

oppose the motion to bracket the bill until next year. Senator Dworak states that one of the reasons that we ought to hold the bill until next year is because we know that there will be some changes at the federal level. Those changes will affect our Medicaid program and accordingly we ought to at least wait until the changes are completed so that we can take into consideration the full measure of the change before we continue the process of reducing the county contribution requirement. Now under some circumstances I might support a move to bracket, knowing that changes are in the works but I cannot so support a move to bracket when the changes are federal changes as opposed to state changes. Three weeks ago or two weeks ago we decided to bracket a bill to allow Lancaster County a district court judge until next year. One of the major reasons we decided to bracket that bill was because we were going to undertake a study of judicial districting ourselves. That study is in our hands. We are conducting it and we will ultimately be able to gauge the outcome. That is not going to be true, however, for the federal program. I think we need to continue to operate on a course that we have been moving on for the last several years which very simply is to reduce the county Medicaid share until we get the job completed, irrespective of what changes may or may not occur at the federal level. Senator Cullan says that he supports basic revisions in the overall welfare program, particularly those embodied in LB 522. I support 522 because that is a bill that I introduced. Those changes are necessary but those changes, likewise, are predicated on relief to the counties of all Medicaid expenditures. Sooner or later we will come to the point literally of relieving the counties of the Medicaid share requirement. It is my opinion we are better off to continue the long, hard, slow and tedious course of reducing the county's share of the Medicaid level. We did 2% last year. We did 2% the previous year. We need to do 2% this year. Any stop in the momentum is a break in the dike of relieving counties of the Medicaid share. It is that kind of a break in the dike that we ought not to tolerate. For that reason, I specifically ask this body to reject the Dworak motion to bracket.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President, I just want to correct a statement. If I understood what Senator Cullan said, he was rising to support the position of the Appropriations Committee and I just want to point out the Appropriations Committee has no position as a committee. We have not met or discussed, I mean no position on this issue. We do have a few positions but not on this one. As far as I know we have not met to discuss the bracketing as an official