

March 3, 1982

LB 522

missioner, could you explain to me very briefly how much control the county commissioners have right now, the county board members have over the welfare program within the county?

SENATOR KAHLE: Well, in opposition to what Senator Cullan just said, they actually have considerable. The county board meets once a month in the size county that I come from as a welfare board with the welfare director and go over it. We are the only people in the county that have access to the names of those that are on welfare. To my knowledge we have never given out those names to anyone. That secrecy has been kept. They do know who is on the welfare roles. Many is the time that we have looked at the situation and recommended to the welfare director that possibly he ought to look farther into the person, his background, and see if they really need help. Other times we have suggested that people come to the welfare office and ask for help when we knew that they did need help. But I am not really arguing about whether we should have the county welfare office or not at the moment. The amendment that I have is that as soon as the state pays for it, they can run it, but not before.

SENATOR VICKERS: But at the present time doesn't the state pay for the majority of the welfare funds?

SENATOR KAHLE: The state pays the biggest chunk of the bill, there isn't any question about that. Of course, there is a lot of it that they do control.

SENATOR VICKERS: I guess that was the question I was going to ask next because I know several county commissioners in my area that have told me how frustrated they are when they meet, as you indicated, as a welfare board, yet even though they might know of certain individuals that they personally feel perhaps may not qualify or should not qualify because of the standards and the criteria set down by the federal government or perhaps the State Department that they really have their hands tied, and I was under the impression that as far as control was concerned, the local boards really didn't have an awful lot of control as to who got the funds and who didn't at the present time.

SENATOR KAHLE: The county boards have argued about that for a long time. My only comment would be that if they have to pay part of the bill I think they should have some oversight as to program. If they are not going to have to pay the bill, then I guess I would be in favor of