

then look at next year when we know where we're at with next year's revenues problems a little more clearer than we do now and then enact legislation if it's in the ability of the state to provide and when the costs are more definite than they obviously are now. I'd have to oppose the advancement of the bill at this time in hopes that amendments would be drafted that would at least permit the development of the information. Perhaps an interim study is all that is necessary but I think it would be most unwise to start a whole series of the enactment of legislation with huge fiscal impact for the next fiscal year which I am sure we already have problems with without new programs.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I rise in support of LB 602. The question Senator Warner poses is whether or not we should pass legislation that has some fiscal impact with the fiscal impact not really to be fully known until July 1st of 1983. Senator Warner suggests that we really ought to authorize the Welfare Department to kind of take a look at the situation, develop some standards and then come back to us with a report as to what it is doing. Well this whole issue of medical indigency is not something that is new. I mean this issue has been boiling at least for the last six or seven years particularly with the closing in Douglas County of its county hospital and in all honesty though there have been some people who have tended to provide some insights into that area such as a couple of Douglas County officials, the University of Nebraska Hospital, some private parties and the like, there has never been any incentive for us to resolve a very difficult social question. What this bill does is very straightforward. It just says, look, come July 1st, 1983, the medical indigency problem shall be taken on by the Nebraska Department of Public Welfare. It sets a very simple standard. If between now and July 1st, 1983, the department decides that it wants to alter the standard, it wants to refine the standard, it can do so. It can come back to us with other legislation but without this kind of a kicker I frankly don't think the problem is going to get addressed and we can't continue to delay and defer this problem, particularly at a time of rising unemployment, more and more people in trouble and the like. This is a very reasonable act for us to take. I would not follow Senator Warner's advice in the least which is to defer this legislation in the hopes that somebody will get something done. Without this kind of legislation nobody will get anything done.