

March 31, 1982

LB 942

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, the second amendment is the one, same subject that you just argued through with on Senator Cullan's. As I indicated discussing that that you had an option to go one way or the other. You also had an option to do both, of course, to really provide some flexibility to the Department of Welfare in trying to handle the increased cost. So I will still go ahead and offer the amendment which gives the Department of Welfare the authority to discontinue some of the lesser important programs. The amendment is found on page 1272. It was Section 12 of the committee amendments to 942 at that time. But I think that one additional, in addition to the Cullan amendment this amendment would even provide greater flexibility for the department in order to have some kind of cost containment where they could also eliminate a few of the lesser important programs in order to provide adequate funding for those that are generally considered as more life saving programs. I think that for the medical services of those who need assistance from Medicaid in order to stay within the budgeted amounts that is in the appropriations bill at this point, that this amendment would further assist in that and would further ensure that at least the most important services the most life threatening services are adequately and fully funded.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, again I rise to object to this amendment. I think again that we are delegating a decision to the Department of Welfare which is properly a legislative decision. Senator Landis and Senator Warner indicated that the Health and Welfare Committee had failed in its responsibility to bring an approach on Medicaid to the floor that would solve the problem for this year and I think now that we have adopted LB 942, a system that does ensure that we do not encounter a major problems in Medicaid, that this amendment is not necessary. Again I think we are going to have to take time and eliminate certain optional services in the area of Medicaid, but I don't think that is a decision properly left to the Director of the Department of Welfare. Just to remind the body, this also would eliminate, would give the Director. . . well the Department of Welfare the authority to eliminate chiropractic, dentistry, optometry and many of the other services and I think that would just be a cost shift rather than a cost savings because many of those services would be picked up by other health care providers. I think it is unnecessary for us to adopt this amendment at this time.