

April 5, 1982

LB 522A

these ancient poor relief laws is contrary to the ancient statute and, therefore, you've got to pay more money. I think that that is one reason that Senator Cullan is addressing that issue with LB 602 which is a little different bill on medical indigency but there is nothing in 522 which would cause the state to pay more money for medical indigency which would cause the state to relieve the hospitals of either the writeoff burden or the poverty burden or what have you.

SENATOR SCHMIT: I think you have used up most of my time, Senator Johnson, but I think it is impossible for us at this time as you just pointed out, it is impossible for us to know that that cost is not going to increase in the next year or two and my concern at this time I believe is this, that perhaps some of those who might be demanding care are now in a position where they could perhaps take care of themselves if they chose to do so but chose to spend their money otherwise. I know that I have seen instances and examples that have been provided to me by....

SENATOR CLARK: You have one minute left.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...provided with care of individuals who should have paid their own bill and did not do so and as a result the hospital wrote it off. Now we come along and that same person...I guess I am questioning as to how long it will take them to learn the system and to find the method whereby they will also loan out to the needy, allow someone else to pick up the tab and if they went through the local people, local agency, I think there is a little bit of scrutiny there that we perhaps might be missing at the state level. I'm concerned that your program will grow, Senator. I know which direction it will grow and I guess that concerns me also.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Cullan. Senator Newell. Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would simply say that the effect of LB 522 as Senator Johnson indicated earlier is merely a recommendation to the next session of the Legislature and it is virtually impossible to put a concrete figure on the effect of LB 522 at this point in time and that directly is related to whether LB 602 passes. What LB 602 will do is to require the Department of Welfare to write a rules and regulations that define indigency and then it puts a lid on the annual income that is acceptable for that definition. So LB 602 is an attempt to tie down any potential impact from these particular statutes but I think Senator Johnson is correct that