

November 5, 1981

LB 7

usual, my activities were as usual, my work was as usual and my eating habits were as usual. Again I state, I don't think this is a pro-life issue and I don't think we should make it one. And I think it is ridiculous that we pay more for a child who is completely dependent on the mother when, in fact, that support comes when the child is independent or should be. I urge you to consider this. I think it is something that we should rethink and I definitely do not think it is a pro-life issue, that it is simply an issue of paying for an individual when they become independent. Thank you.

PRESIDENT LUEDTKE PRESIDING

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I think that it is an abortion question as well as a welfare question that we are addressing here. The language that is being struck is an amendment, as Senator Labeledz pointed out, that I had added to our state statute in 1975 after a court decision. This is the language that the Reagan administration welfare rule says states should not have, that Governor Thone has introduced a bill saying the state should not have. It is language that says that at least in this section of law that at the point of conception we have a child. In this case at the point of conception we have a child for ADC. And my position on abortion is I guess what some call pro-choice, and the pro-life forces have worked to defeat me. I have been at the top of their hit list and yet I agree completely with the pro-life position on this issue. Why? Because although I strongly believe that a woman, a family, should have the right to select whether or not to have an abortion, I do not believe that we should structure our society so that abortion is the choice that is dictated by economics, that abortion is a choice that is dictated by our laws, that abortion is the choice that this Legislature encourages people to follow. And I believe that Senator Pirsch's amendment, that Governor Thone's bill, that President Reagan's welfare regulations, encourage women in very difficult situations to elect to have an abortion when they would rather bring a child into the world. What is a woman, not maybe in the same circumstances as Senator Pirsch, a woman who has been abandoned by her husband, who does not have job skills, who is not employed, finds herself pregnant, perhaps doesn't even know she is pregnant until after she is abandoned, what is she to do? Let's say she is not on welfare now. She has no other children. She could go to employers, ask for a job when she is pregnant. Are employers in this