

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Labeledz, followed by Senators Schimek, Haberman, and Wesely. Senator Labeledz, please.

SENATOR LABEDZ: Thank you, Mr. President. LB 338 appears to be a very good bill. It is, no doubt, intended to address a legitimate important need. However, I am by no means comfortable with this bill, primarily because of its broad authorization relative to providing community public health services. The bill gives the Department of Health the authority to do virtually anything it wants to in the area of providing public health services. If we look at the definition of the community public health services and public health nursing, these definitions are completely open-ended and so it is not possible for us to actually really know what type of health services might be promoted and facilitated under this program. I certainly cannot support legislation through which, for example, the state might inadvertently facilitate or promote abortion, yet nothing in this bill would restrict this. I acknowledge the fact that you don't find any references to such things as abortion and abortion referrals or school-based clinics or that type of thing. Nevertheless, as broadly drafted as the bill is, none of these things are excluded from the bill, and I doubt whether Planned Parenthood would be supporting this bill as strongly as they have if they were not confident that their ideas which they promote could be facilitated by this legislation. Again, I recognize the value and the good that is sought to be accomplished by this bill but it leaves me extremely uneasy. I think we need to proceed very cautiously as to what we may be buying into with this broad authorization. I am in favor of the concept but very, very uncomfortable with its contents. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Wesely and members of the body, Mr. Chairman, I would rise to say that I think this is a very important bill. I would like to be able to support it, Senator Wesely, but I do have a few questions about the bill. And I guess my first question is, is this...is this set up to be tied in with other health services that may or may not already be being provided? And are these regions that have been set up, do they...are they similar to other regions for other kinds of health care services? What I'm...what I'm getting at is I think that there is a pretty big fiscal bill on this particular legislation and are there ways that costs are being taken into