

SENATOR SCHMIT: Well, I have been...

SENATOR LYNCH: I have a list of all the counties in the state here, too, Senator Schmit. If you would like any particular county, I could provide that for you.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you, Senator. I have been contacted by several rural counties who had the bad experience, I guess you would call it, of having to pick up the tab for a rather expensive operation in several instances which seriously threatened their budget process, and my concern right now, as I have mentioned before on this floor, is that you have a limit here of \$10,000 of net worth, apparently, as the top price that one individual can be worth and still receive this kind of care. I know that is, in many cases, rather generous. I have another concern and I don't know how we are ever going to address it, but in the last month, I have had several instances of people, whom I call the working poor, and we have addressed them several times here although we pay very little attention to them, people who have no insurance, who cannot be treated at a hospital, who when they go to the hospital very frankly are treated like second or third class citizens, and shunted back and forth to some other kind of health care. I really don't know what we are going to do about that, and I think that is, probably, Senator Lynch, just as important as the problem you are trying to address, and I don't know that we can address it, and I am sure the Budget Committee is concerned about the cost of this bill, and if I were to try to address the other issue, I think they would probably throw up their hands, but I want to just point out that we have reached the point where many people who are not considered indigent, who consider themselves able to take care of themselves for most of their needs, are not able to take care of their health care needs, are not able to afford the several hundred dollars per month that health care insurance cost, and I would dare say that if most of the state employees had to write a check for their health care insurance, they would probably have difficulty doing it every month. And so I am going to listen to the debate on this bill, and I hope others will raise some of these same questions, because I want to reemphasize again, the cost of health care has reached the point where a lot of people, not just indigent who Senator Lynch is trying to take care of, but a lot of individuals whom you and I meet and visit and work with every day are not able to take care of either. And so, while today we are going to address one issue under