

February 16, 1989      LB 362

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Proceeding immediately then to General File, LB 362.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 362 was a bill introduced by Senators Wesely, Withem and Ashford. (Title read.) The bill was introduced on January 11, referred to Health Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill, Mr. President.

SENATOR LABEDZ PRESIDING

SENATOR LABEDZ: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you.

SENATOR LABEDZ: LB 362.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President. Members of the Legislature, LB 362 was legislation following up on two pieces of legislation passed by the Nebraska Legislature last year and two pieces of legislation passed and signed into law by the Congress of the United States. Let me deal first with the welfare reform aspect of this legislation and give you a quick summation of it and then go to the spousal impoverishment issue. On the welfare reform side of things, this Legislature last year passed LB 518. That bill provided for a continuation of child care and Medicaid health coverage for individuals moving off of welfare and into the work force. We provided that transition assistance, if you recall, last year to that degree, three months for child care, one year for the health benefits. The Congress followed the action of this Legislature and mandated that this transition type benefits would be made available but the difference between what they provide and what we provided last year is that instead of three months, as we call for, they require 12 months. So this bill would take the three-month extension of child care benefits that we passed last year and extend it to 12 months. In addition last year, the medical benefits that we provided for for 12 months had a contribution formula included and that would be eliminated under the provisions of the federal law, so no longer would you have that contribution mandate, but under the federal law you'd just have that coverage provided, period. The bill that was passed was the Family Support Act, the federal act, or another term, most wildly used term would be the Welfare Reform bill. So we come