

based on that, I believe what we have here based, you know, the federal level has placed this requirement on us, but it appears to be almost a bill for the wealthy. So this is the only thing that we can do is lower the \$25,000 then down to \$12,000 of the resource allowance, and I would ask for your support on this amendment.

**SPEAKER BARRETT:** Thank you. Discussion on the Smith amendment to LB 362. Senator Wesely, please.

**SENATOR WESELY:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I would support the Smith amendment, although it will reduce the amount the original bill calls for in protection of assets for individuals. Having reviewed the situation since our discussion on General File, the bill we passed last year did for the first time protect well spouses in terms of assets and income. Well, I guess they did have some protection before that in terms of income, but it did increase their income protection and their asset protection, and then the Congress's changes building on that base were much greater than we had called for last year, and so, really, the \$25,000 minimum, although it can be justified, I think, at the same time, considering all the other improvements in terms of what we protect in income and what we protect in assets, I guess I could live with reducing it down to \$12,000. We discussed it with Senator Withem, and he felt, he is not here, but he felt that that would be okay. And, so, let me again give you...back up a little bit about this bill. Federal reform in welfare occurred last year. It came after we passed our spousal impoverishment and our ADC coverage changes. We are following up with LB 362 to implement the extensions beyond what we did last year to match up with the federal program. We need to do that. We have got to do that. The only difference in this bill with what we have to do in terms of minimums by the federal government is the particular point Senator Smith is raising. That is the minimum...

**SPEAKER BARRETT:** Excuse me, Senator Wesely. (Gavel.) The house is not in order. Okay.

**SENATOR WESELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only, again, the only difference in the issues of what we have any option on in this whole piece of legislation is the very question Senator Smith raises because the minimum under the federal standards is \$12,000. That is to say you get half of the assets. You divide the assets in half, but you get at least 12,000. So let's say