

issue and also, I might add, advocating for this issue and he has done a very adequate job, I think, of explaining the choices that we have before us. And I simply want to basically reiterate some of the points he made, I guess, and lay out for you what I see as policy discussions that will have to go on. I appreciate the way you handled this, Senator Wesely, and I know you have a sympathetic ear in the committee. I'm going to ask that the amendment not be adopted today and that we continue to work with Senator Wesely. We have a couple of policy choices here before us today and I think the committee's wish on this was that we would deal with this through the bill, 678. However, as Senator Wesely has indicated, I don't know if we're going to get to that bill yet. And woven into that scenario is also the issues raised about child care also that appear in 739. We have, obviously, a set of policy choices here in terms of the way we allocate our resources which, essentially, says how much...how much do you want to allocate to this poorest of the poor group and, on the other hand, given the kind of tax credits that are currently legal under federal law and then it would be envisioned under 739, I guess I would characterize that as more of a middle class entitlement. And you are all aware, certainly, of the growing demand for assistance with child care among all income groups in this country right now and the major task, I think, before us right now is to determine good policy in the State of Nebraska and do the best we can for the broad range of people out there asking for assistance. As Senator Wesely mentioned, the current proposal is coming in at about \$2.5 million which would presumably take us up to market rate and if we did anything smaller than that, then it would probably be require some kind of an adjustment in terms of distribution. The process, at this point as I understand it, last summer the department came up with about a million eight figure and then went out and did some looking at those numbers and found that we were experiencing some client growth under the Title XX program and they did a rough market survey as well which indicated that perhaps their estimates were too low in terms of how that related to the market and they brought back in a much higher figure which, obviously, has caused us to question what is the proper number and where should we come down on this. In the meantime, the fiscal analyst has worked with the agency to try to derive those numbers. So that's essentially where we are right now, I think, in trying to determine where would be a correct number to come to rest upon and I don't think we have a complete picture of that out there anymore than the agency yet has a complete picture of what's going on out there. The other