

trying to find the solutions. I understand and I appreciate that Senator Hannibal and Senator Wesely have said that there are problems with the program. Well, ladies and gentlemen, if we took every single program here in the state in which we can find a problem and said we're not going to take care of the need until we solve the problem, we would save a billion dollars pretty quickly because every single program that is here and some of which I have started have problems. But, no, full throttle...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...on most of them regardless. The first responsibility of government ought to be to take care of those persons who are so unfortunate that they cannot take care of themselves. That ought to be our first and our highest priority. If we can't take care of those, then we do not need to worry about the farmers and the greenhouses or the Mead building or we do not need to worry about the teachers or the state employees. If we can't take care of those who cannot take care of themselves, then, ladies and gentlemen, we have failed as a government. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Additional discussion. Senator Nelson, followed by Senators Morrissey, Schimek, Schmit, Lynch, Dierks, Coordsen, Hannibal, Crosby and Warner. Senator Nelson.

SENATOR NELSON: My goodness, after that I just as well keep quiet and sit down because I think there are a lot of opinions. I do appreciate Senator Hannibal's explanation, Senator Wesely's. I, too, am torn. As most of you know, and I will try to make this very brief, when I came in here, I worked for an increase in alcohol tax and for mental health and programs. Last year, I tried to get \$500,000 more. I believe that part of it was vetoed out, so I am not that I am not sympathetic, but I am torn against this. We do have to have some accountability and I don't want to go across the dirty laundry, no more than Senator Hannibal or anyone else, who is at fault for this problem. When I tried to get down to it, and maybe some services were included that may not exactly justify client services and that, I am torn. I don't know how I'll vote on this. These are people that cannot speak or act for themselves. I think of the bill that is coming down the line on retirement, \$6,000 a year, or an increase of \$5,000 a year in a very, very healthy retirement for one part of our...group of our society