

And so I feel comfortable, at this point, with amending the committee amendments, and adopting them, and advancing the bill, and attempting to address some of the concerns that the policyholders have. So that's the basis of my concern. Now let me talk about the broader issues of CHIP. I and Senator Chizek cosponsored the bill in 1986 that became the CHIP program. And at the time we did not anticipate over 3,000 Nebraskans being part of this program and having the cost exceed \$4 million, which it does at this point. We did not anticipate the demand and the need for the program. It was much greater than we saw, back in 1986, but we're glad that we were able to fill in the gap, to deal with the concerns that people had, and that so many Nebraskans have benefitted from the program. Now, I have passed out for you a chart that shows where we're going in terms of CHIP. Let me tell you a little bit about where we've been. When we started off on this program, the assessments were quite small. There was 300,000 assessed in '88, 1.2 million in '89, moved up to 4 million in 1990, and made...made a jump to 4,700,000 in 1991. As you can see from the chart I've passed out, it looks like the assessments will go to about 5.1 million next year, 6.7 million the following year, 8.6 million in 1994-95. From there it goes up to 11, and then \$14 million. The point I want to make is that it's in 1994-95 that we will probably hit the level of premium tax available to cover the cost of the CHIP program. That we have 1992-93, 1993-94, and perhaps 1994-95 that we are able to cover the costs of this program through the premium tax that's offset to pay for the subsidy the state provides to the CHIP program. But we have to, within the next three years, find a solution to the funding problem that will carry us beyond 1994-95, that we have to look at 1995-96, and on down the road, and recognize that we can't...can't leave the policyholders hanging out there, not certain that the program will continue. I think it will. I think, clearly, most everybody agrees that. But we also have to understand that not having an adequate funding base will be a problem into the future. And the chart I have gives you an indication of the problem, and when it's going to hit and be critical. And so I also want to emphasize that the CHIP program is part of a bigger problem, that the health care cost increases we've experienced, the fact that we have so many uninsured, that we're finding insurance...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...not available to many Nebraskans that would