

September 28, 1992 LB 20

The amendment that I'm offering would mitigate the harm that is being done by this bill, to some extent. It would say that during the last three months of pregnancy, for these women who qualify for assistance, they would be able to get the payments that are now available from the time that a pregnancy is confirmed. I think it should be stated into the record again and again, and yet again that with the total amount that would be available for a woman in this situation, being granted assistance from the time that conception is confirmed, all of that assistance is not going to make her rich. Contrary to what some people say, I'm skeptical about the notion that a woman would deliberately get pregnant to get, at most, \$239 a month, or if she has a child to get \$71 more. I don't believe that a woman would put up with a man for \$71 a month, let alone be tied down with a child just so that she can get 71 more dollars. If somebody made a charge or accusation like that against some of us, who are not needy, we would be highly incensed, we would be greatly offended, we would be deeply insulted. But the poor are everybody's whipping person. They cannot fight back. They cannot resist. They have to yield and submit to whatever is forced upon them. So, in this case, we're going to take women who, during other discussions, will be held up as exemplars who need to be protected by society, we will take them in the context of this discussion and deprive them of the little that they're currently being given. The fact that not every state in the Union does what Nebraska now does is not a shame upon Nebraska, it's something which, for once, should give Nebraska a sense and feeling of pride. All this talk about Nebraska, the good life, all this talk about neighbors looking out for neighbors, all this talk, and I have helped with legislation to facilitate these things...

SENATOR CONWAY: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...about these hot lines to benefit rural people who, when they're faced by economic reversals, face the possibility of spouse abuse, alcohol abuse and even suicide, can be given help, we would do that. But with all of that talk we come to one of the most vulnerable groups in society and we become as hard as flint and as unyielding as steel. That ought not to be. My amendment will go a small step toward mitigating the viciousness of LB 20 as it was originally introduced.

SENATOR CONWAY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Ashford, you're next.