

September 29, 1992 LB 20

born has defects or deficiencies which could have been prevented, then the state will wind up being penny wise and pound foolish. The women that this amendment would consider are those who have been established by existing criteria to be needy. To broaden that point just a little bit, for ADC purposes of eligibility there is what is called the standard of need. And that's a level of existence which a person should be entitled to at a minimum to be considered to have a decent standard of living. The Legislature, even though this borders on poverty, has never allowed an amount of assistance to meet the standard of need. So even with the maximum assistance that is available under Nebraska law, a woman does not receive the help that would bring her to a level that has been established as a floor below which nobody should fall in this society. Nobody is going to get rich from the aid being given now, and certainly no woman is going to get rich from assistance that's given during the last three months of her pregnancy. I don't know of any reason why this amendment cannot be supported, other than that the Governor decided he's going to show how tough he is by attacking pregnant women when he has not attacked in a vigorous way any other program. They shift around money from this to that. He wants to merge this with that, but he has not cut or told you to cut any other program completely as he has ordered you to cut this one. I cannot say that if a vote were taken that LB 20 would pass, but I believe that it will. So I have to do what I can to prevent the vote from being taken. On the possibility that a vote at some point will be taken, even if it's outside of this week, I would like the bill to not be as bad as it is now. So if you can find it in your heart to vote for this amendment, you are giving the Governor what he wants, which is a chance to hurt these pregnant women, you'll give him that opportunity. And those of you who agree with that philosophy will get your pound of flesh, too. But in the mean time these women will get some of the assistance that they need and to which they ought to be entitled. And if you don't care about the woman, think about the child that will be born and who has reached this stage of development. Yesterday, Senator Schmit talked about child support payments that are not collected, how various officials and judges have been given the responsibility, under the statutes, to see that this support money is collected and turned over to the mother and her children. Those collections are not going forth. The issue is not seen as a serious one because, again, it impacts on women. It impacts on women who apparently, society feels, should have known better than to be involved with a man, should have known