

September 29, 1992 LB 20

And so Senator Chambers talking about total elimination, it is true when he talks of the total elimination of the cash payment, that is true. It is not the total elimination of support the state gives these people in need. Obviously, the question that begs to be asked is at what point should the state continue this? Obviously, if it's the trimester, there's a federal match there. The federal government has shed some light on that. But, you know, going back to the fact once before we talked about before time and time again is where do you get the money to do it? We have nicked a number of constituencies or we are nicking a number of constituencies in this special session. You know, the MIRF program is one, the across-the-board reductions, the guard tuition, all of those in the scheme of things is a cut on part. All we're doing here when you consider the total amount of aid given to these people prior to the birth of the child and certainly when you consider after the birth of the child I am not in any way, shape, or form saying anyone gets rich off of this money. I'm not in any way, shape, or form saying that I would choose to trade places with those people as far as living in a lap of luxury. I do not think that is a fair criticism of the program. But on the other hand for Senator Chambers to say we are totally eliminating aid to these people it would be incorrect. The cash payment, yes, we are eliminating. I think there are other things there that certainly allow some help. Senator Crosby had related a story earlier about people that came to her door during the Depression as a child, obviously the type of programs that the federal government, state government, and local government has in the 50 years since the Depression has increased dramatically. I think any of those people coming to the door, having not been there I do not know, but even if you take this cash payment away, security of medical care, the security of having food, at least some food, would be far superior to those people a long time ago. So our society has come a long way. At the same time, we have to realize how far can society afford to go? I think given the economic times of the state I think, as I said before, LB 20 in its original form is not an unreasonable policy. Neither is our present policy an unreasonable policy, but I think from a financial standpoint LB 20 is the proper step to take to get to (1) begin with the many other things we are doing to address our Medicaid problem and (2) along with the culmination of all the things you are doing this special session getting a start on plugging our budget gap. And with that I would oppose Senator Crosby's amendment and urge the body to advance LB 20.