

September 29, 1992 LB 20

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Moore. Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I oppose the Crosby amendment as well, but I'd like to just answer to a certain degree what Senator Moore has said. And he's right, definitely right in the message that he has been sending all day and throughout this session that this is a serious budget problem. But I think we have to look at the total budget, what we have put out here and look at the specific programs that have been alluded to. The National Guard program was cut from 75 percent to 50 percent. The Appropriations Committee put out a cut in the wards of the court program that did not take the whole program out. I think we could go down the line and the MIRF program, there's a cut out of the MIRF program, but two-thirds of the MIRF program remains intact. Senator Moore and I, last year, introduced a bill which would have done what Senator Chambers' amendment proposes to do which is to move the ADC payments to three months prior to birth. I obviously supported that then and support it now. In these kinds of programs it's important that we look very carefully at the programs instead of drawing lines in the sand that don't make any particular sense. There have been some good pieces to this whole debate. Senator Landis is talking about the concern about where the money goes. Senator Crosby is proposing a voucher, proposes the voucher idea, something that could be looked at. Senator Lindsay very correctly states that there are significant other payments that are made to these individuals in the form of medical care and food aid. Senator Rasmussen, though she has not spoken on the bill, is talking about managing this universe of individuals in a more effective way. And again, when we're talking about Medicaid, we're talking about 125,000 Nebraskans who are eligible for Medicaid. In this universe we're talking about 500 persons, 500 persons, 500 people; and that is a manageable universe. If we take a good...I don't think we really have taken a good hard look as a body at this particular universe of people. And until we do, I think it's unfair and not right to cut them totally out of this program. That's why I supported Senator Moore's proposal last year to go to the three months. And so if we take all these pieces together and look at it between now and January, with some safety net left in there, and I think the three months, that's about all it is is a safety net, and take a look at where this program is going to go that that's going to be a worthwhile exercise. Finally, in conclusion I don't support the continuation of the program after 1985 at the full nine months.