

September 29, 1992 LB 20

progress we find out we ought not be doing. It's one thing to tell somebody that you will support an idea that they have in principle, but you cannot say what your final position will be until you get all of the information. And you won't have all that information until there's been the discussion and the exchange of views as will occur in here. But if you lock yourself in, then you go through that agony because you know the position that you've taken is not the proper one. I know that if everybody in this Legislature could vote on this issue, and you can, but if they felt free to vote on this issue in accord with what they thought ought to be done, I feel that a majority would be opposed to LB 20. Nobody has brought a bill to wipe the program out entirely. Senator Moore has tried to modify it, but nobody to my knowledge has brought a bill to wipe it out entirely. And since Senator Moore is head of the budget committee, the scrooge factor of the Legislature, we expect that from him so his doesn't really count. He's just doing that unpleasant work that whoever sits in that seat has to do, so we ought to exclude him from all generalizations. He has to do that drudge work. But as far as everybody else is concerned, the program has been left alone and nobody can really show abuses because there's not that much abuse you can do with \$71 a month, or at most \$293, depending on the circumstances. That is not a lot of money. In four days coming down here, I think our per diem when we're in session is \$72 a day...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: That's \$288 for 4 days. And if I wanted to, I could eat off the lobbyists and it wouldn't cost me anything out of my pocket. I could eat off them every day. And we're talking about that amount going to a pregnant woman trying to carry the pregnancy to term and to live at a level of decency, we're saying that's too much to give. I just cannot buy it. And I'll tell you something else and maybe I'll offer a bill and we'll see how much we really mean. We will forego a per diem and say instead the money that would be paid to us as a per diem will go into a fund to help the poor and the needy. And I'd be willing to forego my per diem for that. We set that fund up and instead of us getting, and you could still eat off the lobbyists, but we don't get the per diem anymore. And you shouldn't mind it because you didn't have it...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.