

September 29, 1992 LB 20

this money. It was bad policy from the beginning, not that the women didn't need the money or didn't deserve it, but it was bad design from the beginning. I guess I always look for the positive side of things and when I saw this shortfall or this revenue crunch that we're in, I saw it as an opportunity to look at our priorities and to look at how we are doing business and decide whether or not it's correct. I don't like the way we've been doing business, particularly in this program. By design, we have not asked for any accountability and I think we are not excused from that simply because we are giving money to human resources or to people. I don't think that is responsible even when we have plenty of money to design programs without clear outcomes and without monitoring to make sure those outcomes are happening. But I am mostly concerned because I think that we do a tremendous disservice to those folks that we claim we are trying to help, in this situation, women who are poor and pregnant. I think, by design, we set these women up to be accused of stupid and demeaning behavior at no fault of their own. I think, by design, the whole welfare system is set up to keep these people where they're at, not to promote independence and productivity. I remember, my husband and I put everything on the line to build a business, a restaurant, and we spent two years building it and we spent one year getting the business going and just when we thought we were on a roll a tornado came in and blew it all away. I was humbled as well as awed by the tremendous support that came around that night, as people brought food over and kept us company all night long, the helicopters that protected our property, but six months later those people were still there helping us put the walls back up on the building, and three months later they were there to celebrate with us when we reopened our business. And when we began to open the doors again they were still there helping us get that business going. That's what we ought to be doing with...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: ...our welfare programs, and we are not. What we do is we say, we're here to help you poor people as long as you don't move. I have not...I have supported LB 20 because I see it as an opportunity to look at a different design for promoting the health and welfare of all women, especially those of low income. I will support this amendment but I want it in the record that if we do not change this design over the next couple of years, I will not support reinstating the program as