

ADC household if she moves out and establishes her own household. Director Harvey noted in '92 that there is, "a growing concern that young women, particularly those younger than 19, are actually encouraged to leave their mother's household, that parent is not the term used here tells a lot about the irrelevancy and lack of expectations of the father and a two-parent family under our current welfare system", and I continue, "because this is the way they can achieve greater payments." I do hope we can avoid the strident pronouncements on who cares about the welfare of children and who doesn't. I don't think anyone in this Legislature has the slightest desire to hurt children, and I also don't believe that anyone here can defend the current system of today as creating the ideal environment for children. Now we have adopted Senator Wesely's raising the health benefits to 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and I think that is really what we want to accomplish in our increasing the reform of welfare. I might talk also about the savings from this program. Even with adding Senator Wesely's increase of about 350 women and children to our health care, we will save about \$1.5 million by eliminating the cash payments. Nebraskans are generous and compassionate people, willing to help those less fortunate than themselves, and certainly the young girls and women who receive ADC and the other assistance need our support and our understanding. But I think it is ultimately a false kindness that allows us to create a system that the state takes on the role and responsibilities that families and particularly expectant fathers, as well as the expectant mothers, should be held accountable for. They are responsible also from that moment of confirmation of pregnancy. To prepare for an expected child should be a time for fathers as well as mothers and, yes, the extended family, grandmothers and grandfathers. And I think, with LB 658 as amended, we will increase the accountability and responsibility and decrease perhaps some of the unhealthy things that happen to our children before they are born. I hope that you will support and pass on LB 658.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Pirsch. Senator Wesely, your light is next, followed by Senators Chambers and Crosby.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President and members of the Legislature, I'm copying off for you a handout that will give you some sense of what states have been doing on this issue since, well, actually the information I have is from 1992 so it's not exactly the most recent information here in 1995, but