

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So this is one of those amendments which will do no good whatsoever. Since we're going to discuss so-called welfare reform in terms of how much money we can avoid spending to help the poor, this amendment need not be adopted because to keep in the committee amendments the language that Senator Witek is trying to strike does not cost the state any money. This is one time when an amendment can do something in the way of helping to lay the groundwork of a policy without costing the state money, and if this goal is something which the Legislature is unwilling to even say we will aim at, then it shows really the hard-heartedness of some people on the floor of this Legislature. I'm against Senator Witek's amendment.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. The next speaker is Senator Wesely, followed by Senators Day, Dierks, Maurstad, Witek, Bohlke, Jensen, Bromm and Chambers. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, I yield my time to Senator Beutler.

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Crosby, members of the Legislature, I would like to oppose the amendment and I actually have an amendment drafted to make it stronger because I think one of the most important things we need to do is to address the problem of health care for children and I'm talking about those children who are caught in between the Medicaid level and those children who are the children of the middle class and the wealthy families who, of course, get good health care. The interesting thing about, I guess, the timing of this debate on this particular item is the fact, in a way, in a small way it comes up in just behind our Richardson County debate and the problem that small counties have because they cannot anticipate the haphazard and unpredictable happening of huge expenses related to indigent defenses. And for families in Nebraska, for a certain set of families in Nebraska medical care is the same kind of thing. You can plan for housing, you can plan for closing, you can keep your budget as tight as you can and watch every cost and do everything you can but, by golly, when the kid gets a major illness or breaks a leg or has to go in for some kind of major operation, you're bankrupt. You're basically bankrupt. And I think that it's been clearly identified and we all know that one of the major problems in escaping the welfare