

Madam President. (See pages 1583-90 of the Legislative Journal.)

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Maurstad, your light is next followed by Senator Chambers and Pirsch.

SENATOR MAURSTAD: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature, I'd like to state, on the onset of what I'm sure is going to be many hours of debate on this particular topic, that I, for one, certainly respect the positions and the work that are done by all the members relative to this particular issue and the variety of issues that we will discuss as we focus in on welfare and I hope that everyone else does the same. And like some of the speakers before, I'm not particularly interested in rhetorical labels either, although I think if we're going to include labels relative to those that have been mentioned, then we also need to throw in the labels relative to hypocritical and hard-hearted and some of these other types of rhetorical labels that maybe don't have the political significance in people's minds but, to me, are no more than the same type of rhetorical labor. If this, in fact, is a cornerstone of our welfare program, then it should have been included in the program in a far more greater extent than just as the intent that we want to work towards this particular goal. And as I indicated the first time I rose, that's my main concern relative to this aspect of the committee amendments. I think it's certainly a debatable topic but, once again, I want to reiterate that I would rather see it done outside the context of this particular issue. I also share Senator Bromm's very pertinent observation relative to the policymaking aspect and feel as though that if we're going to do this, then the Legislature ought to continue what it has been working on the last couple of years and take hold of this issue and continue to develop it. The last thing I want to comment on at this particular time is the study or the issue, the welfare reform task report that has been alluded to and passed out; as was indicated by the individual who spoke and referred to it, this was an October 1993 task force, the work being done during that year and I say it's not relevant anymore. This task force and the report was done within the context of getting ready for national health care reform that was going to occur in 1994, and did occur, and I submit to you that some of the sections relative to this task force are included as a basic setup for those efforts towards universal care that were going to take place on the federal and state levels across the country in 1994. I think we have a different environment today, and