

to the standard of need, tie the assistance to the standard of need. As Senator Wesely pointed out, what it is now is that you don't merely have to be poor, you must be the poorest of the poor. You have to be among the wretched, as they used to be called. And I don't think it is in the best interest of a state, I don't think it's in the best interest of a society to say that before we will give assistance to our less fortunate brothers and sisters they must be totally wretched, they must be on the verge of starvation, they must be in a position where stealing is a viable alternative because if you don't steal, the alternative to that is even worse. What we're quibbling about here is how wretched we want people to be in order to obtain some assistance. What this amendment that the committee has offered does is to merely state what that standard or line ought to be. The payments are not increased as a result of this amendment. I do believe that we make policy decisions and we often make them by putting something in statute which, if funded, would require more money than we appropriate, but we do that on a regular basis. Those who think there should be full funding have to argue for it. Sometimes they win, sometimes they don't. In this area, I don't know of a time that I could say that I was ever on what I would call the winning side because we've never raised the level of assistance to that which I think it should be or which the standard of need indicates it ought to be. The least we can do is give ourselves in statute a guideline and a means to allow that guideline to be adjusted. We all know that no individual state has the competency in terms of person power, knowledge, maybe computer ability to consider on...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...a national basis what this Consumer Price Index ought to be. So presumably competent people, with presumably good information, using presumably the best processes available establish what this Consumer Price Index is, and it is used in connection with things other than this bill. And when I was discussing the bill that Senator Witek had prioritized, we agreed that the Consumer Price Index is used in there and pegged to that are certain other adjustments that will be made in tax rates. My interest is not in saying that she didn't know what was in that bill, but to show that the Consumer Price Index is used in a lot of different contexts when you're adjusting various things, even at the state level. And I think with what Senator Bromm and...