

Health Committee, did they have a fiscal note when they made these changes or voted these on, and the two members that are right here in my area have said, no, that they did not have a fiscal note as to what impact these changes would have. So we're being asked to adopt a big policy change here and not just one change but a continuing change. If we tie this to the Consumer Price Index this will occur on into infinity. It will be attached to the Consumer Price Index. And, Senator Crosby, we're the ones that make this decision. It's in statute, so when I say us people who are...who are charged with this, it is the Legislature, it is in statute, so we're the ones who make these decisions. But it is given to the department and I did read the section. It says the department shall make a finding as to whether the applicant referred to in this section will be allowed or denied these benefits. So I guess it's in concert, the Legislature with the Department of Social Services makes this decision. But if we adopt this change, we will no longer make the decision, the Department of Social Services will no longer be involved in the decision, the decision will be made by how many people qualify tied to the Consumer Price Index as that number. So that is a decision that you are being asked to make here. If you would adopt my amendment, it would strike this section and we would continue as we have and keep at the numbers that we have. I think another concern here is if more people qualify, is that the direction that we're being asked to go in? I know if you all look at...people on Appropriations and anyone else looks at the books, the greatest increase, and the reason we're being even asked to go into welfare reform, is because of the costs, the tremendous costs of these programs and the costs that they have been increasing, the increasing costs, the compounded increasing costs in a lot of these programs. And people will be saying, we don't have any control of that, usually it's the federal government. Well, here's something that we do have some control over and I'm asking you to make a decision on the policy from the Nebraska Legislature on this. And it would increase the costs.

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR WITEK: And people, I heard from people all weekend long on the taxes that they're paying right now and just begging, I mean, it's getting to the point of begging, and myself included, please try to keep spending down. And if we adopt this change in the committee amendments, Senator Wesely has admitted, although nobody has any numbers on how much, that it will