

Mr. Clerk, is this the amendment that is found on page 1565 of the Journal?

CLERK: Yes, sir, it is.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you. The amendment that I offer is one that I do on behalf of the counties. It, basically, says this, if you open your book, your Journal to the page that is listed. It says that any person who is or becomes ineligible for other medical programs or general assistance due to his or her own actions or inactions or due to the termination of a benefit period shall also be ineligible for medical services from the county. What this says, and then it goes on to say in a separate section, when any...or is not eligible for other general assistance programs, then it restates the same language only it deals with general assistance programs with the counties, as stated up above, as it dealt with the medical issue. It says that, in essence, if the state adopts the standards and benefit periods, if you will, for purposes of assistance, that those will hold true or at least be followed by the county. So, in other words, the burden, if it is no longer the state's, is not one that will be shifted to the counties for purposes of taking care of these individuals. It is a policy question that needs to be addressed. I believe that it is one that says that if the standards are going to be set by the state, if individuals are eligible under those, they are also eligible at the county level, but once they have rendered themselves ineligible, whether it is through their own actions or inactions, or whether it be the run of a benefit period, that individual is no longer...or that county is no longer required for purposes of medical services and for general assistance to provide additional benefits. It, basically, says we are going to mirror at the county level what the state has adopted as their policy for purposes of folks who would be in need of these benefits. It is a question that needs to be addressed. I really think that the Legislature has to decide, if the intent with the passage of the welfare reform bill, as is embodied in LB 455, is really attempting to shift the burden to the counties, I don't believe we are, and I believe that the amendment would clear that up, clarify that an individual would not be able to, once they exhausted benefits, if you will, at the state level, then be eligible for additional county benefits when, in fact, that the policy of the state is that we're going to cut folks off at a certain point in time; then I believe that it is not only for purposes of state revenues, but it is for