

purposes of county revenues as well. With that, I would offer the amendment and I hope there is some discussion on it. And I, Madam President, would stand to respond to any questions that I might. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Hall. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President and members. I appreciate Senator Hall raising the issue. It is an appropriate one. All along on the issue of a two-year cutoff, the question has been, what happens to the counties. With general assistance as the safety net, the ultimate last recourse for the poor, they have been very concerned about the consequences and have generally opposed the efforts to time limit welfare. But I must say, at this point, I need to rise in opposition to this amendment because, in my understanding of it, Senator Hall, and you could perhaps comment on it, if you follow it to its logical conclusion, there may, in fact, this would wipe out any sort of role general assistance for anybody who hasn't...well, I guess for anybody who has been on welfare whatsoever, and lost through terminatio.. of benefits, or through their actions, there aren't going to be a whole lot of other people out there, basically, unless they haven't yet gotten onto the welfare system, I guess that would still be a possibility. But it would so dramatically curtail the county role, which has been a traditional historic role as being the last place, last line, that you can go to to get some help when everybody else has let you down, whether it be the federal programs, the state programs, any other programs, it was always if you fell through the cracks, the one place you could turn to was the county, and I believe even the first responsibility of the counties in the Constitution talks about general assistance and welfare, if I am not mistaken. But in any event, they are right to raise the issue, the counties are right to raise the issue, but, currently, general assistance is not a mandatory, automatic mandate, entitlement. It is something that the county has control over, and this would eliminate even the chance that if somebody came in and needed to have help, they got released from the welfare program after two years, and ran into hard times a year later, and really were desperate for let's say one month of payments for heating bills, you'd end up with this saying they couldn't do anything. Even if they wanted to do something, we would not allow the county even the option of providing it. So this takes...this takes us a long way away from the idea that I think started with the formation of the counties and the formation of the state, the