

general assistance based on the standards established by the county board. Now, keep in mind, the county board will set the standards and there is also a thought that it is the support of last resort, and so if somebody is denied coverage by the state because they haven't fulfilled a contract or whatever, I think...my interpretation is that the counties would have the option to say, no, it is not our responsibility, we are not going to fulfill it, but, you know, obviously, my hope would be that they would care for the needs of the poor and wouldn't take that step unless absolutely necessary. That is, in fact, their responsibility. But what Senator Hall's amendment would do is say even if they wanted to take care of this person, they couldn't. This would not allow for it, and, you know, I can't believe that the counties would be that hardhearted, that, well, I would hope...well, yeah, I guess I can believe that they would be that hardhearted in some cases. Senator Chambers may be right on that point, but that has been their long-term, historic role, to be, when everybody else fails somebody, you can turn to the county and they can determine on a very short-term basis what assistance to provide you to get you through, to get you through, to make it through the next week, the next day, the next month, whatever. It is not a long-term subsistence, assistance coming from the counties, but it is, in fact, when you are desperate, down on your luck, and nowhere else to turn to, there is supposed to be the county there for you. This amendment says, uh-uh, that's gone, it's over, as far as anybody who has had any medical assistance, that be Medicaid or anybody that has been on the ADC program, and is no longer on it. That is too big a step to take and I think you take away that safety net. And, you know, I am not sure how this is all going to play out, but I think it is, in fact, a step beyond what all of us would believe would be a good one at this point. So I would hope that you would not adopt the amendment and realize this is a very major change in the role of the counties, far beyond what we have time to discuss perhaps at this point. Again, I oppose the Hall amendment.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Abboud.

SENATOR ABBOUD: Madam President and colleagues, I rise to support Senator Hall's amendment. I think it provides...it is a natural flow of the bill in that it provides that the...it assures that the individuals that are seeking to become a part of this program and sign the contract with the hopes of bettering themselves will not fall into a different type of