

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President and members, the issue being raised by Senator Hall is very appropriate. Obviously, it gets to the heart of the matter in terms of individuals having children who have low income, a difficult situation, and then having the need for assistance through the ADC program. If we can work with our...both, I think we should work with both young men and women to deal with this problem of pregnancy, and try to not have the situation where pregnant...unwanted pregnancies occur and, thus, the results and the consequences of that are moving on to ADC or even worse of having an abortion. So the family planning issue is a very important one. How do we address this problem before it is brought to us in the form of another child on ADC. So I do support the concept of what Senator Hall is talking about. The information for you is that the Health Department gets approximately a million dollars a year from the federal government. That money is distributed for health planning purposes across the state. If you are on ADC, you get family planning as part of your services on the program. So we are paying for this, but in some cases, it is after the fact, and in some cases, it is too late. Hopefully to head off further problems, obviously, but still they are already on ADC when they get this family planning. So, conceptually, this gets to where I think we need to be going and that's trying to have as few situations where people become pregnant that don't want to be pregnant as possible. I mean you should have the choice, and when you make that choice and proceed with the pregnancy, that should be the decision you make and we should be supportive of that. Bu: the problem with the situation that we have now is there are too many young teens out there, as young as...I mean, it is incredible how young some of these mothers are any more. And this problem is getting more acute, and, actually, what we are finding is they are getting younger in terms of having children, but the other thing is they are not getting married as they once were. The number of teen pregnancies as a percent is not particular exploding, as you might imagine. What is happening, though, is that they are younger and they don't end up getting married, and, thus, they are single and, thus, they turn to the ADC program for assistance. And, again, that is the point of this whole effort. How can we head that off? How do we stop these very, very young children, in my view, from having children. So I think that Senator Hall hits upon a key point. I am supportive of the concept. If we need to refine and focus it more, that is fine, but I think in concept it is heading us in the right direction on this particular point.