

longer be on the welfare program. I think this is a step in the direction and I ask that you oppose Senator Janssen's amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Fisher. Senator Pirsch, followed by Senators Vrtiska, Day, Bohlke, Witek, Matzke and Chambers.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Wow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Legislature. Again, we have a philosophical mind-set; which kind of mind-set do you have, that do we give women the ability to handle the cash, to learn how to handle the cash, which is meritorious, I think. But, unfortunately, that money that we say would go for food, Senator Chambers, that you referred to will definitely go for food with food stamps, and I don't know how in the world they could trace the cash in the state that Senator Fisher talked about because cash is not identifiable. My daughter worked in a grocery store, as she worked her way through college, and in a fairly middle income neighborhood, our neighborhood, and was amazed at the food stamps that came through that register, her register. And food stamps could pay for snack foods, candy, pop, ice cream, as well as what we would call the more staple foods, but it's amazing because these people seemed to have cash to pay for the beer and the cigarettes and the other items that food stamps wouldn't qualify. Now food stamps can be converted to cash or paid back in cash and change but another good feature about them is that they can be traced if they're stolen, and many times you have seen where food stamps are on the black market, food stamps are stolen. They can be traced. Cash cannot. And I guess if food stamps are so easily spent and given change in cash and converted to cash, why do we make it easier to give them cash which is easier to lose, easier to steal and certainly not...not able to trace, as far as I can see, with spending and to determine responsible spending with that cash. I know, Senator Witek, people have been talking about the electronic debit card, and I think that really is a good idea to consider. It won't be considered this year, as I understand, but may be superlative in that it also, as food stamps, can be easily identified, can be traceable and certainly could identify exactly what welfare is being spent on and where, indeed, that welfare should be spent on. So I support Senator Janssen's amendment. I think that food stamps have certainly not been that objectionable and certainly cash, I think, would be objectionable.