

expenditures by nearly \$4 million in our next biennial budget. That bill, LB 658, was amended by the Health Committee to include an increase in Medicaid coverage from 133 percent to 150 percent of the poverty level. Now let me tell you what that would include. That would include 300 women and children, that's estimated, and would cost a half a million dollars, a half a million dollars for 300, who is estimated to qualify for that increase from 133 to 150 percent of poverty. Now when we talk about welfare reform, we are talking about a whole variety of standards. We are talking about at this standard that the state proposes you get this. We are talking about child care, to avoid that cliff effect up to, I believe it is 185 percent, Senator Wesely may correct me on that. We are talking about going to the parents of the...the unmarried mother's/father's family, who only if they are making 300 percent of the federal poverty level. We have all kinds of poverty levels out there and we do that, of course, because we think those women who go back to work, who are going to complete their contract on welfare, that they need a little extra. They need a little extra in health care benefits. They need a little extra in child care benefits. So we have increased the percentage of what we call the need. Well, I am telling you that I had a bill that would eliminate the cash benefit for that last three months, and that is the way it came out of committee, and the committee amendments added this amendment to it because I felt that was a trade-off. Now, no, you didn't all agree to that, but I felt that was fair. With the amendment that was put on on General File, I don't think it is fair anymore, and, quite frankly, I am thinking about the working family, the mother, the father,...

SPEAKER WITHEM PRESIDING

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR PIRSCH: ...the children that I am concerned about are not asking the state for everything. They have to perhaps pay their hospital bill in installments. They have to get a second job if they are going to have prenatal care. I do think prenatal care is important, but I will tell you, we are now and will continue to give prenatal care and postnatal care to those what we have considered poverty women to 133 percent of what the federal considers poverty. And with those 300 women and children, it will be an increase of almost a half a million dollars. Now, if I had my druthers...