

And it was amended with a committee amendment which expanded the Medicaid prenatal care for a woman and a child. And quite frankly, I thought that was a good trade-off because, while I think cash is not a good thing to give to particularly the pregnant mother before the birth of the child, I do think that we want to keep all of the other aids in place for the health and nutrition of the mother, which is the medical care and also food stamps, housing, all of the other things that one is eligible for. As you will recall then it was amended so the cash payment was kept in for the last trimester. Now if we do nothing, if LB 658 does not pass, then there is a sunset clause on that last trimester of cash payment and we will go back again to paying from the very moment of confirmation of pregnancy which, as I will remind you, is very expensive. So I have come to you today with another proposal which I hope that you can accept. This leaves the Wesely amendment for the medical care up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level, so, indeed, all the prenatal, postnatal medical care is still there, but it would phase out that cash payment for the last three months. And if you look at the Journal, page 1979, it would remain, this last trimester, for a year and then it would go to the last two months, and then the third year be eliminated. I think with the things we're looking at when we talk about the things that a pregnant woman needs are being provided. The cash payments often can be used for things that are detrimental to the child as well as some of the things that we talked about that a...particularly a first child might need, like a crib. During these next three years, I predict that the welfare form of payment is going to change drastically and I think that we will be using debit cards, and in that case, those kinds of things will be given instead of the cash and be used for the kind of preparation that a woman who is expecting a child needs. With that, if there are any questions I would hope that you would accept this kind of compromise, that we phase in that particularly objectionable cash payment to...during that last trimester. I have passed out various things before that talked about other states. 18 states make no provision for assistance to pregnant women in way of cash. Most states, of course, do prepare women and children with medical, with housing, with all of the other benefits, but many are saying no to the cash. And I know in the House they have just passed on a bill in their welfare reform that would eliminate cash payments to the pregnant women 18 and under. And I could give you the familiar arguments. Who is responsible for those children. Where are the families? Where is the father? Is the government to be