

SENATOR WITEK: Madam Chair, members of the body, I rise in support of the Pirsch amendment. And I know we've had a long, pretty thorough discussion on this issue so I'm sure that everyone understands what Senator Pirsch is asking with this amendment, the phase-out of the \$71 a month. But I guess what I find most interesting about the discussion is that people keep referring to this as poor women who will have nothing if the government doesn't give them this money, or poor women who will be in much worse shape if the government doesn't give them this money; and what we're discussing here is money from the government when a woman gets pregnant. When I got pregnant I didn't receive any extra money from the government, and with my first pregnancy I would say we were probably (laugh) probably could have qualified for a lot of these programs, but we did not. We went ahead and we...and I say it again, we got things...help from the family, we watched our expenses. You know when Senator Chambers talks about these women it's always in terms of this woman is all alone by herself. There are other people within the communities, within her church, within her own family, possibly even, and I know this discussion has entered into it, and Senator Crosby pointed out rightly so that this is a lot of the discussions this year, the father, the biological father could maybe come up with a couple of dollars cash that he could give this woman to help her through some of the things that they do need to buy at that time. But, instead, we're willing, as the government, to step right in here and start giving out other people's money for individuals who...we're saying that they have to have it at this time of their pregnancy. I don't believe that's true. If I believed that was true I would support it, but I don't believe that's true. I believe that the whole idea that the government has to step in at this time and supply everything that individual needs is what is going wrong in this country today. We're...I just heard on the radio this morning how families are struggling, people are taking second jobs, they're struggling to pay not for luxuries anymore, struggling to pay for food, shelter, clothing. These are the basic necessities that families who are probably pretty close to that edge of...every time I hear when they talk about eligibility for these programs it kind of is amazing, and probably to families when they find out what the threshold is for some of these programs. They're very close to those programs. And yet we continue to take money from those families to give it to areas where we think people need this additional money, and this is one area where I don't agree with that. This