

the most important components not only of this amendment, but of the bill. The proposal addresses one of the biggest problems that is out there for individuals who find themselves in need of welfare and that is, how do I take care of my kids so that I can work? The argument is that somehow, or the belief is I guess, that folks who receive welfare don't want to work. That's not the case. It can be in some instances but it is not the case for the majority. The fact of the matter is they have so many obstacles to overcome that they don't have the ability to work and the chief obstacle they have to overcome is, how do I take care of my kids so that I can work? How do I find day care that allows me to go to work? With the reimbursement rate at the 75 percentile, it's adjusted every two years, you allow for those care providers to operate and you give them the ability, at least the willingness, to accept those kids. If you don't have a fair rate at which they're going to get reimbursement, there is no incentive, there's no desire, there won't be any willingness and there will be no providers who choose to accept these young kids which in turn puts us right back where we are with regard to the problem of taking care of kids so that folks can go to work. It's that simple. Now if it means that we have to spend an additional \$12 million, fine. It's a very easy, I think, argument to make with regard to, you know, what happens when the parent or parents go to work? I mean, don't they generate some kind of taxes that are paid to the state? Don't they generate income that flows to the sales tax base as well? Isn't there a trade off for purposes of the cost associated with the requirement that we pay at the 75 percentile level not only for the parents, but for the income that is derived from the care givers that works to, at a minimum, wash out for purposes of the cost associated with it. I would argue, and I can't because I don't have the numbers, but I think you could make a very good case to that effect, that it probably pays for itself. At a minimum what it does is it provides that these individuals have the ability to go to work to try to get back 100 percent into the work force to become totally productive and get away and off the welfare system.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: One minute.

SENATOR HALL: If we don't allow for this initial operation to take place, the whole key problem of what do I do with the kids so that I can go to work, you will never begin to solve this problem. You will never get away from that. And the key component if this is having child care providers out there who