

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. President Will you continue the house under call, please?

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Yeah, I'm going to stay because we're going to be getting to a vote.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the body, the amendment that I bring you today is one that I'm sure you could expect that I would have "broughten"...that I would have brought. I...it deals with the family cap. I've tried to remove the family cap on previous occasions. This particular amendment did not do that. It simply extends the family cap for two years, at that time you would have the opportunity to vote on it again. The...the amendment, I think, is one of a caring Legislature, approved by a caring Legislature. I think that too many times we get caught up in the rhetoric that's going across our country that says welfare is bad and that we need to put curbs and stops to it. And I agree in some cases we have made some errors there, but not with this. We haven't made any errors in providing for those unfortunates who are born in a situation they had no choosing. They were born there and they had nothing to do with that. And so we shouldn't penalize those babies, we shouldn't penalize really the mothers who have them. The...we know that what happens, I'd like to just ask you a question, for those of you who speak against this amendment, suppose that you have a young pregnant lady on welfare whose contraceptive measures have failed, what do you tell here then? She should not get money? She should go seek an abortion, is that what we're going to say? And that happens and you know that happens. I'd like remind you again about the fiscal impact. The family cap would not impact any cases until 1997, fiscal year '97. The cost for statewide coverage would be \$138,876 total, the first year, and that is broken down into \$55,000 of General Funds and 77...or 83,000 of federal dollars. And in the Omaha area that's approximately 163 cases in a year, and statewide it would be about 360...326 cases, I'm sorry. So I think that the amendment is one that shows compassion and it's one that provides for the opportunity to resist some of the rhetoric that we hear that isn't necessarily totally true, and it does provide us with the opportunity to support these individual infants who have the unfortunate experience of being brought into this world needing support or into a situation where the family is not able to provide that support and will cost so very little. I would appreciate your support of this amendment. Thank you. And I'd like to ask for a.... The house