

you remember when we discussed the waiver on food stamps, at that time, Senator Witek brought her preference to the floor as far as getting to an electronic benefit transfer system, or an EBT card. I said that in the end I think that Senator Janssen and myself and Senator Witek all agree that we would like to see the state go in that direction, realizing that it will take some time to do that. And I had stated at my very first meeting on the welfare task group that I had said that that was an idea that I would like to see go forward. And so I support this that the study will go forward and to look...to use that system throughout the state and I had indicated to Senator Witek I would give her a balance of my time on the opening and I appreciate the...I think the great deal of work and communication she has done in this area and really raised this issue on the floor. I give the balance of my time to Senator Witek.

SENATOR LINDSAY: Senator Witek.

SENATOR WITEK: We did do a lot of discussing on the cash-out program about electronic benefits transfer, and I appreciate Senator Bohlke incorporating this into this welfare amendment because I think it's extremely important that we get started on this...this program and this discussion in the State of Nebraska in government. We are one of only...if you look at the map from the handout that I passed out from NCSL, we are one of only 11 states that have not started planning or even some of these states they already have pilot programs going and in some they're already operating, so we are a little bit behind here. And I appreciate that we're beginning at least a discussion on electronic benefits transfers with those individuals that are named here in this portion of the amendment that have an interest in that and that's the retailers and the bankers and we've included members from the Governor's office, members from the Legislature and individuals who are receiving welfare benefits from the State of Nebraska. So I think we have a really good mix of people on this task force. I don't generally like putting together a task force but I think, in this case, it's a good first step because I think we will eventually get to putting together an electronic benefits transfer system here in the State of Nebraska that will eventually, in my...from what I can see happening at the federal level be part of the federal block grant programs. Many of those areas that you see in the NCSL brief here that they talk about, which are food stamps, the AFDC, SSI child support, WIC general assistance and unemployment