

February 12, 1996 LB 1044

the stranglehold on programs. We will now be able to provide the services to people with one set of rules and only one caseworker, not three or four sets of rules and up to three caseworkers, whose full caseloads amount to intellectual welfare. Our public has asked for this type of streamlining. They are tired of filling out forms in up to five different agencies. We will also make much wiser use of our employees' time by letting them look up records on the computer, rather than refiling forms. It will also allow us to make sure of one other thing that we haven't talked about, and that's double-billing which is very easy to do when you have a computer system like we do now. Over the last 20 years, there have been something like 50 studies done to try and reorganize this thing, but we have never, since J.J. Exon, kept it in administration for eight years, be it either side of the aisle, and that is how this thing has finally came about, is we've had people that have been on the job for five years and learned how to work together. So I think it's time to get it done. We've got to contain what's a 12 percent growth in spending on this particular part of our government, which is two-thirds of the state budget, which means that if we are going to stay at 12 percent without doing anything, we are going to have to take 6 percent off the rest of the budget, and no one can do that. Senator Jones and other people have asked questions about the number of caseworkers. There is really no way you can put a definite handle on the number of caseworkers or number of anything that goes up and down. There may be a possibility that you will actually have more caseworkers, but perhaps less in the number of accountants, less managers, and things like that. Senator Dierks has asked a question on the date of the January implementation. The reason for that January, and I told the Senator that, was the fact that that makes...the law provides that they have got to supply one budget as opposed to five. So, and the question on jobs, any jobs to be eliminated will be through attrition and retraining. So this thing all takes place in the '97 to '99 budget, which has to be submitted in January. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Klein. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Wesely, if I could address a couple of questions to you, again, to better understand how this would operate.