

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...with respect to our citizens who are least able to take care of themselves. It's the overall package, one thing or another may or may not be affordable depending on whether you have money for all of the expenses. Food may not be affordable. At what level is food affordable? When it is over 10 percent of your budget? When it is over 20 percent of your budget? All of these things are subjective, and the best we can do is start with what we can afford and help those people who need the help most. And if after that, the taxpayer wants to use government to transfer payments to those who are not nearly in so much of need of government payments, then we can choose to do that. But I think that the taxpayers would support starting out with what's rational and what's reasonable and what's doable...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Time.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...and not helping out those who really can afford to help themselves.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Senator Wesely would move to amend. (See FA479 found on page 1008 of the Legislative Journal.)

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Chair recognizes Senator Wesely to open on his amendment.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President, members, what I'm offering is, and we are trying to do this kind of quickly, but I would like to... Senator Beutler's amendment, basically, targets and defines low income as those at 150 percent of poverty, and then doesn't recognize very low income, low income distinction that I was talking about before that is typical in these programs. So what I'm offering is that his definition would be for very low income, that we would define low income as 80 percent of median income, which is what is the standard in other programs in housing, and then we'd add this language: For purposes of this act very low-income persons shall be given first priority for assistance. So the idea would be that we would, in fact, have a definition that I think is consistent and