

Wesely's amendment.

SPEAKER WITHEM: The amendment is adopted. The call is raised. Mr. Clerk, anything further to the committee amendments?

ASSISTANT CLERK: Nothing further.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Chambers, to address the committee amendments.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, as I look at these committee amendments all I see are expressions of wishes and what amounts to a smoke screen. I don't see anything in these amendments, the bill itself, or in that other bill, which is, I think it's 1044, this so-called merger bill, that will deal with the delivery of services to recipients. That has not been the basis of the discussion for the committee amendments or 1059 itself or LB 1044. All we're talking about are those things that relate to people who work in these agencies, people who preside over these agencies, and other bureaucratic elements. But the reason all of these programs exist is to help people who need the help. When I look at the committee amendment, and some of it goes over into the bill so maybe I can get into that aspect of it after the committee amendment is adopted, because I know that it will be, I see things that really don't hang together. I see what appear to me to be gaps. The bill takes effect July 1 of 1998, but the funding level that will mark what the state should feel obligated to meet but is not required to will be determined as of June 30, 1996. Senator Wesely said that if what I had asked about were to be done, then the counties might take advantage of that. What I had asked about being done is to say that the date that the takeover occurs is the date to determine the level of county spending. Well, Senator Wesely's comment went to the notion that the counties may take advantage of that and help the poor to a greater extent. And by helping the poor to a greater extent, the state would be required to help the poor to a greater extent. So in all of his sensitivity, my good friend Senator Wesely made a statement that is inconsistent with that feeling of sensitivity. He should join me in encouraging the counties to spend more on these programs because we know more should be spent. And if they will tighten the buckle, or whatever they have to do, I guess it's a belt, to get a little money, to spend a little bit more, that is good. Senator