

level by the private community, by the administration, by the agencies of the state working with the administration, to make a system much better than we had and, for the first time in all the years I've been involved...

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR LYNCH: ..with these kinds of programs, it looks like there's something we can see the end of the tunnel. With the pay equity responsibilities we assumed and with the blueprint responsibilities being addressed, hopefully all of those people will receive the kind of services they need. And, by the way, this is an institution cost that's very expensive. It could be just a ride back and forth to work, but whatever that service is, we can see now that we're finally maybe, hopefully, by the first of next year, at least in some time next year, going to be able to do that. So I would strongly oppose this effort or any other effort to try to change the pay equity issue or the blueprint issue.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Lynch. Senator Engel.

SENATOR ENGEL: Madam President, members of the body, I, too, oppose this amendment. We have made this commitment to finally get these people off the waiting list, the developmentally disabled people who cannot help themselves, and no matter what our intentions they're all for naught if we don't have qualified people on the front lines delivering these services and we can't get qualified people if we don't pay them an equitable wage. Therefore, without any further ado, I totally oppose Senator Avery's amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator...Senator Janssen.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Madam Lieutenant Governor and body. If Senator Wehrbein would answer a few questions for me...

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: I'll try.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Senator Wehrbein, was this the commitment that was made last year or part of it among the developmentally disabled people?