

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

May 13, 1999

LB 637

Senator Bohlke, you're recognized to speak on AM1775.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I didn't hear all of the opening remarks by Senator Brown. But there's certainly some things we agree upon. Certainly the welfare reform bill, that was passed in 1996, that I carried for the Governor, certainly depended on the success, and Senator Brown is correct, on child support and the collection of that money; that is essential for the success of the program, so we agree with that. We also agree, I think, that all of us certainly don't want to pass anything that's meaningless. I don't think that was ever the attempt by any of us. We were saying, as we ended the last time on the floor in frustration, what would be the possibility of a waiver? Senator Brown has pointed out the states who have not yet enacted anything. There are a number of them, or three of them that she said, California, Indiana and Nebraska. I should point out that Nevada was just given a waiver, so...and South Carolina had a waiver. So it was not without some recognition that it would be difficult, but it was not in an attempt to do something that had no meaning when we talked about the possibility of getting a waiver. I think all of us agree the path would be much easier if we could come together on an agreement here, enact something that we all agreed upon rather than asking for that waiver. What we have to be reminded of is the fact that, even if we would pass LB 637 as it is right now, we would be receiving a letter saying that we are not in compliance, and have next...following next October, and by January have 90 days to come into compliance. So no matter what we do, that...that will be an issue that we will have to deal with. I think Senator Brown has worked hard and said that she had some indication that perhaps they would not deliver that letter, if we were able to pass something that they thought was significant and show that Nebraska is well on their way to putting something in place that would conform. So I think all of us agree with that end goal. However, LB 637, Senator Brown said, is the compromise. And I would suggest to you that LB 637, as yet, is not the compromise. (Laugh) There is a great deal of discussion going on. There are other amendments to be filed. And I think, in the end, we will be able to get to a compromise. But at this point there is certainly no compromise. And there have been ongoing discussions, not only with Senator Kerrey, but also with Senator