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SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Those wishing to speak on the Beutler amendment are Senators Wickersham, Jensen, Engel, Chambers, Wehrbein, and Senator Crosby. Senator Wickersham, on the Beutler amendment.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Mr. President, I'm...I'm concerned about the implications of the Beutler amendment, but maybe not for reasons that would be readily apparent. It appears to me that we are beginning to create the impression that this is a fully legislatively managed program. We're converting...it seems to me that the path that we're starting to take is converting a program, in which there was some administrative decision making possible for purposes of flexibility and probably other good reasons, to one that will be very tightly managed by statute. I'm not sure that that's the way we should go but maybe given the history of this program in recent years, maybe that is something we need to consider, but for that...but, for me, I think that's the turning point. I...ever since this issue began surfacing, I have wondered what in...what was going on, why was this a problem. As it was originally described to me, the problem, quote problem, and the problem is money, not whether we have done anything good but it seems that the problem is money. Senator Jensen handed out some graphs and they made me start thinking about this all over again, and if you still have those graphs look at December of 1998, on the first page, where it says child care expenditures. Child care expenditures began growing in June of 1998 and hit a fairly significant level in December of 1998. Now, do you all remember where you were in December of 1998? You were home. You were preparing for the next session of the Legislature. You thought somebody was preparing a budget, didn't you? You thought somebody was preparing a budget that would meet the needs of the agencies in the state of Nebraska. Do you remember hearing anything about this issue in the last budget discussion? Do you think anybody knew the last time we talked about the budget that there were substantial cost overruns in this program? Do you think if they