

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

March 15, 2000 LB 1407

spoken to. At first, I was confused when she said she wasn't supporting the committee amendments and then I was thinking, that's right, that the...it's the...it's the committee amendment that changed the original intent. As you read through the amendments that then follow by Senator Beutler and Senator Jensen, I believe that some of the issues that we're concerned about they begin to address and certainly make it a better...a better committee amendment. However, the question I have is that we're going to go ahead and place this in statute before we've had the study to try and determine what has caused the increase in the cost. We are assuming or guessing at some of the reasons that we've had this skyrocketing cost and everyone is concerned about it, but I would...I would guess that an increase in the wages may have a significant implication for why costs have gone up. When we are now having more child care providers accredited, those...those wages are higher. One could argue that probably the child care, the quality of child care is better, but that that may come with increased costs. But that's an assumption I'm making that I don't know. And so I think we've got this in the wrong order and sometimes, Senator Jensen, as you begin to discuss this with the committee amendment, it seems to me until we know some of the facts that are driving up the costs rather than the assumptions that we're now making we wouldn't want to put something in statute. And so those...certainly I think, Senator Beutler, the amendments that you have filed make great improvement to it. I believe Senator Jensen has one that I've read that improves the committee amendment and I know that they'll be talking about some of the flexibility, I believe, that that then brings to the bill. But we then come back in the end to have...I think making it much better, but the central question is we're putting something in statute, taking away the flexibility because we're concerned about the cost, but we're doing that before we know what has increased the cost. I haven't heard anyone say here are the facts as to why we know that this cost has skyrocketed. And I'm sure the Appropriations Committee struggled with it. As Senator Wehrbein said, that's...it's a terrible amount of money. I mean, we should be concerned, but I don't know if we react in state statute before we know the facts. And so I would ask Senator Jensen or Senator Wehrbein, either one, if...and maybe, Senator Wehrbein, if you would respond.