

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

April 3, 2000

LB 925

state of Nebraska about \$1.5 million a year. It will provide an option to single parents to stay home with their newborn child on AFDC one year after birth as opposed to requiring the parent to go back to work and send their children to child care. The parent will still be required to participate in family nurturing classes, preemployment skills and education. It still requires a full participation and a self-sufficiency contract. It will not, I repeat, not extend benefits to any person that does not collect these benefits already. It will not increase the amount of per month assistance provided by the state of Nebraska to any person on assistance. It will not make it easier for any person to collect ADC payments. It will not extend the time period that the woman has to collect these payments. Right now it's three years. It does not extend that three year time period. It doesn't extend, doesn't increase her benefits. Simply what it does, it empowers the woman to make the decision and have the choice to stay with her newborn child up to 12 months rather than 12 weeks. And it saves the state of Nebraska a million and a half dollars. I gave you a yellow handout which was produced by the Nebraska Applesed Center which demonstrates where that savings comes from. Since we have to pick up the child care expense, the chil...the expense to this family is much more than if we allow the woman the option simply to care for her child; \$4,368. We have a strange situation. We've passed a landmark welfare legislation, but as you can see by our third handout, the graph, our child care expenditures last June exceeded that ADC expenditures in the state of Nebraska. We're now spending more money on child care than the ADC payments. I was not in the body during the welfare reform debate, but part of the message that I received, as a regular citizen on the street, was that if we were to do this, we would save money. We are not saving money. There were those who opposed welfare reform at the time because they felt it was antifamily. I believe my predecessor made several points to that effect and was...so here's an opportunity to not scrap welfare reform, to hold all the education, all the self-sufficiency contracts in place, but allow the woman the choice to stay at home if she wants to up to 12 months while taking those parenting classes and so forth. It saves the state a million and a half dollars. The only opposition...as I said, it got out of Health and Human Services Committee under the great leadership of our Chairman, Senator Jensen, 6 to 0, without a single dissenting vote. They thought