

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

April 4, 2005

LB 709

the nineties. In the early part of the nineties, if you had some assets and if you went to a planner, typically it was that, I need to plan for my long-term care. Should I ever go in a nursing home, I want to set dollars aside. That was done first, and then you started looking at what it's going to cost you to live until that appointed time, how many dollars that you would like to give to your heirs, your kids, or whoever that might be, how much you'd like to leave to your church, whatever that might be. That was in the early nineties. By the late nineties, it was, Medicaid will take care of me; I don't have to take care of myself. Matter of fact, what I really need to do is I need to become poor on purpose, poor so that I can qualify for Medicaid. And so we saw, rather than planning ahead for it, it was to get rid of everything so I don't have anything so Medicaid will take care of me. And you look at the chart, you look at this chart, and just see what happened from the early nineties until 2000. Tremendous growth, 2002. That is where, I think, a great deal of the cost is coming from. And if we can get people just to plan ahead, just to do a little setting aside of dollars, I think that would be one of the greatest things that we could do. Now, that's a culture change, which is one of the hardest things to do. But I think it can be done. I didn't get through my list of ten. But one of them was also--and we hear this in our Health Committee all the time, that I would really like to see a change--and that's those individuals who are on Medicaid, who would like to work a few more hours, but if they do, they get cut off their Medicaid, and so they are faced with, do I want healthcare or do I want to work? Well, I can't afford to work. And that just seems backward to me. That if we can allow those citizens...and in many times, it would be one of the better things that they could do for their own health, is to work more. And boy, I would never, ever stop anybody from working. But we're doing that in our society today. We have another issue that's coming up. Last year, we passed a prescription drug bill in the federal government, Medicaid Part D. Do you know how many employees that HHS will hire in order to provide for Medicaid Part D? Sixty employees. Sixty employees. Now, I've heard some of you say that HHS is a huge bureaucracy, it's a behemoth. Well, it's growing more, because of what the federal government put down upon us. Now, there are claw-back provisions, as they're referred to, that we're going to be able