

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

May 11, 2005

LB 425

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I'd like to address Senator Stuthman's concerns. And he didn't get a chance to finish asking me his question, but as I understand it, he's concerned about the problem of meth, as we all are. And as clarification, meth is really not the problem with a pregnant mother on the Native reservation; it's, quite frankly, beer. Beer is cheaper. Beer is available. Beer is legal to buy. You can go purchase beer, you can purchase as much beer as you want to. The culture doesn't restrict that, doesn't restrict the consumption. So it really isn't the meth issue with this particular group of individuals; it's the consumption of beer, straight up. I appreciate Senator Foley's concern. I appreciate his program, frankly. This program is focused on the needs of the pregnant mother. It's focused on helping her to have a healthy baby. To me, that seems ideal to look at the Native American population and offer this program to make the priority available to the group with the highest need. I look at that and I think this makes the most sense. I think in anything in life you look at where is the need. We have a limited amount of dollars. I've heard that since the day I was sworn in and I knew that before I came here. Look at the need. When one in three babies born to a Native American...a Native American parent, a Native American mother, with fetal alcohol syndrome, an uncorrectable condition, a lifelong condition, that will in fact cost each and every one of us for care and treatment of that child, that's where the greatest need is. And I offer the remainder of my time to Senator Chambers, if he would like it. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Chambers, did you wish to use the remainder of Senator Howard's time?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Howard. Thank you, Mr. President. My comments today are not meant to disparage any proposal that somebody else has on the table. That is not necessary and that has been done. My position is clear on that. Now we have something before us which can stand on its own merits and it does not have to be compared to something else by way of making the other thing appear negative. This is such a positive approach and it will be possible to determine how this money was used and what benefits accrued from it. It would be