

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

May 11, 2005

LB 425

SENATOR BEUTLER: I think I've confused you, and I think I only have about ten seconds left, so I think I'll pick this up later.

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Foley.

SENATOR FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. President. Let me pick up on a couple of things that I've heard other senators say on the microphone. Let me start with a comment from Senator Beutler when he was asking Senator Howard a question. He said, for the sake of discussion, let's suppose that 3 percent of the women in Nebraska live on...are Native Americans, I think is the way he phrased it. I might not get it right...quite right, but he said 3 percent, and that's not the case. I'm looking at statistics that I mentioned earlier from the U.S. Census Bureau. I presume they're ballpark accurate, maybe not pinpoint there, but they've got to be pretty darn close. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, .9 percent of all Nebraskans are Native Americans. That's what they say. And if we can leap to the conclusion that about half of those are women, we're now down to .5 percent of the entire population of the state, .5 percent. And of those, I think it's fair to say that a majority probably are not pregnant, so we're down further. And of those who are pregnant, many of those do not have fetal alcohol...are not alcohol abusers. Gets me back to where we started before. We are radically, under the Howard amendment, we are radically narrowing the nature of this program, and that's why I'm so strongly opposed to it. I want this program to be available to every women in Nebraska who has the needs that we're trying to address here, not just a small sliver of the population. Senator Jensen spoke earlier and was mentioned, I think in response to a question, he said there's \$500,000 now going to the reservations for healthcare needs, and we really don't know what they're doing with it. We have some general ideas of what they may be doing with it, but we don't know, to the level we should know, how that money is being spent. Maybe that's where we need to focus some time, is looking at that program, those dollars that are flowing there currently and trying to get those