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LB 994

since it was passed and I think it is time to look at that. That will conclude my opening on AM2157 and would just ask for its adoption. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Jensen. (Visitors introduced.) Mr. Clerk, we have an amendment to the amendment.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Howard would move to amend Senator Jensen's amendment with AM2458. (Legislative Journal page 874.)

SENATOR JANSSEN: Senator Howard, to open on your amendment.

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the body. We've just heard from Senator Jensen what we have to do and why we have to do it. The question now is, how do we do it? This is an amendment to offer support to the front-line employees who will be responsible for doing work required to ensure that Health and Human Services can meet the new federal guidelines for TANF. As I understand it, in addition to eliminating the federal TANF bonus to states as a component of the Deficit Reduction Act, the new federal guidelines will require that Nebraska demonstrate that 50 percent of TANF recipients are participating in work activities by October 1 of this year. The current requirement is 35 percent and we have met that amount. But as you know, the further you reach into the pool of TANF recipients, the more challenges these individuals have to overcome in order for them to become employable. This federal change will mean that approximately 1,700 more families will need to participate annually in order to meet the requirements. These requirements will put additional stress on the already burdened work force of income maintenance workers. According to Health and Human Services workers, they are currently maintaining caseloads of minimum of 120 families. That's each worker. They are responsible for employment activity placement, and if the families require childcare, they are responsible for coordinating those services to support the working participant. Staff have commented that they already have difficult time following up with clients in a timely manner, if at all. They believe the stress of these workloads is just not fair to the individuals moving or