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April 3, 2006

LB 1248

SENATOR JENSEN: That's true.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay. Lincoln was asked, Abraham...well, my time is just about up. Mr. President, is that true?

SENATOR BAKER: Time is up.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Byars.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. President, and I'll make a brief statement, then I'll yield my time to Senator Chambers and Senator Jensen so they can continue a dialogue which I think is very necessary. I think the work of the Medicaid committee, they spent many long hours and did a lot of deliberation. Certainly some of the findings that they brought back, as Senator Pederson presented to the committee, weren't exactly as they had intended, and he certainly was very, very, very insistent on the fact that we have legislative oversight on whatever changes are made. I know there are amendments forthcoming that deal with that, and I am also very supportive, as I was when this bill was introduced, that this is not a carte blanche to the department, whoever they may be, present, past, future administrations. This Legislature needs to be the body that makes ultimate decisions on what happens to people that have needs, and to their lives. And I don't think we want to lose sight of the fact that we constantly say that the cost of Medicaid is out of control, and certainly every one of us knows the double-digit increases in many years past. But let's understand, this is part of a healthcare issue. The cost of healthcare itself is rising faster, by a much larger percentage, than the cost of Medicaid. Let's not try to pin all of our hopes of reforming the healthcare system on the backs of the poor, the disabled, and the elderly. Let's understand that this is a bigger problem, a much bigger problem than that. The work that the committee has done, the work the Health Committee has done, the work that Senator Jensen and his staff have done is very noble, but let's all listen. Let's all work together to see if there are ways that we can make this amendment better. I