

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, members. The committee amendment takes LB, I believe, 834, which was a bill heard before the committee dealing with raising coverage of prenatal care for low income women. Currently it's covered up to 133 percent of poverty. There's an option, under the Medicaid program, to go at 185 percent of poverty. Thirty-four states have a higher percent using that option, all the way up to 185 percent, in fact some states have gone to 200 plus percent in terms of what they cover for the prenatal care and cost of delivering the baby. What this amendment does is it doesn't take all of that bill. All it does is raise from 133 percent to 150 percent of poverty what we cover under the Medicaid program for prenatal care. This is less than I'd like, less than I would hope for, but it does utilize some of the money freed up by the main provisions of the bill, which cuts off cash assistance to those who have ADC cash payments to those who have an unborn child, and turns around and puts that money into prenatal care, which is a very, I think, beneficial move to make. And I'd ask for your adoption of the committee amendments and be ready to answer any questions.

SPEAKER WITH THEM PRESIDING

SPEAKER WITH THEM: Thank you, Senator Wesely. For discussion on the committee amendments, Senator Witek, followed by Senator Beutler. Excuse me, Senator Witek, followed by Senator Pirsch, followed by Senator Beutler.

SENATOR WITEK: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I will not be voting for the committee amendments because I would like to vote for LB 658 in its original form. This decision was made by the Legislature, as I understand, several years ago in a special session to stop this funding when there was a cash crunch. And I understand that Senator Wesely's concern for providing this medical care, but I have not heard that there has been any...any problem with doing without for the last two or three years I think that this has been in effect. And I just think that I don't agree with the concept that we have to provide monies to women who are pregnant for extras during their pregnancy. I get letters all the time from people who tell me that we have to cut government spending, and telling me how when they were raising their children or growing up themselves how they made do with less, how they...how they cut corners, and if they didn't have the money they didn't spend it, and all of these measures that, you know, people didn't have, starter jackets and name brand