

burden away from the state to the counties, and I don't believe that is the case. I think that clearly, although I recognize the issues that Senator Wesely raises in his argument that the county has traditionally been there as the last bastion of hope, if you will, for the poor, the question still remains for purposes of the standards that we are setting out with regard to welfare, that those standards, if they are good enough for the state for purposes of eligibility requirements, then they ought to hold true as it relates to the county and public assistance in that environment. I don't believe it is the wish of this body to, basically, push the expense onto the property taxpayers at the county level. I don't think that's the intent at all. And, clearly, if you read the amendment and take a look at what it says, it says that the person has to become ineligible, or that through their own action or inaction, or they have had their benefit period terminated, so it clearly is an issue that says, look, you have to work through the system that has been established at the state...by the state. If you have, fine, there is not a problem. I don't believe that it removes any liability on the part of the county because there are going to be individuals who, as Senator Wesely put it, fall through the cracks. Well, the problem is is that, in many of these policy decisions we are making, the cracks are getting very big, and I think that's one of the reason for the need for this amendment is that it very likely could be a situation where the burden does fall to the counties, and to the tax...property taxpayers at that level. In terms of the question that was raised with regard to the medical assistance, Senator Schimek, I responded, and I see that you have stepped off the floor, but I responded that at the county hospital, for example, that surgery might be performed. I was sent in a note and it is written in hieroglyphics, I can barely make it out, but it says that a county hospital doesn't do surgery anymore. It has, basically, become a residential facility, a nursing home facility, and that that care would be provided at a clinic. And so just for the record so that's clear, but many county hospitals function in the other counties in the state as an operating hospital. They provide complete services and, in fact, we have given waivers to counties for purposes of their mill levy specifically because they have exceeded that 50 cent limit. We've exempted out those hospitals so that they could be...could continue to operate and that would not be a burden on the county to, basically, have to close their hospital because of the services that are provided there. With that, again, I rise to support the amendment and say that for purposes of general assistance, for the medical