

sure, Senator Hoagland, perhaps you or Senator...excuse me, Senator Johnson, perhaps you could address this, but my concern is that we are going to implement the standard of need. We don't know exactly what those figures are going to be, and I think that perhaps it would be better to establish the standards of needs, do the studies, but not let them affect our operation for a year or two. Now would you object to my amendment which follows this one that would say that the standard of need will be for informational purposes only, at least until such time as we have a chance to review them and review their effects on the fiscal impact on the state and their effects on the operation of our welfare programs?

SENATOR JOHNSON: Well, I do have...yes, I do, Senator Cullan. That's one reason why I wanted to deal with it in my amendment, is because in a properly administered welfare program there oftentimes is and oftentimes should be a significant difference between what the standard of need is, and all the standard of need represents is the amount of dollars that this state through its legislative body and through its welfare department says folks need to live on to meet minimal subsistence. There oftentimes is a difference between that amount and the actual payment amount. In fact, in our ADC program right now we have a statutory maximum of \$250 for one individual and a child, \$310 for two individuals and a child...for one individual and two children, and right up the line by \$60 per month. That's the maximum payment. Now it may well be that under LB 35 the standard of need would be higher than that amount. If the standard of need is only informational, if it's only for informational purposes, then the higher standard of need does not have the kind of salutary effect that I'm going to describe later on on the working poor. It doesn't result in the working poor having any further incentive to work, and that's the reason I don't want the standard of need to be used solely for informational purposes. It is to be a working tool with the Nebraska Department of Public Welfare as it presently is. All I have done in my amendment though is to make certain that if we do have a higher standard of need that we have grant levels that that higher standard of need cannot unwittingly cause cost overruns. It cannot unwittingly cause deficiency appropriations so that there is flexibility with the Department of Public Welfare to readjust the standard of need as the case may be to take care of the total number of dollars that we do appropriate for the grant in aid program, and that's why it is important that the standard of need be a working tool and not just an informational tool,