

SENATOR JOHNSON: All right, thank you. Oh thank you I'm very pleased that the amendment is being passed out. I was beginning to wonder how I was going to explain the amendment to the body when last year's Journals were probably not available. LB 35 is the only piece of legislation that I am aware of that deals with welfare issues in this legislative session. What the bill itself deals with, what it is concerned with is very simply an item called the "Standard of Need". The standard of need is the yardstick used by the Nebraska Department of Public Welfare to measure neediness to determine whether or not people are eligible for welfare benefits. It basically says if one has an income of below such and such a level one is a poor person and is eligible for benefits. Now the standard of need in Nebraska has not been examined by the Welfare Department for a long, long, time and when it has been examined it has always been examined in a highly political context. So, I sat down and I wrote LB 35 essentially from scratch. I said I thought that it was about time that we the Legislature establish what items ought to be considered in determining who was a poor person and who was not a poor person. So, I set down some standard for food and I set down a standard for shelter and I set down a standard for clothing and transportation and the like, and they are very modest standards. I said you know we are the boss we will say that those items have got to be examined by a welfare department in determining what the standard of need is. Then the bill says simply that the welfare department has to ascertain what the real cost is of obtaining those items. Once that is done the welfare department will fashion the appropriate standards of need. So, LB 35 represents, in my opinion as a lawyer and as a teacher of administrative law, a kind of responsible balance between the legislature on the one hand setting down the basic guidelines and the administrative agency on the other hand flushing out those guidelines, using its expertise and its knowledge and its know how. We are the boss we say what should be included in the standard of need and the welfare department, they are the experts and they price it out.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Johnson, I apologize for interrupting you but you are explaining your bill. There is a motion to recommit your bill to the Public Health Committee. So with this in mind do you want to proceed to explain the bill? Briefly.

SENATOR JOHNSON: That motion will be taken up before my amendment, is that not correct, or am I wrong? I really have to do an amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Yes, the motion takes precedence over....