

It is not my intention that it be that. It is very difficult to interpret it to be that, in fact, it is downright impossible to interpret it to be that. What the bill is, very simply, is a legislative articulation of basic necessities that the Welfare Department is to cost out and the Welfare Department is to look at different groups of people, elderly people, children, families, disabled people, foster care children and the like and to then develop standards of need, not of income but of need, based on the costing out of these basic necessities. The Welfare Department is to report back. We, in this Legislature, if we decide to approve of a recommended standard of need, must act before it ever goes into place. If we don't act then the Welfare Department will continue to operate just as it always has in the past. If we do act, then we in this Legislature are fully and totally in control of the welfare function. There has been a lot of conversation about poor people and jobs. I have passed out, it is uninitialed, I have passed out a study by...some excerpts from a study by Leonard Goodwin for the Brookings Institution on the poor and work. In our society we have had an easy time in a sense in saying that poor people do not want to work. The truth of the matter is is that poor people do want to work but some poor people, because of educational deficiencies, because of cultural differences, because of skin color differences, do not have an easy time finding work and when they do find work the work itself is menial work and in this state when they do find work and they receive public assistance, they will discover that their public assistance dollars are reduced not quite dollar for dollar but about they are reduced for every three dollars worth of work income, about two of the public assistance dollars go. So in effect, we have a tremendous work disincentive built into our programs. The reason that we have such work disincentives is because we have kept our standards of need at unrealistically low levels. Now in the chart that is attached to my letter to you which I sent out a couple of days ago you will see that effect in operation right now. This bill, when passed, when the studies are completed, will then give us the tools to develop a Welfare Program that will not provide work disincentives but instead will encourage work and at the same time begin to meet some basic needs but do not be mistaken. This is not a guaranteed income bill nor anything even close to a guaranteed income bill. I would appreciate your support. It is a very sound piece of legislation. We ought to adopt it. I think frankly, we enhance government in this state by adopting this bill.

PRESIDENT: The question is, shall LB 35 be advanced to E & R initial. All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. Have you all voted? Four excused, Senator Johnson.