

April 1, 1980

LB 789

a medical expense, that figure ought not to be used in determining whether this state truly pays enough money to at least bring people above the poverty guidelines. Furthermore, the poverty guideline itself is a very poor measure for us to use. Without question, that figure was put in LB 596 last year because that started as a good beginning point. But that is a terribly poor end point.

SPEAKER MARVEL: One minute.

SENATOR JOHNSON: A federal study on funding children and families indicated that the base point in this country ought to be fifty percent of the median annual income for families. It further indicated that at no time should state payments fall below the poverty guideline. At no time shall we put our children in the kind of emotional and social and economic risk that can occur when their income in that household is below the poverty guideline. At no time should that happen. We should try to put families and children at least at fifty percent of the median, and I can guarantee you that 789 as presently drafted doesn't even begin to do that. And, of course, with the Warner amendments it would fall far short of the mark. I urge this body to reject the Warner amendment.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Goodrich.

SENATOR GOODRICH: Hello. Hello. Mr. President and members of the body, I, too, rise in opposition to Senator Warner's amendment. There is no one in this Legislature that is more conservative in this area than I am. We have proven that over the last three or four years. I would like to remind you, though, of two things. Number one, when Senator Chambers and I introduced this bill in the first place we picked the very conservative approach. Senator Johnson has already outlined what we should have done as far...if we would have been trying to keep up...let these people keep up with the Consumer Price Index as far as their purchases are concerned. We should have come in higher and let the Legislature negotiate down. However, when Senator Chambers and I agreed to introduce this bill together, we did on the fact that we were taking a conservative approach to this thing and we were only going to meet the very minimum needs that we had to meet in order to keep these people going, these children that we are talking about. I'd like to also remind you of the fact that for every 43 cents that is put into this particular program by the state and county, 57 cents comes from