

family member had to be paid for and cared for by the family themselves. And so this program wanted to encourage families to stay together and so for a very nominal amount of money, the maximum amount of money is \$300 per month, this program assisted those families to care for the disabled person in their home rather than placing them in an institution. So it is a pro-family bill. It is a pro-work bill and it has been cost effective. The original bill called for a \$500,000 maximum amount of money being spent on it. This has only has \$100,000 spent on it and been able to serve many, many people in the state and the thought is that perhaps up to \$200,000 might be spent on the program. So it is far less of a costly program than we thought and because of the way we approach it, it actually does provide some real incentives to save money by not placing people in costly institutions and instead caring for them in their own home. I do have a handout that is available to you on LB 87. It shows that there have been 202 applicants on the program this first year. One thing that has happened that has been kind of interesting, not all 202 people have been helped by the program. Many of them though have been referred to other existing programs and have been provided assistance through those programs. It is sort of a safety net concept. That is what it was all along. We have lots of different programs out there for the disabled, but when these people work through the system sometimes they fall through the cracks and yet they do deserve some assistance and this program is there to help them and to direct them over to other existing programs first and help them find that assistance they need elsewhere before they ever come to this program and receive anything. And because of that, lots of people have been saved and served and helped by this program, first off by referral and then second off by actual direct assistance in a cost effective manner. So that is LB 87. It came out of committee, I believe, unanimously and has a great deal of support across the state. I appreciate very much your support for advancement to Select File.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, Senator Wesely has done an excellent job of explaining the bill and the program. I would like to commend the Senator because of his deep interest in this project and his follow-up on it. He has really brought the thing, I believe, to a major part of its potential. I think