

member insurance companies may be assessed for the pool losses. And finally the bill says, those assessments against the member insurance companies may be totally and absolutely deducted from the insurance companies' premium taxes and that is what my amendment deals with, the premium taxes. Because what it means in the end is that if there are assessments to insurance companies by virtue of the operation of the health insurance pool, the taxpayers pay, because those assessments against those insurance companies become direct deductions against the premium taxes. Now I don't have any real problem with taxpayers picking up some of the costs for people who have high risk medical conditions because I think that in many respects those issues are social issues and not just individual issues, but by the same token I think that for the taxpayers to pick up the full costs when I have insurance companies out here who by virtue of having a high risk insurance pool are able in a sense to shunt their high risk policies or applicants off to the pool and continue the profitability in the nonrisk area or the nonhigh risk area, I think they ought to share in the cost. So I simply have provided by an amendment that 50 percent of the assessments against the member insurance companies may be deducted from the premium tax with the remaining 50 percent, obviously, to be absorbed by the insurance companies in their own profits or their own mutual shares or even their own premiums to the other insureds. I'm just simply saying that the taxpayers shouldn't pick up the full freight for whatever losses the high risk insurance pool sustains. We ought to pick up 50 percent of the freight, but not the full freight and the insurance industry ought to pick up the rest of it. In the end, this issue of people with high risk medical conditions, it's an issue that is important to the insurance companies, it's important to the state and it's important to the people. I think the cost ought to be shared and the way to share the cost is to not have the full assessment to be deductible from the premium tax, but to have part of the assessment or 50 percent thereof and that's what my amendment would do.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: First off, Mr. President and members, this is the first time I've heard of Senator Johnson's concern and I don't particularly appreciate springing amendments at this point. We worked on this bill through the committee on the way through the different process, Senator Johnson. The