

help us solve this problem. I would appreciate your serious consideration of Senator Johnson's bill and your support.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Wesely, please.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, it's a privilege to be co-sponsor of the bill with Senator Johnson. He and I worked on the issue two years ago with LB 112 and have continued to be interested in the issue since. That bill was advanced by this Legislature, passed by this Legislature and ultimately vetoed by the Governor and unfortunately I don't recall if we even had a chance to override or not, but this Legislature has spoken on this same issue before and said, yes, we do support this program and have passed previously legislation very similar to this. I think we've done that because we've recognized that it's very important to take care of these people now because eventually if we don't, we will take care of them later at a much higher cost. It is as simple as that. These individuals, if we care for them as inexpensively as this bill calls for today with their pregnancies, we can prevent the sort of high cost results of lack of care during their pregnancy that might result with children born with different crippling diseases or ailments that will ultimately force their parents to be destitute and come to the state to help them at that point and the cost to us then will be much greater than what we're even contemplating at this point. Now these individuals that we're talking about are the, more or less the near poor. The very poor now qualify for Medicaid and ADC payments and this same Legislature, as Senator Labeledz and I were just talking about, several years ago when we talk about the bad economy today, I think it was probably even worse back then and we were in a budget cutting session and we decided during that special session that the federal government which had changed their program to care for the poor that were pregnant in their ADC coverage, instead of caring for them from the moment they were discovered to be pregnant which would usually be about two or three months of pregnancy, they changed their system and said we won't start until they're six months pregnant to care for their basic needs through ADC and we said in this Legislature that is wrong, that those people at the moment they are found to be pregnant have got to be cared for especially at that point when they are two, three, four and five months pregnant. That's a very critical stage and we said it's important for