

our state to step in where the federal government had erred in stepping out and that we would pick up the cost ourselves to care for those pregnant women on ADC between the point at which they are discovered to be pregnant and the six-month level at which the federal government comes in and takes over. It's that important that we recognize the pregnancy and the need of these poor people and these near poor people to care for their needs or else, if we don't take that step and provide that assistance, it will only cost us more in the long run. We said it then, we said it with the passage of LB 112 last year and we're going to hopefully say it again with the passage of this bill, LB 201, because we've recognized in this Legislature the need to help those people. So as I am saying, this is probably more geared toward the near poor, the low income that aren't quite yet covered by the ADC Medicaid payments, that have the special needs, that have the high-risk potential, that don't qualify for another program. The bill as amended by the committee says if they can qualify for another program, if there is another available resource that we send them there first because it's already there and care for them in that manner. But if they can't get other assistance, if their needs are not met, then we shouldn't turn our back on those people. We shouldn't say, I'm sorry, but you don't qualify and you have a problem, yes, we understand that but you're just going to get by and then find that those individuals are not cared for. Now what is going to be an end result? Well, one is that they may go ahead anyway with the pregnancy and give birth to a child that may end up with some disability and then we'll really know what it costs to take care of a child with a disability, or that person may decide, look, I can't afford this, I've really got a high-risk pregnancy here, I'm going to have an abortion and it's something that they are going to think about. And I say that that's not a reasonable thing to do. We ought to stretch out our hand and help those people and not force them into that sort of awful decision to have an abortion...

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...just because they don't have the resources to take care of themselves and face a high-risk pregnancy situation. And we've said that with ADC because again the poor women with child that are facing a situation where they don't know that they can financially make ends meet might choose the alternative of abortion over having