

not going to cover the actual additional cost of this coverage, that in fact, it's at least 2-1 and perhaps more than 2-1 over the premiums paid in will be the actual cost of covering this age group. On the other hand there is a significant problem. I passed a comprehensive health insurance pool bill. You all helped me with that. We cover people that don't have insurance otherwise and we need to take care of these individuals. There is a bill, LB 276, Senator Labeledz and Senator Pappas, I believe, have that is on General File and it includes this issue as well as some others. I would suggest the better course of action at this time is to deal with this issue in the context of LB 276, not on Senator Pappas's bill, to have the full facts and figures in terms of the actual cost to the state and do not proceed with the Morehead amendment at this time. Although it is worthy in terms of goals, I would ask your rejection of it at this time based on the fact that Senator Pappas has a bill that is much smaller in scope and another bill exists that will be coming up soon that will address this matter in a more satisfactory fashion. So I ask your rejection of the Morehead amendment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Morehead, then Senator Labeledz.

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Well, contrary to what Senator Wesely said, Mr. President and members of the body, I ask for your acceptance of this amendment. I believe that we have indeed an obligation to these employees. I'm afraid that this is an opportunity that, if we pass it by, we will not address it this session. Senator Pappas is saying that I am going to impact his bill highly and he is going to follow, if those of you who vote with me, as I hope you all will, has an amendment which will put his bill right back into his original form which he can do with amendment and address the subject. Now I do think we do have an obligation to these people and I think it's a crime that Nebraska is the only state, the only state, that does not give this option to their employees. If you require these employees to stay on your payroll, be even when they are sick, some way or another, you're picking up the cost there. They may stay on the payroll because they know that they do not have an option to get coverage even if they're willing to pay for it. So they'll stay, I mean they'll hobble in every day or whatever it may be in order to maintain that health insurance coverage, you all know how terribly important health insurance coverage is. It is no small item on the