

changes so that they become Medicaid eligible. And, to be fair to the nursing homes, we've added a couple of provisions on those people that they have to retain. In my amendment we're saying, before a person has these rights to stay in the nursing home, they have to have been a private pay individual for at least the term of one year; secondly, that we're not going to force any nursing home to have more than 10 percent Medicaid eligible individuals. We think those are provisions that make it so that no nursing home is going to have to bear an unreasonable portion of this Medicaid expenditure, but at the same time we can assure that individuals who have lived in nursing homes for a reasonable time period...I might emphasize too that this term reasonable is still a subject of negotiation, we may be back with an amendment on Select File to change the one year to some other time period, but an individual that has been there a reasonable time won't be forced to be transferred from their home, the place that has become their home. This is only to me a stopgap measure. What it does is, while we're seeking an answer to this overall problem of how best to fund the Medicaid program, how best to make sure that nursing homes aren't treated unfairly and forced to suffer an economic loss, what we're saying if we adopt this amendment and pass this bill in this form is that we're at least not going to send people out in the streets for the crime of spending all of their own personal...for the crime basically of living too long. We're going to make a statement as a Legislature that that should not happen. With that, I urge you to adopt the committee amendments, excuse me, my amendment to the committee amendments. It makes the bill far less restrictive. It takes a lot of the clout away from the bill, I admit, but that's probably the fair thing to do now. If we adopt this amendment, as I understand it, we're not going to have serious objection or any objection from the nursing home association and the other individuals involved in providing nursing care, nursing home care in this state. With that, I urge you to adopt the committee amendment. I will answer any questions if you have any.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Goodrich, please.

SENATOR GOODRICH: Mr. President, members of the body, would Senator Withem yield to a question, please?

SENATOR WITHEM: Be happy to.