

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Crosby.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Senator Wesely, I want to...I'm going to say something and I want you to be sure to under...to see if I'm correct. Under this definition, if a recipient reaches the two-year limit and there are jobs available which pay as much as the present cash assistance benefit, minus unearned income, like if they're getting some Social Security for some reason, then they will not receive any more cash assistance. Is that right? This means for a family of 3, if a job which would pay at most a net of \$364 per month is available, then this renders that family totally ineligible for any further cash assistance. Right?

SENATOR WESELY: Well, at least that amount, yeah.

SENATOR CROSBY: This breaks down to a job which pays at least \$91 a week or at minimum wage a 20-hours a week job. And this is about 30 percent of the poverty level. See, I...that's...that's the problem I have with...thanks, Don, I wanted to be sure that what I was saying that you felt was correct. There are jobs of this kind available in Nebraska but most of them don't have health care and other benefits. And so I just think this...this exception is meaningless. It will, in all likelihood, force a drop in the already meager existence for these families. Don't kid yourself that these families are living off the fat of the land because they're getting some public assistance. That's not true. I hear...I hear all the stories that you do about they drink Coca-Cola and they eat potato chips and they all have a television. Well, one reason that's good that they have the television is most of them can't afford to go to movies or anything, even at Starship it costs a lot to take a family here in Lincoln. So I still think that my amendment would have been better because it would have included the cost of the benefits. I'm going to listen to the rest of the...your discussion of this amend...the whole amendment. I voted for the other amendment but unless the two-year...two-year arbitrary cutoff comes out and the family cap, I'm just not going to vote for the bill. And I know you want to go home to your constituents and say, I voted for welfare reform. Great. My constituents, a lot of them say they understand what I'm saying and they are trying to be supportive and I have a lot of constituents, Sally Burt happens to be one of them, you just got a letter from the consortium on children...families and children