

just...I just think at this point we've got a pretty reasonable approach, and I would hesitate to make any further changes and would ask opposition to the Crosby amendment. But again, she's raising a good issue and we ought to look at it further.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Chambers, followed by Senator Rasmussen.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, the main reason that I support Senator Crosby's amendment is because we're talking about a person who is accepting a job which does not provide adequate wages or benefits, but is trying so hard to get off the welfare rolls, to get out from under that hammer, that she's willing to take this job. And we're saying, all through the discussions that we're having today, that we don't want to make being on welfare more desirable than being off welfare. Senator Hillman, I'm not going to lose my voice completely. (Laugh.) But, see, that's the price that I pay when I try to get along. When I'm up here blasting and doing what I do best my voice never falters. But now that I've become different in my approach, my voice doesn't even recognize me, and it's about to take flight because it thinks it's in a strange abode. But at any rate, this provision that says the totality of what the woman receives would be 130 or 133 percent of poverty, as determined by the federal government, certainly cannot be viewed as somebody living on Easy Street. It's not the kind of thing which a person is going to get on welfare for. We have one trying to get off welfare. I assure you that the majority of people receiving public assistance would not like to be there if they have a viable alternative. This creates the alternative. It means that the job, by definition, does not pay a living wage. The person would not be required to take the job, but she wants so badly to be independent, to be on her own, to try to make it without this millstone of the welfare system about her neck, that she takes this job. It shouldn't be too much to ask that we be the wind beneath her wings, to quote a line from that song, to bear her up and help her get out of this rut, as people have described it. Think of every negative characterization that you can that has been attached to the welfare system, which has unjustifiably and unfairly and unconscionably been attached to people who must receive welfare. Ask yourself if you would like to be in that situation and the answer would be no. If all of this is designed to be a hand up instead of a handout, why are we saying that somebody must be flat on their rear end without the ability to even roll over