

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker and members, I want to reiterate what has already been said. This is a very important bill. It is important to the rural areas. We know what is happening. The people are moving from the so-called rural areas into the larger cities. We need to keep these essential items here such as grocery stores, physicians, whatever the case might be, one more tool to keep the people on the farm, so to speak. I urge your support for this bill. Thanks.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. Senator Byars.

SENATOR BYARS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of LB 505. You know I think we have to look at what has been happening in rural Nebraska. I think all of us have perception, but there's some statistics that I think are important in looking at what we're faced with in rural health care. And I don't believe it's been mentioned, but if it has, I'll repeat. We have at least 60 rural Nebraska communities right now that are looking for at least one or more physicians. And many of these communities have been looking for at least two years or longer. And if we look at the shortage area designation criteria that is set out for internal medicine, for obstetrics, for gynecology, pediatrics, general surgery, we have 61 counties that meet that criteria for family practice alone. If you look at general surgery, 77 of our 93 counties meet the shortage criteria. So I think we need to look sometimes at some of these statistics that support so vividly the need for trying to offer as many incentives as we can to all medical practitioners, not just primary need, but many of the ancillary type of medical needs also. And so I urge your strong consideration and support of LB 505. I think we have to send a message that the State of Nebraska cares about rural health care and many times those areas that we consider rural aren't necessarily so rural, so please advance LB 505.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Byars. Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I rise, of course, in support of this bill. I think that we've had really good success with some legislation that went through here a couple of years ago involving the training of nurses especially nontraditional students in nursing. That has been very successful in my area. It does result in getting people back into the rural part of the state to do their practice of whatever part of medicine they're doing and I think this bill