

Legislative Journal.) The vote is 44 ayes, 0 nays, 5 excused and not voting.

SPEAKER BAACK: LB 831 with the emergency clause attached passes. We will now proceed to Item 6 on the agenda and General File.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 429 was a bill introduced by Senator Moore. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 14, referred to the Health Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. I have committee amendments pending by Health and Human Services Committee.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Wesely, on the committee amendments.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, this is an issue that's been before the body in one form or another in each of the 15 years I've been in the Legislature. Senator Pirsch remembers it and others who have been around do as well. It's a question of the ability of optometrists to utilize pharmaceutical eye drops or orally use those pharmaceutical agents to treat eye diseases. I'm going to give you a brief background of the issue and get into the committee amendment here in just a little bit. The issue first arose, that I'm familiar with, in 1979 when the issue was raised about allowing eye drops to be used for diagnostic purposes and the Legislature did take that step, I believe it was in 1979, and allowed that to occur. Following that action, there was further initiative to allow for eye drops to be used for therapeutic uses in addition to the diagnostic uses and eventually in the mid-1980s that step was taken as well. So in 1979 and the mid-eighties steps were taken to allow for the topical, that would be eye drop use, of pharmaceutical agents to treat...to diagnose and then treat eye diseases. Now the question before us that was first raised in 1989 is the question of oral medications, that is taking the medication internally to deal with your eye disease. And in 1989 a review was undertaken under the 407 process to review this very issue. And let me tell you what the 407 process is for those who are new to the Legislature. This process was set up in the mid-1980s to help us deal with issues like this, that is the question of scope of practice for health professions, and every year we have a number of these come before us. There are three stages of review. There is a Technical Committee of health professionals looking at the issue. They make a recommendation on changing the scope