

final analysis I didn't go to medical school, those terms are terms that I've learned as a legislator but not necessarily ones that I've learned because of my profession or my training or my business. But we do have a responsibility here and this morning I bring to you an amendment to the committee amendment. I know that you've all been lobbied both ways, probably harder than you want to be. But let me lay out some parameters for you and try to make it as simple as I can as to why I do what I do because these are ones that I should probably just sit down and let go, because there are people who are my friends on both sides. I have an excellent friend who is a wonderful optometrist in Minden, Nebraska, pillar of the community, bright, works hard and does a good job. I also have friends who are ophthalmologists, who are medical doctors, and so I'm torn there, but what I try to do and what I want to lay out this morning for you is let...here are some things we're not going to talk about or shouldn't talk about. If you hear discussions about, gee, the ophthalmologists want to defeat this bill so they can protect their money base and their money, ignore that. If you hear the argument, well, gee, the optometrists want this bill so they can do more so they can get more money, ignore that as well, because I don't believe that's the issues. The issues are not here. Who wants to earn more money? If they are and you're going to make your decision based on that, then policy probably has little to do with the discussion we should have. Some want this issue to go away. No matter which way you vote I'm sure that this issue will be back. The only way that it will totally go away, totally go away, is if you let optometrists do everything that ophthalmologists do, and then the issue goes away, but you'll probably have the ophthalmologists back wanting to cut that back. I think the best thing we can do is to try to look into why we're doing what we're doing and what, if anything, we can do. What I would like to do with this amendment is allow some things to occur. One that I think the optometrists have done I don't think has been in the statute and I think we ought to make clear is that they do have the ability to remove foreign objects from your eye. I think they also ought to be able to give pain medication. My amendment allows for both of those things to occur. What do I have a problem with? I have a problem with giving oral medications by people who are not medical doctors. It's not necessarily a matter of education, it's a matter of training and experience. Medical doctors do go through extensive residencies and internships which is nothing more than just plain, practical experience with eye disease, and that's what we're talking