

Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President. Again, you know, we've argued and spent a lot of time on the Medicaid issue and the frustrations there and when we talked about Medicaid we said, look, there's a bigger picture here. This is that bigger picture. This is the health care system that Medicaid is a part of. Medicaid is something like 9 percent of overall health care expenditures in this state. It's important, but it's just a piece of the overall health care system, but it's a reflection of the health care system. Skyrocketing costs, problems with the quality of care, problems with access to care, Medicaid is a symptom of an overall illness that needs to be addressed through our medical system. Now we have, again, in the charts I passed out, I hope you'll have a chance to look at this, the United States has a per capita health care expenditure of about 2,300 dollars based on 1989. Now it's closer to 3,000 dollars per citizen. You see that Canada is below us about 800 dollars or 900 dollars down below that and then all the way through all the major industrial nations you see less and less spent on health care. We are, by far, spending the most money of any industrialized nation in the world, yet we haven't got national coverage. Not every citizen is covered. So we spend more and cover few people. We have a system that makes no sense. It's a system driven by, again, the providers and a cost-based reimbursement system that hasn't recognized the need to cover everybody and to do it at a lower cost. We've got to change our overall health care system and it's got to happen soon. Now, if you look at another chart I've got again, we've worked through the expenditures on Nebraska in health care and there you'll see we've gone from three and a half billion dollars in 1989 to about four billion dollars in 1990, to four and a half billion dollars in 1991, to four point eight billion dollars last year and so we'll be over five billion dollars it's estimated this year. Over five billion dollars we're going to spend in 1993 on health care, and we're going to talk about a billion and a half on the state budget. We'll spend a lot of time working on it through the Appropriations Committee and everything. We need to take some time on this issue. If people don't like what LB 827 does, what's the alternative? What is the other course of action that you have? Is it the status quo? Are you satisfied with the status quo? Do you think it's doing fine? Do you like the idea of 155,000 Nebraskans not covered? Do you like the idea of people in rural areas not being able to get health care? Do you like the idea of having to spend so much that you can't