

April 7, 1982

LB 602

SENATOR NICHOL: All those in favor of adopting the E & R amendment please say aye. Opposed nay. They are adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Vard Johnson would now move to amend the bill.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Vard Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, you have had circulated about 20 minutes ago amendments to LB 602. They should be on your desk. The amendments are very straightforward. LB 602, as you may recall, deals with the subject of medical indigency. LB 602 which becomes effective July 1st, 1983 provides that the State of Nebraska shall be responsible for the medically indigent and it directs the Department to establish a standard of medical indigency that is equal to or less than the current Hill-Burton Act standards of medical indigency. Now Senator Cullan and I have worked with this measure together with LB 522 which is the overall state takeover of the County Welfare function together with members of the Governor's office and with the Nebraska Association of County Officials. What we are doing with LB 602 is we are amending it to provide that with respect to medical indigency the Nebraska Department of Public Welfare shall again be responsible for the development of the medical indigency standard totally in keeping with the terms of the bill, that is the standards shall be the current provisions of the Hill-Burton Act which are the property guidelines set by the Office of Management and Budget, that the county boards themselves shall meet the needs of the medically indigent within those particular standards. Current responsibility for the medically indigent does lie with county boards. Current requirements on county boards come from an ancient law that we have which is known as the Poor Relief Law. This will be the first major update in the Poor Relief Law in probably a century and what it will do though it will fashion a real standard for the medically indigent and it will leave the responsibility with the county board. In addition the bill provides that when the State of Nebraska takes over the county welfare function the county boards shall continue to provide the State of Nebraska at least the office and service space currently used by the state in the operation of public assistance programs. These amendments have been cleared with Mr. Jack Mills from the Nebraska Association of County Officials, again with the Governor's office and they all support the amendments to LB 602. I would at this time move the amendments.

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