

Mr. President.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Senator Haberman, please. Senator Haberman. The question has been called. Do I see five hands? I do. All those in favor of ceasing debate vote aye, those opposed vote no. Have you all voted? Record. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Debate has ceased. Senator Johnson, you are going to close on the amendment, is that correct? Senator Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, my history on optometric bills has been as follows. When the optometrists asked in 1979 or 1980 for authority to put eye drops in eyes for diagnostic purposes, I acceded to that authority. I concluded that eye drops were not inherently dangerous, that optometrists were uniquely qualified to fit lenses, that primary care physicians did not fit lenses, but optometrists did, that while ophthalmologists did that, that there were so few of those throughout the state that it was fitting and appropriate to allow the optometrists to put in eye drops. But I feel totally differently about authorizing optometrists who are lensfitters, about authorizing optometrists to prescribe drugs for therapeutic healing purposes. My eyes are too precious for that and yours are, too. I have worn glasses all of my life. When I was 16 years old, I smashed my glasses in an accident and I had glass all over my eyes. I could barely shut my eyelids because the glass was scratching up and down the eyeballs. So what did I do? I go to a doctor, an ordinary general practitioner doctor in Columbus, Nebraska, and he very painstakingly lifts the eyelids and slowly picks out the glass, slowly picks out the glass, and then he puts the drugs in to allow for the healing processes to occur. That man had the technique, the skills, and he was a general practitioner. Now, what we are authorizing today is we are authorizing an optometrist who is a lensfitter to lift the eyelids, pick out the glass, and to put the drugs down. Senator Chronister says the drugs are no different than the kinds of drugs that you and I could buy at the drug store. What drug would you buy? What would you buy at the drug store to start the healing? Do you know? This morning's