

January 17, 1992 LB 677

committee amendments.

PRESIDENT MOUL: The committee amendments fail. Do you have an amendment on the desk, Mr. Clerk?

CLERK: Madam President, Senator Wesely would move to amend. Senator, I have AM2332. Membership will find it in your bill books, AM2332. (Amendment printed separately from the Journal and referred to on page 343.)

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, members, let me describe for you the essence of this amendment. I'd be happy to answer questions if you should have them. The Older Americans Act established in every state a long-term care ombudsman. We've had one in this state for quite a long time but our state has not adopted statutory guidelines on the long-term care ombudsman or formally recognized in a fashion that it is felt to be adequate by the Department of Aging. So as Senator Withem asked before, Senator Smith and I both had legislation in this regard to try to fully implement the Older Americans Act regarding the long-term care ombudsman. We need to have that program in statute and that's the essence of the bill. But the next step we take on here is kind of an interesting one. We find the whole concept of the ombudsman one that is a very valuable one. It attempts to resolve problems in nursing homes and as well as other facilities, residential care facilities, boarding homes and if Senator Crosby were here she would be interested in continuing care communities would be included. So these other areas, besides nursing homes, are covered by this where there are individuals that could be described best as vulnerable adults by and large, individuals who have a particular vulnerability that requires them to be in some sort of facility, not just nursing homes, to care for their needs. So what we find though in terms of the nursing home aspect of that, and that alone accounts for 208 nursing homes in this state and 16,500 residents in nursing homes, and again, that is but a part of the total amount of individuals that are covered under this bill. For those 16,500 nursing home residents plus there are but two state ombudsman staff and of course that's almost an impossible task for two individuals to try to look out for the interests of that many individuals. So the concept that came back to us was how do we take the limited resources of the state and reach out to these vulnerable adults and have a voice