

**SPEAKER BAACK:** Thank you, Senator Moore. Before I proceed to the next speaker, I would like to introduce a guest of Senator Hillman. We have Keith Ellis. He is under the south balcony. Would you please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do sign LR 228 and LB 816, LB 869 and LB 870. Senator Schellpeper, you're next.

**SENATOR SCHELLPEPER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, I have to rise in opposition to this amendment in its present form. I've always been a supporter of the optometrists and I've always been willing to work with them and trying to help them to see that they can do what they are actually trained to do. With this amendment of Senator Moore's, you're going to have the optometrists regulating optometrists. That's like having a student that's going to school to say, well, I'm...I want to graduate without having a teacher really agree to it. I think you need to have somebody over the optometrists. The ophthalmologist, at the present time, is regulated by the Board of Medicine and if the optometrists are also going to get into the medicine field of treating glaucoma, they also need to be under the Board of Medicine or have somebody there to regulate what they can do. Now I think this bill or this amendment has some education put back into it that we took out with the amendment last year and that is a good part of it. But there needs someplace in this amendment has to be that they have some supervision by the ophthalmologists or the Board of Medicine. Now I have an amendment that will follow this that will set up a joint board of two ophthalmologists and two optometrists under the Board of Medicine that will regulate this. As I said, I have no problem if they want to do it but they need to be regulated. You can't have the same profession regulating it that when you want to do more than what you are actually trained to do. Now in Schuyler, at the present time, we have three optometrists and an ophthalmologist building a brand new building and they are in this building. They practice together. I think we need to have more of that in our rural areas. But, by adopting this amendment and saying that the optometrists shall regulate themselves, they shall treat glaucoma, is not the way to have the boards regulated in this state. I think if you could get the optometrists under the Board of Medicine some way, I think there needs to be some way that they're underneath that so that there is somebody there. Without that, you have nothing in this bill to say who is really going to regulate them. So, with that, I oppose the amendment in its present form. Thank