

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

January 13, 2000 LB 480

first you have a commission and then the commission needs more staff and then...and then suddenly they need a building, and this is the way that...that we start to lose total control of our fiscal budget. And it appears to me that, with a little inventiveness, this program could be fitted in to existing entities that are here, and I would just like to submit that as a proposal. I'm certainly in favor of the issues involving women's health, but I am certainly opposed to the idea of adding additional organizations to our state government. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Pederson. Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. Senator Pederson, I...I would like to continue that discussion a little bit because you brought up a program which is near and dear to my heart, and that's the Every Woman Matters program. And I have to tell you that it was this Legislature that passed that legislation originally, setting up a screening fund for mammography, which allowed us then to take in private funds. We, because of passage of that bill, got a \$9 million grant from the CDC for a four-year program, which was the genesis of that whole program. So the Legislature has been dealing in that policy arena before and I guess one of the reasons that this bill was introduced in the first place is because we believed that we could be more effective doing those kinds of things. There are...there is a lot of emphasis nationwide on women's health right now and there are a lot of people who are interested in research and in providing the grant opportunities. So I understand where you're coming from, but I guess the old...the old adage about being penny wise and pound foolish might apply in this case, because I think we could do a better job of bringing in some of those monies than we're doing now and we could have better coordination among the 5,600 or 5,800 employees of the Department of Health. I mean, that's a huge bureaucracy and somebody needs to be in charge and thinking about these matters, and it should be under the direction of the Department of Health. I never for a minute imagined that this would be a separate office. I knew, politically, that would go absolutely nowhere, and I didn't want to do that. I wanted...and we called it an initiative because it is an initiative. It is...we are trying to initiate some...some