

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

February 22, 2001 LB 10

is about forty-some percent compared to almost eighty percent at our veterans' home. I've received several phone calls from...complaining about the condition...working conditions and so on at our veterans' homes. For awhile I just kind of brushed it off, but they kept coming. And the State Commander of the VFW, a good friend of mine, has asked me to try to find some time to get down to the Tom Fitzgerald Home and see some of the conditions that...and the problems they're having there. And I haven't been able to get there yet, but I'm still going to try and get there and see for myself what could be the cause of this. It looks to me like the biggest problem is the wages, the wages that are paid at that home compared to comparable positions in the private sector. I don't know what the answer is, but we're dealing with people here who have sacrificed a lot for this state and for this country. And I think it needs to be...Senator Pedersen, what you're doing here is fine, but I think we have to go further. We have to find out why that turnover rate is so great. And, if it's just that, if it's just the wages, why then we maybe have to address that. But it's...I wonder once in awhile if there isn't something else underlying that we're not hearing about. So, Senator Pedersen, I'm going to support your bill, but I'm looking forward to further legislation next year or in the year after to try to address these. It's a dwindling...a dwindling part of our...of our society. We haven't had a full-scale conflict or engagement where we have a lot of veterans but, needless to say, that they are here, we need to take care of them and we need to have adequate employees working at these facilities to address the problems they're having. So it's a big...it's a situation that's not going to go away in the near future. And thank you, Senator Pedersen, for bringing this bill; I think it's a small step, but we need to take further steps later on. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Senator Cudaback, on the committee amendments.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. President, members, I want to reiterate what's already been said. It's a good bill. We went around the different communities, had public hearings on the matter. Usually, why, you don't go to a grocery store to buy shoes, you go to a shoe store; you go to a grocery store to buy groceries.