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SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Senator Thompson. I'd like to have her...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Give your time to Senator Thompson?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Thompson, you have about two...about three minutes.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President. I considered introducing this bill a year ago and held up on it because I was hoping there was going to be a federal resolution of some of the prescription drug costs. There wasn't. There's...it's under discussion now and my hope would be that eventually this particular problem, which is one of the larger debate on prescription drugs, would be handled at the federal level. If it is, the state is the payee of last resort and eventually, through the appropriations process, if things went extremely well, and I don't know that they will or they won't because the focus right now has been of older, over 65, which a lot of people in this category are not. And so I...I first considered that, but I think it's at such a problem state in this state. I looked at what other states were doing and I felt it was important to come through with...with this. It is a significant but modest amount and, like a lot of things we do here, we can't solve the whole problem. I felt we should at least attempt to solve part of the problem and be able to ease the hardship for some Nebraskans who apply for it. Probably the best estimate I have is that we have...it's probably less than half, but around 40 percent is the best guess I could get of people who are experiencing some financial hardship for this. And what happens to the people in their insurance plans is sometimes their drug coverage may be capped. They may have certain exclusions for these particular types of drugs because they are specific and expensive and in some cases a generic doesn't substitute very well. It's a pretty fragile thing to keep a human being from rejecting a drug (sic). So, in answer to your question, I felt this was a step that we should take. The people involved know it's probably not enough, but it would ease some of the suffering that's...that's going on out there and hopefully, if there is ever a federal solution, it will take this into effect