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Health Committee, advanced to General File.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Suttle, you're recognized to open on LB 468.

SENATOR SUTTLE: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, the name of this bill, the Nursing Scholarship Act, the Nursing Incentive to Practice Act, the Nursing Student Loan Act, and the Nursing Loan Repayment Act, all of those parts of the bill have been modified greatly. I will go into that when I am introducing the amendment that I have, but it has been greatly reduced because of the cost of the initial bill, the green copy. I don't know whether the body is aware or not, but nurses are in shortage nationwide as well as in the state of Nebraska. We had an article in the paper yesterday that indicated that hospitals in Omaha were closing their emergency rooms. And one of the problems that they cited in the article, early in the article was that on some days four of the Omaha's seven hospital emergency rooms have been closed to ambulances for various lengths of time. They are finally getting together and talking about the safety and the unsafety of this practice, and they are not coordinating their efforts. And so now they're talking to one another and they are coordinating their efforts. There are many problems, the article goes on to say, in healthcare that are forcing emergency rooms to turn away ambulances including the shortage of nurses' care for patients when they are transferred from the emergency room to recovery beds. It's pretty bad when you can get into an emergency room; but if you're so sick and you need care upstairs in the hospital, you don't have a nurse to take care of you. I am afraid that those of us who are baby boomers, and that would probably include just about everybody in this room, except Senator Chambers, when we get old and have to go to a nursing home or to a hospital because we're ill or because we're too old to take care of ourselves, we're going to push the button and nobody is going to come. And that would not be a very good thing to happen. Part of the reason for a nursing shortage in the country is, one, because nursing is usually a female profession which it shouldn't be. More men should go into nursing. But one of the things is that we have a big choice now. Our choices are not limited to teacher, secretary or