

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

May 14, 2003

LB 407

to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Byars. Senator Stuthman, on the Smith amendment to the amendment.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, I would like to address one of my questions to Senator Smith, if he'd be available for an answer.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Smith, would you respond?

SENATOR SMITH: Yes.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: What portion of this or how do you...can you give me an answer of what you feel is not equitable and why you are trying to make it equitable?

SENATOR SMITH: Yes, the reality is that...and I'll even say that all three centers, the two in Omaha and the one in Scottsbluff for the whole Panhandle, serve approximately the same number of people. You're going to see, with the current language in the appropriations bill, LB 407, you're going to see \$700,000 times two in Omaha, and a more restrictive \$164,000 for all of the Panhandle, when we're talking about serving the same number of people in need, the same number. So...and then...and then one step further, my amendment doesn't even restrict it to the 3rd District. It says, basically, those who need it will have access to these funds, so it could be people in Columbus if they are medically underserved...a medically underserved area or medically underserved population, or a medical or health professional shortage area. And that shows that where there's need there should be some relief.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Okay. Thank you for your answer, but is the Panhandle Community Health Department taking advantage of every opportunity as far as any other type of grants that they can access to try to alleviate this problem?

SENATOR SMITH: That is my understanding. I've seen their operation and I believe they operate more efficiently than probably any other agency in the state.