

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

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And I would turn the rest of my time back to Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR JANSSEN: The Chair recognizes Senator Byars, I believe.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. President. This...I'm standing in support of LB 664. It actually came about because of legislation that I introduced last year to...in behalf of the department, and then a stand-alone bill that I introduced to try to deal with those hospitals who didn't wish to be critical access hospitals in the state, to allow the critical access hospitals to increase the number of beds in compliance with federal law. And, quite honestly, we did not deal with those hospitals that could be on the bubble, like we're seeing now with Broken Bow and Lexington, that would choose to become critical access hospitals. Under our current state statutes, they are not able to do so. So this really is quite simple. It keeps our rural hospitals vibrant and alive and gives them some choice in the case of Broken Bow and Lexington, and certainly, as this was my legislation originally last year, I'm very supportive of what Senator Cudaback and Senator Fischer are doing, and would encourage you to support LB 664.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Senator Byars. There are committee amendments. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, I do have committee amendments offered by the Health and Human Services Committee.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Senator Jensen, to open on the committee amendments.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Senator Janssen and members of the Legislature. The committee amendment, all it does is add the E clause to this bill. It's very important that this be enacted quickly because of the time restraints that the federal government has put upon us. It must be done by the 1st of January, and so the committee felt that, to ensure that, we should put the E clause onto that. So that's all the committee amendment does. I would like to comment that if it wasn't for the critical access hospitals and the federal government's participation in this, we probably here in Nebraska would have