

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

April 11, 2006 LB 1113

disease, but autopsies are not always performed. Even when an autopsy is performed, it may not include tissue samples and toxicology tests that can be key in determining the cause of deaths and in prosecution. I am told that some attorneys who are elected to county attorney are unaware of their duties as county coroner and don't have the experience to guide them. So guidance from the Attorney General's Office would be very useful to them. AM3046 would address the fact that Nebraska continues to have a high SIDS rate, higher than the national average. Without a complete analysis that includes a full autopsy, medical records review, and a death scene report, a SIDS determination does not meet the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control. This amendment would make these three steps mandatory. AM3046 would address the costs associated with complete autopsies by offering to reimburse counties for up to 50 percent of autopsies for children five and younger. That age category was chosen for emphasis, because those children are the most physically vulnerable and the most isolated from societal interaction. Therefore, they are most at risk for abuse that would go undetected. They also have the highest death rates. It would use the Child Protection Cash Fund in the Attorney General's Office as a mechanism for partial reimbursement. Currently, this fund is used to pay for expert witnesses. An autopsy finding is an extension of an expert witness, if you will, and I feel appropriate for this reimbursement. I would like to increase the funds available to the Attorney General to recover the reimbursement of certain autopsies. Statistics from HHSS show that historically, there are about 100 deaths of children age five and younger per year in Nebraska. To fund 50 percent of 100 autopsies a year at approximately \$3,000 per autopsy, \$150,000 is needed. The cost of an autopsy is a county obligation, so our idea is to give them some relief to encourage proper autopsies without taking over their responsibility. This amendment will make another improvement to our response to child abuse. I ask for your support, and I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Aguilar. Senator Mines, did you wish to talk on the...thank you. Further discussion? No discussion. The question before the body is, shall...did you wish to close, Senator Aguilar? Did you waive? He waived