

bill that is just beginning its journey in committee here and I suppose we could jump up and say that the Legislature is going to do something because that bill is starting to move across the committee or in the committee or been introduced. Now we all know that that is a long ways away from passage and a long ways away from changing. Senator Kelly's arguments are very good and arguments that I have given many times, and in addressing this particular issue, I had to think my position through on what we are doing as far as the private enterprise of the nursing homes are concerned. I think the argument Senator Wesely gave and all the public dollars that are being spent in these private enterprise facilities the public has a right to make some decisions there. There are an awful lot of tax dollars being poured into these areas and I think when tax dollars and public monies are being spent, the public has a right to some control. I don't believe that we pour tax dollars in with a blank check and no reins. I think a rein has to be put on. If not, let's just maybe stop the public dollars going in. I think Senator Wesely's total figures of what it is going to cost this Legislature in the next year on medicaid reimbursement, \$105 million compared to \$99 million this year ought to wake some people up as to what is happening with public tax dollars. You know the health care profession is a little bit different than the normal business type situation. If you are going to buy a new suit, you have got a lot of choices as to where you might go, or if you are going to buy a car, you can choose between different companies and you can choose between different models. If you are going to buy a home, you can look at a lot of ranges of prices and a lot of different features that you may or may not want, but let's face the facts. When you go to the hospital, your choices are narrow and you are going to go and you have to go and you are going to pay whatever is asked. You know if you are laying there sick or bleeding or whatever, you are not going to go around and get bids on where you can get the service the most efficiently and the cheapest. You are going to go where it is available and you don't care what the cost is at that point. I think Senator Maresh's argument is a beautiful argument about, well, the insurance companies ought to be picking up the tab. I kind of agree but most of these premiums that I am seeing right now are so high right now that I think few people are able to afford the essential coverages that are made available to them right now, and if we start adding more benefits, you are adding more cost and it doesn't make any difference whether it is a private carrier, Blue Cross-Blue Shield or whoever. So that is an approach that is absolutely...that isn't a solution to the problem, that is a reflection of the problem. I think