

legislation, but my concern is that they receive the best treatment possible and at the same time protecting the taxpayers of this state. This proposal will in effect do great harm to health care costs in this state. We are talking about over-bedding across the State of Nebraska but particularly in the Omaha area. These veterans are presently being cared for in nursing homes. They are not at home. They are not on the street. They are not being neglected. They are being cared for in private facilities. The question is the establishment of a special home for them in Douglas County by taking over the annex that is presently being used by the Douglas County Hospital. This would be a particular benefit to the County of Douglas and the City of Omaha, but not a particular benefit to the veterans of this state, or the taxpayers of this state. The State of Nebraska would pay the same percentage basically of care support for the veterans that would be served in the facility, but the real winners in this proposal, the real winners in the change from the private facility to the new veterans' home would be Douglas County, because their portion of the medicaid cost would be cut right out of the formula. They would not have to pay any longer for the support and care of these veterans, and Douglas County would at the same time also take care of another problem, and that is what I consider to be somewhat of a white elephant, their annex. It is getting old. It looks like from a walk through survey by the Department of Public Institutions they were talking about close to a million dollars in renovation cost to bring it up to minimum standards...minimum standards. That is a lot of money. That is a lot of money that is going to come out of now the state coffers rather than county coffers. That annex is not being used to its fullest but it is being used, and the problem is going to be basically this. We shift from Grand Island and some of the other nursing homes to Omaha to this new facility veterans being cared for. Then we take the veterans that are now in private facilities in Omaha and move them out to Grand Island. That leaves beds free in private facilities in Omaha, which means when you have free beds, unused beds, you still have cost but you don't have utilization and so the cost for everybody else that is left in those homes is increased accordingly. So that means an increase in medicaid costs. So in the end we have a vicious circle situation here that I think does not do service to the veterans or the taxpayers of the state. This is not a good proposal. It is not necessary, but it is going to pass and it is going to be established, and you are going to vote for it, and I am not going to berate you for it or call you any names, but I really think that the people of the state ought to know what we are doing down here today and what we will be doing when we vote on this in Final Reading and pass it. I think what