

April 8, 1981

LB 249

recommendations that are made to the Board by those who are working for the Board in the Department. It was also interesting to me at the confirmation hearings on two members of the Board of Health recently, when I questioned the individuals as to why they took a particular position on one bill versus another that happened to be before the Public Health and Welfare Committee earlier, these were major issues that the Board of Health took the very aggressive position upon, happened to deal with certificate of need. I am not particularly concerned with what position the Board of Health took, but what does concern me is that neither the legislative chairman, the Chairman of the Board of Health's legislative committee nor a member of that committee could articulate clearly even one distinction between these two bills, and yet they vigorously supported one and opposed the other. That indicates to me that they did not adequately research those and it also indicates to me that they were more than likely just accepted, the recommendations which their staff gave to them. The other major arguments that we have heard with respect to this particular issue, and I consider this to be the guts of LB 249, we have heard the argument...we have heard the argument that we don't want to politicize the Department of Health. I just called for a page and I will distribute to the members of the Legislature now...I apologize that I didn't distribute this a second ago, but I will distribute to you now a flyer that came from the Nebraska Association of Public Employees urging employees of the Board of Health...or the Department of Health, excuse me, the Department of Health to attend the hearing on LB 249. When you get this flyer, you will read, and I will read a section of it to you now. This flyer said, "Health Department employees will have to be more concerned with politics in the Governor's office than with protecting the health of Nebraskans". This came from the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, and I think it expresses a fear and a concern that all of us should be concerned about. It expresses a concept which bothers me a great deal. Those who use the phrase that we will make a political football out of the Board of Health are really telling us that they do not trust government, particularly elected officials. It is alarming and scary that this has become the focal point of those who oppose LB 249. To accept the political football argument is to say that we do not trust those who regularly go before the people and ask the approval of the voters, and that we would rather place our trust in the bureaucracy who is accountable to no one. If we continue with government by independent commission....

SENATOR CLARK: You have one minute left, Senator Cullan.

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