

bill? Do you know what is in the amendments? Do you know what we just did? If you think, for instance, as some Senators have just talked to me that, well, they were just minor changes, that this isn't really that much different than LB 378 as introduced, then I would like to correct you because I think you are wrong. There are some major components of the amendment we just adopted that change drastically the present process. Number one, instead of having the Health Department make a decision, it is then sent to an appeal board of citizens, we now have the decision made by an advisory committee of citizens that the Health Department and providers argue before and then it goes to an appeal board, a major change in the process, a major change, let me emphasize that, that I have never seen before and I don't think anybody else here except perhaps Senator Cullan and a couple of other Senators have even thought would be proposed this year and at this time, a major change that the public has not been informed of either, a major change that needs to be heard in a public hearing. The other major change that I think ought to be heard is the increase to \$600,000. Now from \$100,000 to \$600,000 is a major increase, that we were talking about an increase but not to that degree, and when you talk about \$600,000, think of how much money that is, think of the budget we go through in this Legislature, and would we exempt \$550,000 worth of expenditures here or there or wherever because it didn't meet a \$600,000 threshold. That is a lot of money and that money goes into these hospitals and the nursing homes and what have you and are translated into rates that we all pay through our taxes and medicaid, that we pay through our insurance premiums, that employers have to pay for employee insurance benefits. All of these things are translated across the board, not just for the patient paying the rates but we all suffer with high health care costs. Again that needs to be heard by the public. Now if this bill, this amendment, is passed at this point to Select File, I think you can say it is an indication of a power of the lobby. It is an indication of the power of the special interests, but if you return this bill to committee, you are reasserting the power of the people. This is the Unicameral that has relied on the public hearing as a second house of this Legislature, where the public serves as the second house to tell us how they feel about issues, to tell us how they feel about bills, and the public should have a chance to express themselves on this issue and this bill. Let's return the power to the people and let us not emphasize the power of the lobbyists and the special interests as we, again, in 1979 were successful in defeating. It is important that this bill be returned to committee for that reason. In addition the Health Department has submitted