

am happy to debate and discuss each one of Senator Wesely's amendments with him. I am certain that by the time we process his twenty-five amendments the Legislature will have a thorough understanding of the technical nature of certificate of need and why we don't need another hearing. But I would like to address a couple of concerns as far as the need to indefinitely postpone LB 378 is concerned. There is a great deal of discussion by Senator Wesely, by editorial writers in the State of Nebraska and others who are opposed to this legislation about its affect on health care costs. They believe that LB 378 enacted in its current form will result in increased health care costs. I do not believe that that will occur for several reasons. Initially I would point out that the great majority, in fact a ridiculous number of the certificate of need applications that are processed are approved. The Department of Health spends a great deal of time on all of its certificate of need applications. There is going to be most likely reductions in federal funds for health planning. When that happens the staff of the Department of Health in this particular department has to be decreased in size unless the Legislature is willing to pick up those positions. If it is decreased in size, we will have a tremendous number of applications or a large number of applications being reviewed and the Department of Health will be able to give just cursory review to any of them. The Department of Health has told me that if we enact the ceilings which are suggested to us, their workload will be reduced by approximately forty percent. That will give the Department of Health considerably greater time to review those applications which are important and which are potentially costly and will eliminate reviewing applications which are minor, relatively insignificant and are not going to add significantly to health care costs. Initially I think shortening the procedure and making some of the changes that we have made will make the procedure a less expensive one and that I think will be a benefit to health care costs as well. I would like for a minute to address some of the claims that Senator Wesely has thrown out on the floor of the Legislature and that were repeated in some of the editorials that the Lincoln Star that was circulated here earlier this morning. The Lincoln Star indicated this morning that...on Thursday morning, and I quote, "Thus far over ten million dollars has been lopped off additional health care costs in Nebraska through the review process". I would assume that that \$10 million figure is the one which came from the Department of Health. On March 4, 1981, Ken Diamond, who is the Director of the Bureau of Planning of the Department of Health wrote Senator Exon and provided him with his analysis of what certificate of need had accomplished in the State of Nebraska.