

could have an architect, under your amendments an architect could certify that that proposed project would be under the \$600,000 minimum and, in fact, it could occur after the fact that that is not the case, that overruns in building construction will bring it up more than the \$600,000 but it wouldn't be reviewable and the Health Department could not say, hey, look this is going to cost more than that, and anticipation of those sort of problems. And so what we are trying to do is give more authority to the Health Department to anticipate costs and not be hamstrung by some of these provisions.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Mr. President, Senators, I didn't really want to speak to this bill, but several things that have happened in the last week have made me consider that it is necessary. For one thing, I had a friend that went into the hospital in Omaha at six o'clock in the evening and he was released the next morning at nine o'clock. His bill was \$1,114. No, he didn't have surgery. That is why I think these amendments, Senator Wesely's, and this bill is important that we listen and that we don't run headstrong and right off a cliff and vote ourselves out of any future hospital care and our children and our grandchildren. Also the University of Nebraska Hospital, I raised some questions about their purchasing a helicopter and they were very good to send three gentlemen over to speak with me last week and to clarify the matter. First of all, the helicopter was not bought by the University of Nebraska. It seems that five hospitals in Omaha, including the University Hospital, entered into an agreement to use some kind of a helicopter service in Omaha, the same one that the TV stations use, and in our conversation they mentioned that University Hospital paid \$45,000 for the heliport or helipad to keep the helicopter at, and I asked them, what about the other four hospitals in Omaha? How much of that \$45,000 cost are they going to share since they are sharing in the helicopter use? Nothing. The taxpayers will pay the \$45,000. I asked, how did you decide that University Hospital that sits right in the center of Omaha nowhere near a freeway or interstate to transport those emergency patients from University Hospital to another hospital, how did you pick that hospital, when once you get an ambulance there to move the person to another hospital, they will have to go all through Omaha traffic? There is no way they can get to an interstate. And they said, well, University of Nebraska has a trauma team there and we keep a trauma team there 24 hours a day and when that trauma team is called out to go to the helicopter, a doctor and a nurse, I asked them, what does the University