

issue. What this says is that when a decision is made on a certificate of need, it must be based on appropriate and significant criteria. Now the criterion that apply to certificate of need include the state health plan. That is this document here. This is the Nebraska state health plan. It takes a great deal of time to put the state health plan together. It is put together in different regions of the state and finally comes to the state level. In many respects by the time the state health plan is actually published, it is somewhat obsolete and we are just simply saying that the Department of Health, the review committee, ought to have the flexibility to consider....

PRESIDENT: One minute, Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN:criteria other than those which are contained in the state health plan, only consider those criteria which are appropriate and significant, and that would allow them to vary from the state health plan if that were appropriate. So I would disagree with Senator Wesely on that approach. I think his amendments are an attempt to undo much of what we have done earlier. I believe that they are not well based and I would urge you to reject Senator Wesely's first set of amendments.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I don't like to appear to be a Godfather or the Mother Hen or anything else of the Legislature, and I don't really care at this point which side of the bill you are on, whether you are for Senator Cullan or for Senator Wesely, but I wish that the body would take notice of the discussion that is taking place here this morning. I think Senator Higgins made some points. I think Senator Cullan has made some points, and Senator Wesely has made some points, and I think this is probably one of the more important bills we are going to deal with in this session of the Legislature. Now we adopted some amendments to a bill several years ago, and very frankly some of us have not been as pleased with the results as we had hoped to be. I can understand some of Senator Cullan's frustration, but I can understand those persons like Senator Wesely and Senator Higgins who also have a deep concern about the escalation of health care costs. So we have heard many times on this floor someone say, well, we don't know enough about the issue. I would suggest there is going to be an opportunity to learn something about this issue. It is a complicated