

January 25, 1981

LB 378

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Higgins.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Mr. President, Senators, as I look around this body I notice that many of the Senators are not listening to this debate. I would have to say their minds are probably pretty much already made up on how they are going to vote. Senator Schmit, when you talked about your being in the helicopter business, I forgot to mention that the three people from University Hospital told me they did not take any bids from anybody on the helicopter service. It will just be added on to the cost of the taxpayers or the patients. Also, when you talk about this appeal and review, many of you may have the misconceived idea that the insurance companies are going to keep hospital costs down. Let me tell you that Douglas County which has hundreds, thousands of employees, their insurance company does not pay one penny of the cost of a hospital or a doctor. Do you know how it is worked? When a Douglas County employee goes to the hospital, their insurance company is paid by Douglas County to review the claim and decide whether all of it should be paid or not. So where is the incentive for an insurance company to say, hey, this is an overcharge, hey, this guy went in with a sore toe, why did they x-ray his head? They get paid just to look at the claim and say, yep, it is covered under the terms of your policy. I don't see any incentive there for...and this is one of the largest hospitalization companies in the country. They insure all the federal government employees also. So you want to know why your health care costs are going up. It's that the taxpayers think that the insurance companies are looking at the cost. They're not. They get paid whether they deny or they accept it. I just wanted to mention that because when we were talking about this appeal board, who is looking out for the consumer? And if the Health Department doesn't have any appeal and just the providers do, somebody here better look out for the consumers. Abraham Lincoln said, the world will not long remember what we do here, when he was talking about Gettysburg. Believe me, Senators, our constituents don't know much about this certificate of need bill, but they are going to ask questions as time goes on and hospital costs go up, and they are going to say, why, and what has the Legislature done about it? What have they done for us and what have they done to us? We have got to be here to represent our people. They are the ones that brought us here. Thank you, Senators.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature,

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