

health care and the major cost and expense to the people of this state, that being health care, and it should be carefully considered and strongly reviewed before we ever take any steps to change what has become a very important bill to Nebraskans by trying to keep health care costs down. I think it is important to note that all this talk about competition in the health care market place is what we need more of at this time is just not valid because our system for paying for health care costs has totally gotten out of the free market concept, away from competition and the talk about lifting CON is going to bring more competition is not true because at this present time in the hospital expenditures in the State of Nebraska 34% of them come from insurance premiums. Insurance pays for about 34% of hospital costs but 41% comes from taxes from public dollars and about 25% of hospital costs in Nebraska are paid for out of the pocket of those who are patients in the hospital. So what happens is the people of this state who know that health care costs are going up are insulated from those costs. They are not directly having to pay those and we're not seeing the excitement from the public on health care as you do with utilities because they are not paying for the full bill. They are paying for 25% of the bill in the case of hospitals but they really are paying for the full bill of health care and that is the problem that we are having, communicating to the people of this state. So many times I've had people talk about the press coverage of the CON issue in the last couple of weeks and they say, "Don, it sounds like you are doing the right thing. You are fighting for the consumer, for the public but we just don't understand what the issue is." And they don't. They don't understand what certificate of need is. They don't understand why health care costs are going up as high as they are. They don't understand what the conflict is between Senator Cullan and myself and two factions in this Legislature and what it comes down to is this. We all pay for high health care costs in one form or another. Whether you can see it or not high health care costs all come out of the same pocket and that is the people of this state. But whether you pay for it out of your higher premiums for insurance, health insurance, which is one result of high health care costs, or whether you pay for it in higher taxes and we see it in state and federal taxes through Medicaid and Medicare. You're paying for it through your public dollar or whether you're paying for it when you get out of the hospital, the nursing home, right out of your pocket, wallet, and paying for it directly, one way or the other you are paying for high health care costs and that message is not getting through as clear as it should be to the people