

March 1, 1982

LB 378

urge you to reject the Newell amendment, to vote against bureaucrats who write health plans making the decisions, and to vote for citizens and consumers who pay bills and pay taxes and who use health care facilities to make those decisions.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to support the Newell amendment which is an amendment similar to the one I attempted on General File to try and deal with one of the key problems with the bill as amended by Senator Cullan. There are a lot of different reasons. Senator Newell identified some of them for supporting this amendment. I think Senator Cullan's arguments against it point out also some supporting reasons why you should amend this legislation in this manner. First off, Senator Cullan is one of those that led the charge against HSA involvement in the CON process and HSA has provided local citizen input and was a process that had some problems and need to be improved and there are some ways that we could do that. But, nevertheless Senator Cullan led the charge to eliminate the HSAs along with the Governor and that was done. Now it is the same Senator Cullan turning around and saying how important it is to have citizen input and citizen participation and that this is a great way to do it. Well, instead of having people in the local area determining in a review process what they feel about a different project that they have before them in that area, we now take out of the local control onto the state level and say a handful of citizens, five of them, I believe, on this committee are now going to be omnipotent and they are going to be able to make some decisions that the Department had made in the past and hopefully do it in a way that provides some citizen representation but at the same time we are forgetting the fact that the local input that was so vital in the past is not going to be provided for. So what you have is a new concept that doesn't have local input. It is a more cumbersome process. It is one that will not shorten the review that we have right now but will in fact probably make it a little more cumbersome, a little longer. I think Senator Schmit and I know I have a proposal that would try and streamline that process would make more sense that what Senator Cullan is trying to do with this bill. So it is more cumbersome. It is going to be more costly. You are going to have the hearings in Lincoln which means that you are going to have these people traveling to Lincoln rather than in the local communities. It is going to be more expensive to do that. You are going to have to educate these people through the process rather than having experts in the Health Department