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LB 378

providing that decisionmaking and it seems clear to me that this is not really the streamlining that they have talked about with LB 378. The big argument is make the process simpler, make the process better, and I don't think they simplified the process with this review committee or make it better by not having local input from the citizens that might have more understanding of the local concerns. I think probably the final concern and one that is probably most important is Senator Cullan and a majority of this Legislature made the Health Department a code agency, a code agency, one that was under the Governor and thus was not supposed to have the sort of independence that was so disliked by many of the people concerned about Certificate of Need. So here we have, I think we have had this as a code agency now less than a year. The first session after that bill was passed we come back in and decide that those virtues that we had been told about last session and the reason that we wanted to have a code agency really are not the virtues they claimed to be and we want to now take out of the Department the decisionmaking process that was so great a concern to the providers and those who oppose a strong Certificate of Need law and now want to revert back to a citizen review committee. I submit to you that those of you who supported the code agency status of the Health Department would appear to be a little hypocritical if at this time you would turn around and take away from the Department the decisionmaking process that so concerned many members of this Legislature and which led to that change. I think you ought to let the Health Department under its new code agency status continue as it has in the past under its new situation and see how the Department reacts to that before you start changing once again in such a short time the procedure that they follow. So for all these different reasons, talking again about the need for citizen input, yes, it has to be there but at the local level, not at the state level, a system that would provide for less cumbersome a process, one that would be an improvement...

SENATOR CLARK: You have one minute left.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. ...would be an improvement over the HSAs but at the same time not the sort of high and mighty proposal that Senator Cullan has, one that would be less costly would be I think a benefit than the proposal that Senator Cullan has, and I think we need to keep in mind the code agency status of the Health Department. For all these reasons I think that Senator Newell deserves support on his amendment.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Hoagland.