

March 1, 1982

LB 378

group, this body. I forgot to have these amendments printed in the Journal and, consequently, I have had them xeroxed and they are on your desk. Now these amendments are very simple and Senator Cullan, I have talked to him and agrees that these amendments do exactly what I have said they do. Basically they strike Certificate of Need review committee and put back Department. Now the bottom line issue here, and this is a very serious amendment, as I said to Senator Cullan and as I said in my opening, if these amendments are adopted, I can support the bill because this is the guts and the essence of Certificate of Need and I think we all should understand that. Senator Cullan's premise has always been we need to do away with the mickey mouse. I don't quite agree with that but I am willing to do away with the mickey mouse if we keep the process as it was intended to be, a process where we watch and we review unnecessary capital construction and costs associated with the rising cost of health care. Now that is what this amendment does. Senator Cullan basically creates a new bureaucracy, and for those of you who are concerned about bureaucracy and duplication, that is exactly what Senator Cullan has done in his amendments. He has created a review committee that is similar...similar to the appeal process, and the reason he has done this is to take away the power of the Department which is now a code agency, which is now going to be sympathetic and understanding of the interests of political forces throughout our community but he is going to take away from them all power to do their job effectively at all. The essence of this issue is simply this. We need not create this new bureaucracy and we need not gut, and that is exactly what Senator Cullan is doing, gut the entire Certificate of Need process. If you want to do away with the mickey mouse, then we will do away with the mickey mouse. We will raise the threshold. We will make all kinds of other changes. That is fine but the vote on this amendment is a very simple vote. It is a vote on whether you want this process to mean anything at all or whether it will be just a shell. Now frankly this Legislature knows that health care costs are rising at an astronomical rate. Eighteen to twenty percent a year and that is absolutely impossible for many Americans to be able to live with. This proposal will at least allow the process to work a little bit. I doubt if we will see significant reductions in costs in the near term because frankly Certificate of Need is a long term process. It is a review to make sure whether these expensive capital investments are needed or duplications, but without this amendment, without restoring this process, without allowing the Department to at least review, we are gutting this thing altogether and we might as well have a

8115