

March 10, 1982

LB 522

SENATOR CULLAN: I'd like to give Senator Nichol a few seconds at the start of my closing and then I will conclude.

SENATOR CLARK: Alright, Senator Nichol.

SENATOR NICHOL: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, thank you, Sam, for the fifteen seconds. I just want to say look at this bill. It has big financial interest, not this year but next year and with what the Governor just told us we should be looking at the financial impact of this bill. It is important. It is not a sleeper. Wake up. Thank you, Sam.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I think Senator Johnson and I have been more than up front about what this bill does and it is not a minor bill that is sliding through the Legislature. It is a change in philosophy. It is a major change in the philosophy of the State of Nebraska as far as administration of its welfare programs is concerned. It is a change from county administration to state administration and it is done after this bill has been before the Legislature, many times in front of the Public Health and Welfare Committee. And the Health and Welfare Committee advanced this bill because it believes that it is time to make major changes in the structure of the welfare system in the State of Nebraska. If you want to continue with the welfare system that costs much more to administer than any of our surrounding states, then vote against the bill. If you want to continue with the philosophy that property taxpayers should carry the load from Medicaid and indigent care, then vote against the bill. But if you believe as I do that those functions are not responsibilities of the local property taxpayers, if you believe as I do that there is no local control in the welfare system today anyway, that all the property taxpayers do and all the counties do are pay the bills, then why would you want to retain a county welfare system? There is no local control. When a county board turns down a recipient that is qualified under the federal and state laws, the recipient appeals and the recipient wins and that is expensive to the county because they have to pay for the cost of the appeal and is expensive for the state and in some cases attorneys fees are awarded too so it is an unnecessary problem. I estimate that we can save two and a half to three million dollars at least in administrative costs by reorganizing the way we administer the welfare system in the State of Nebraska. John Knight told me this morning he thinks it is closer to \$4 million but I don't think there is anyone that would dispute that a substantial savings can be made by reducing significantly the number of people, number of bureaucrats who administer the welfare system in the State of Nebraska. I think this bill makes sense. I