

SENATOR HABERMAN: If a person would sign that they are indigent and couldn't afford to pay the fee and it turned out that this wasn't true, is there any penalty?

SENATOR LANDIS: There is not.

SENATOR HABERMAN: So then basically it is worthless.

SENATOR LANDIS: It depends on how you feel about it. I think it is valuable. The Department of Health has no problems with it, neither does the Governor's Task Force.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Well I don't care about the Governor's Task Force or Public Health. I'm just saying if I walk in there and say I'm an indigent then I don't have to pay the fee as long as I sign it. If I get reelected and have four years for people or forget it. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR KAHLE: Senator Wesely, do you wish to speak on the Landis amendment?

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, as a member of the Public Health Committee we did hear LB 863. It was about two or three months ago that the bill was brought before the committee and was advanced. I don't know what it's status is. I know it hasn't come up on General File. There was support for the concept of establishing fees in this area and so I will support, at least at this point, the amendment by Senator Landis but I also want to caution the body because at the hearing it became clear that there were some things that we had to be concerned about in terms of establishing fees. And so I am not sure exactly what is in and what isn't in the amendment offered by Senator Landis but let me give you some examples that came out at the hearing. There was a great deal of concern from the City of Lincoln about the question about venereal disease testing and the fact was that they offered it free because of the concern for the general public health. If you didn't provide easy access, no barrier whatsoever to encourage people to come down to be tested for that disease which is so contagious and a serious problem in this country, and they were saying that if they did establish even a minimal fee you may have people reluctant to come in and to get tested. And there was some concern that there may be more cost in the long run by establishing a fee. Now what Senator Landis has done I think is very admirable in providing for indigent free care and free testing and I think that would make this amendment much more palatable than what is in LB 966. So I will support the amendment but I would ask that you also keep in mind some of the concerns that when you do start assessing fees and some of these things, they were established free of service for a purpose. There was a reason that they decided that these sort of tests were important to provide free of