

April 5, 1982

LB 378A

mention also a significant point which is the tremendous decrease in the workload in the Department of Health which will result from LB 378 and I think we could reduce our staff from twenty to about seven and probably be over-staffed at that point or adequately staffed at that point. So I urge you to reject the Wesely amendment. I see no reason for additional monies for the Department of Health now.

SENATOR LAMB: Senator Higgins, on the Wesely amendment.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Mr. President, the last time I talked to the Department of Health I understand that federal government has already cut their licensure department by 60% of what the federal government had been paying so that while the federal government is telling the State of Nebraska, if you want to qualify for Medicare and Medicaid you have to go out and do these inspections and where we have been paying for them. Now we are not going to pay you but 40% instead of 100%. So the Health Department has't necessarily got too much money to spend and while we are all trying to find ways to cut government expenses and I certainly agree with it, if you want to take money from the Health Department so they can do a poor job of inspecting hospitals, nursing homes and seeing that the general health of the State of Nebraska deteriorates, then I can't go along with that argument. So I would ask that in the interest of protecting all of the federal funds that we get, that we support the Wesely amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR LAMB: Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I guess we are down to a judgment situation. I would support Senator Wesely's motion for the simple reason I think it is more realistic. Talk about the number of people on our staff. There are...I assume it has been pointed out the substantial federal funds that are going to go away that are not replaced. We are not asked by the Department to be replaced and a number of those positions in the natural course of things will be gone. But the Department has consistently indicated that 378 would have about this impact. As a matter of fact look at the appropriation bill. We had a \$37,000 figure anticipated cash income which was from the certificate of need application. I think the A bill is what, twenty some thousand, that is proposed in it which is ten or fifteen thousand under at least what will probably be required. As a matter of fact, the whole Health Department's budget is substantially down from what it has been in the past because of the loss of federal funds. So I guess you