

April 7, 1982

LB 602

the reason it will grow is not necessarily because of LB 602, in my opinion. The reason it will grow is because of the recent litigation between Douglas County... in Douglas County where the Douglas County District Court said that in 12 cases that Douglas County should have paid medical bills. So the jist of LB 602 is it establishes standard statewide to define indigency because currently there is no standard, and I think without establishing some kind of a standard we are going to see a lot of litigation throughout the entire state trying to determine whether individual patients are indigent or whether they are not indigent and that is why I think it is important. I would also...well, I guess I would just urge you to support this bill because I think it will alleviate a lot of the concerns that people had about 522 as well.

SENATOR LAMB: Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Question for Senator Johnson if he will yield, please.

SENATOR LAMB: Senator Johnson.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, I shall, Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Senator Johnson, as I understand it the problem with the counties is that they have not been paying at all.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: That's right. That's why it is going to cost them more money is because they have had an obligation for one hundred years to meet the needs of the medically indigent and they have paid a little here, a little there but they basically haven't paid. So what happens is that we resolve the problem. We say, okay, there is going to be a uniform state standard. It is going to be applied uniformly to all counties and, yes, they will have to pay.

SENATOR PIRSCH: And yes they will have to pay, but there is really nothing in here that guarantees that they will pay.

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Other than...no, there is not. You know, the ultimate guarantee I guess is litigation, but, no, there is nothing in here that guarantees it.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Okay. Also, Senator Johnson, could you tell me what the appropriation increase then would be for 602?