

Proceed.

SENATOR LYNCH: Oh, I see. I think I have only talked that long once since I have been here so it won't take me too long. What we would simply like to suggest is that in this particular case, given the public health concerns we should have across the state, the legislation that, in fact, provides for needs across the state, that this kind of a statewide responsibility is important. The cost seems high, but in a sense is very little when you consider the fact that this would deal primarily with preventative care. I don't know what the adage is but I heard a dollar in preventative care is worth about \$10 in real costs of ongoing care if you fail to recognize those primary needs and, in fact, what this would do is provide care for those now unserved, just so we understand that as well, plain addresses four basic public health services that are listed in the legislation, and it also provides, by the way, for the State Director of Health to evaluate and approve of a program for public health in all of those six areas. It also provides that information should be provided to the Legislature. It also provides for the Director of Health, by the way, to appoint an advisory council in each region. The advisory council would consist of at least one person from each of the counties within those six regions, and most importantly, I guess with growing medically, again, indigent problems we have in the state, which, by the way, aren't nearly as serious as they are across the country because Nebraska has done a very good job providing, through its Medicaid and Medicare programs, benefits that aren't found in most other states. But this would even help our good state in doing a better job. We would hope that you would give this some consideration. I know we have budget restraints. I would hope that you wouldn't just routinely deny the opportunity for this priority to be included among other priorities that many of you have as it applies to our limited funds, I would admit to that. But give us a chance. I would hope that you would simply permit this bill to continue to move. I would expect that when the time comes we have to divvy up the pot, so to speak, that we would have to compete with that pool of money and, hopefully, justify it on need, but that, we are a little ways away from that. This is an unmet need that should be met. It is an important priority we should have. It is a small amount of money that we would be spending in state funds but an important amount of money that would have lasting and, I think, very cost effective benefits to the state. Simply ask that you give serious thought to this and, hopefully, let it pass through