

first-time financial incentive to nurses entering the field the first time, and that is the essence of the bill, to entice them into nursing. And the second portion of it would be which has to do with an extended campus, off-campus courses, primarily offered by Bishop Clarkson and Creighton University in Hastings, out through the state. This part would give \$50 for credit hour towards the tuition on this off-campus course. I will explain that off-campus course a little bit more. It is designed to bring help in the rural areas and to improve the health care. The third portion of the bill is a financial incentive to those nurses that go back out and serve in the rural area, that is areas that are under 50,000 population. Those areas are not able to give the incentives to draw the nurses into training or to keep them there, and so that is the third part of the bill. In the past five years, some of this information, and as you know, most of you, that I had LB 890 a couple of years ago which adopted the associate nurse program in the community colleges, so there was a lot of work, and part of that bill was that a study commission, and they had a lot of hoops to go through, and so on, before any new nursing programs can be adopted or studied. So a lot of this information is very current. It was put together last summer and last fall, and there was a report made to the Education Committee about a month ago in their findings on new nursing programs, the shortages, and so on. The Nebraska Department of Health data shows that in the past five years approximately 50 percent of both RNs and LPNs take employment in the same counties that they take their training in, and another 11 percent of the RNs and 17 percent of the LPNs in an adjacent county. So the idea of the program is to entice them into training and entice them into the rural and outstate areas. I probably don't need to belabor the fact to any of you of the current nursing shortages that we have. I have a file here which was, incidentally, voluntary of nursing homes, hospitals, and so on, on the severe nursing shortage. If I have time, I will share with you a few excerpts from a few letters that explains the situations very, very careful. Nebraska has...the nursing vacancies have increased approximately 21 percent. A part of that is through new technology, the new need, people are sicker, and girls, primarily, and men are not going into nursing, primarily, the low wages, the long hours, and so on. I think of the meeting that we had last evening out at the Fairgrounds, LB 89, and the teachers pay. It is sad. This group of nurses that I am talking about and these beginning students still are drawing less money to start with, particularly the LPNs, than a lot of the teachers that are