

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Nelson, please.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I don't intend to belabor this bill any longer. I think we have spent enough time on it, but I was made privileged to some information and how this count came from. As you know, I mentioned here a little bit ago, a \$6 million cap, and sometimes you get figures real rapid, and this is no exception. The actual count as been counted in the last couple of years, the outpatient and the hospital inpatient, and the total charges billed were \$13.6 million, and the hospital's share was \$4.6 million at 35 percent, and the state's share at 65 percent, \$9 million. So then my question then was back, well, I am quite sure that the doctor maybe that has to absorb some of this fee, it doesn't actually maybe cost him \$24 to serve that patient. Let's cut that in half or two-thirds, so actually they did in arriving at the \$12 million figure, they used 65 percent of the billed charges. So I am not denying those figures and I have no reason to believe that they are not correct. I, too, have to set my priorities and whether or not I could support the bill at that amount of money, but I thought I would share that with the body real quick.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Owen Elmer, please.

SENATOR ELMER: Thank you, Mr. President. There has been several individuals among the membership that have said this is not a property tax relief bill. I would look at it more in this light. The counties are obligated to take care of these type of individuals that they find out they are unable to take care of themselves. The potential for increasing the property tax to do that is there. This would, at least, address some of that potential liability that those counties may incur. In that respect, it could be viewed as a future curb on increases in taxes in those counties. That is how I view this. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Lynch, would you like to close on your advancement.

SENATOR LYNCH: Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the courtesy and the time that was given by the body to the bill so far. Anything I would say would simply repeat what has been said before. I hope you allow the A bill to proceed along with the bill, itself, to Select File. I would ask for your support. Thank you.