

157.

SPEAKER BARRETT: LB 157 is advanced. LB 360.

CLERK: Mr. President, 360 by Senators Wesely and Smith. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 11, referred to the Health Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, just a brief explanation and then Senator Smith will follow in the opening. The bill deals with two subject matters. One deals with burial expenses allowed under Medicaid. Currently, that's \$3,000. This is the amount you retain in assets to cover your burial expenses when you go on Medicaid. The cost of burials have gone up dramatically and the \$3,000 now allowed is woefully inadequate. This bill would increase the 3,000 to \$4,000 this year and then in two years it would go to \$5,000 so that we could allow these individuals who do go on Medicaid adequate resources to have a proper burial. In addition, the bill deals with the subject of personal care allowance in care facilities. Right now we allow \$30.00 to individuals a month to retain in terms of income that they have. The rest of their income then goes toward the expense of their care. This bill would increase from \$30.00 to \$45.00 the amount of personal care allowance that we provide. That's a quick summary of the bill and I will give the rest of my time to Senator Smith.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Smith, please.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Mr. Chairman and members of the body, I will also be very brief. The bill is...and Don has already told you what the provisions of the bill would be and I would just use some examples. I'm in and out of the nursing home in Hastings a lot, and I will just tell you, very personally, I have had a father-in-law there. You've heard me mention about the fact that he was there for a period of time before he passed away, and now my mother-in-law is there. And so I do visit often, and I have a lot of contact with the other folks that reside in that nursing home and a lot of phone calls from them. And one of the biggest concerns that they have is that presently they're only allowed \$30 personal needs allowance for their...all the personal kinds of needs that