

it was on the floor. This has been worked out between Senator Nelson, myself and Senator Smith. I think everything is in workable order now. We do have a few technical amendments, but outside of that everything has been worked out. Let me just state a little bit what this really does. This is a tuition assistance program based on substantial financial need in order to enable eligible nursing students, who are residents of and attending an approved nursing program in this state, to receive a tuition assistance, in order to bring higher quality health care to rural areas and to enable hospitals and nursing homes in rural areas, in order to meet current and future federal requirements for Medicare and Medicaid by offering off campus courses, and to establish a program of financial incentives for nurses who practice in a rural area. Now I'm going to let Senator Nelson get into all of the details. I'll be able to answer some questions later on, if I need to. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Nelson, please.

SENATOR NELSON: I thought Mr. Schellpeper was doing very good. He did pass out a memo which I think does a very good job of explaining what the benefits are. As most of you remember, my initial bill was strictly a flat out incentive to entice nurses into nursing. I, at that time, could foresee the problem in establishing need and so on. But the body was more comfortable in adopting Senator Schellpeper's version, so to speak, in regards to need. And I've had a good lesson, I think, on establishing need, because there is a big difference between colleges and how they establish that in the unmet need. So we have tried to address that to bring all interests together. Simply what the bill does, starting after the bill is signed in, starting this next year, it allows incentives for three years. And the nurses that have started, the BSN's and the ADN's and the diploma's are allowed to finish that training. So my original bill, I did have a provision in there that the Education Committee and the Legislature would again address the need or the continuing of the program. I don't believe that that is in amended version. What it does is it allows \$1,000 of loan forgiven, and the institutions establish their criteria to a BSN for their...up to their three years of training. Now we put in a maximum of three years on a BSN simply because of the fact that a good share of the hospitals, particularly in the Omaha-Lincoln area, do offer incentives and so on for that fourth year of nursing to entice them to stay in their institution. It's down for an associate degree in nursing to