

\$500, and less for the LPN. In the rural incentives, this portion of the bill, and I will address the fiscal note on this, I don't know if I'll have enough time on this time at the mike. But there is an incentive to practice in the what we call the rural areas, it's any county under 60,000. And as most of you know or realize Medicaid and Medicare do not pay the same rates outstate as they do in the metropolitan hospitals, therefore it's very difficult for the nursing homes, particularly in some of the outstate hospitals, to be able to offer the same incentives to entice nursing to their areas. I do have in front of me, and this was effective the first week in March, some of the hospitals in the Lincoln area, and most of the new RN's, their starting wage is \$9.65, \$9.41, \$9.97, \$10.50, \$9.55, gives you an idea. Incidentally, the state is low, theirs is \$8.66. There is not the discrepancy between the rural wages as there is...it was first perceived here on the floor, and that was due to a testimony given in the Education Committee. Grand Island, Kearney, the starting wages are \$9.35 and \$9.63, so there is not that much difference. One Omaha hospital, for an LPN it's \$6.96 an hour, and outstate it's \$5.98. So there is not that big difference. I have in front of me, too, and I think all of you know exactly what the nursing shortage is. It's getting worse every day. This came from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Rosalie Yeaworth, which I've had the opportunity to work with, and this is on the federal level from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and some of their concerns. One of them I might say is exactly what we're talking about, development of nursing resources, financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate nursing students must be increased. The burden of providing this assistance shall be equitably shared among the federal and state governments, employers of nurses, philanthropic and voluntary organizations. The preferred method of providing this support is the use of service pay-back loans, as well as scholarship funding for those in financial need. If I have any more time I will address the fiscal note on the bill. But maybe I better do that later. I think that we have, oh one other very important part of the program is the extended off campus course. From what I have gathered this is one of the most valuable parts of it in the need. This is primarily offered by Bishop-Clarkson in Omaha, I think they have 90 or 92 students. UN-L offers some of these courses. What it is is a girl is an associate degree or a diploma nurse and she takes off campus courses, or he, to upgrade their education to a BSN. The nursing homes are very much in need, and the hospitals, in BSN's. The maximum that