

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Discussion continues on the committee amendments. Senator Lowell Johnson.

SENATOR L. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I think I can partially respond to the question posed by Senator Hefner. In the experience that I've had in hospital affairs the podiatrists having been given staff privileges on hospital, and with respect to their surgery involved, in our case, they were allowed to perform surgery under supervision of a qualified surgeon who is on the staff already. So there would be coverage from that standpoint. And I would like to urge also acceptance of the bill, because hospital staff privileges generally are desirable for podiatrists which would include services to people, like diabetics and the senior citizen, as has already been indicated, but also those people who have been involved and are involved in active sports such as running and aerobics. Since they are qualified to perform surgery in their own office, the best place to perform in a more difficult surgery would be in a hospital, as opposed to the office setting. In this case then they would be, if there are complications involved, the privileges of the hospital would enable the podiatrist to have immediate attention admitted to the hospital to deal with any problems. Under this bill podiatrists would therefore become a part of the total health team in providing health care, not only to the diabetics, as we indicated, but the senior citizens and anyone who needs special treatment for their feet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Any other discussion on the committee amendments? Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In closing, again the committee amendments do become the bill. And in response to Senator Hefner's questions, again what we're providing for here is a nondiscriminatory situation, so that podiatrists now will have an equal opportunity, within their scope of practice, having the chance to utilize hospital facilities. There are 35, I believe, podiatrists in the state. I am aware of only one currently with hospital privileges. There has been discrimination in the past, I think it was unreasonable, and all have agreed to stop that discrimination and allow a reasonable process to proceed. I think we ought to adopt these amendments and advance the bill. I think it deals with a long-standing problem that clearly we've come to a time at which we're ready to address it, and appreciate your support for the committee