

May 10, 1989

LB 303A, 303

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. President and members, just an alert, again, to the members of the Legislature. The health cost problem is increasing. It is a great concern to me. It should be a great concern to you. LB 303 calls for \$8,400,000 additional dollars next fiscal year, \$14,500,000 the following year and that doesn't even include the additional \$5 million in dispute now between Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the state which is now under actuarial study. This is serious, this is serious. We're talking here about \$23 million more dollars, maybe \$28 million more dollars over the next two years just in health insurance costs. This is reflected not just in state employee health insurance, but any employer in the state is facing the same sort of increases. I know from personal experience over in Lincoln Telephone where I work in personnel, the sort of increase we're facing and I can assure you that there isn't an employer in the state that isn't facing some sort of increase in health costs and in some cases significant increases just as we are suffering from a significant increase. We fight and argue and scrap over \$50,000, in Senator Schmit's case, and millions of dollars in other people's cases and here we're talking about \$23 million. Nothing much we can do about it, but I think at the same time we need to understand that this is \$23 million visibly present but there are millions more out across the state in other employee and employer insurance coverages that are also increasing. My suggestion is that we've got get a handle on this and the one way to get a handle on it is to get more information, more data and start to make some cost control, cost containment initiatives work here in the State of Nebraska. If we don't get a handle on it, it's going to only get worse and I just want this bill to point out once again how serious a problem we have with health costs.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. The question is the advancement of the bill. All those in favor say aye. Opposed nay. It is advanced. LB 303A.

CLERK: Mr. President, on 303A I have Enrollment and Review amendments pending.

PRESIDENT: Senator Hall, would you help us on the Enrollment and Review?

SENATOR HALL: Mr. President, I would move the E & R amendments be adopted.