

very good that this bill will pass and pass overwhelmingly, but nevertheless, let me run through once again why there is great concern on my part for this legislation in its current shape, and, first, let me thank Senator Baack in particular for having been very cooperative in bringing the bill into a form that is much more acceptable than it was to begin with, that he has been willing to cooperate and negotiate and I have appreciated that a great deal. I'm not offering any other amendments and I just simply think a chance to one more make the case against the sort of changes in this bill needs to be made. Number one, in preparing for this I went back over the years to, as Senator Moore said, I've been involved in this from the beginning and was a co-sponsor of the original bill and it was a very tough bill nationally recognized and we weakened it terribly back of '80-81 and ever since I frankly don't want to claim much credit for it because it hasn't done nearly what I hoped it would. Nevertheless, I do feel it has done some good and I've looked back over the years and found that it has saved millions of dollars in expenditures and I'll go over that in a second. But it has been weakened quite a bit over the years and hasn't done all that we'd hoped to do. But nevertheless, the problem of health care costs are still out of control despite whatever successes we've had with CON, limited as they have been. And I look back over the years and back in 1984 I fought for changes in our state employee health insurance coverage plan and I was arguing because at that time we had a \$15 million plan and it was going to go up to \$16 million and I thought we couldn't afford it, it was unbelievable and how we had to do something about health care costs. And now just for your information that \$15 million cost to our budget is going to be \$46 million this next fiscal year, tripled, tripled in five years. Now this is something we've got to try and get a handle on and I do appreciate, yesterday, your support for a minor cost, \$36,000 amendment to do a health care cost index, but we are in a serious crisis with health care in the State of Nebraska and in the nation. The one effort we've really undertaken was certificate of need. It was weakened and this will weaken it further. Other things need to obviously be done because despite CON we're still having health care cost increases, but when you've had a \$15 million expenditure triple in five years, it ought to be a cause for alarm. What are we going to do about it? One thing to do about it is not to weaken one of the few efforts we've made to contain costs. I think that is a mistake. This bill is much better than it was and I appreciate that, but nevertheless, it still does dramatically weaken the impact of