

File, committee priority bills.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB 678 was introduced by Senator Wesely. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 19 last year, Mr. President. At that time, it was referred to the Health and Human Services Committee for public hearing. That committee reported the bill to General File. I do have committee amendments pending by the Health and Human Services Committee, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Wesely, please.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, it's a real pleasure to begin the 1990 legislative session with discussion of LB 678. It's very appropriate that this be the first bill that we consider during this legislative session, it deals with the topic of child care. The issue of children, the issue of families are one of high priority to the State of Nebraska. Nebraskans have long been concerned about the welfare of our children and I think it very appropriate to place I think the first piece of legislation up this very bill. Following this bill, we will discuss the matter of child welfare; following that will be education. And I, again, emphasize that I think it's a very appropriate way to start a legislative session as important as this one. Now the topic of child care is one that I'm going to briefly outline where we have come from and then get into the committee amendments and then get into the heart of the bill after the committee amendments are adopted. First off, let me start with the topic of child care and where we have come from in this Legislature in recent years. In 1987, a task force was formed by myself with the help of the Health and Human Services Committee to look into this topic. In 1988's legislative session, we introduced legislation to add licensing specialists because we were finding that the licensure practices we have in place for day care were woefully understaffed and we were finding that day care homes were not inspected but once every four years or so, so in 1988 we did add four licensing specialists which have come on board this fall to better inspect day care homes. In addition this Legislature passed, as part of that bill, a rewrite of the rules and regulations for day care homes. As you probably understand, day care homes are situations in which an individual stays home and cares for children in their own home. You also have day care centers and other types of categories, but a lot of the focus of LB 678 and other legislation has been on day care