

SENATOR HABERMAN: Withdraw them, please.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Withdrawn. Senator Wesely, we are back to the main bill as amended. Proceed.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Speaker Barrett, members of the Legislature, if I could I'd like to summarize the legislation for you and then again open it up to questions. I understand Senator Beck indicated a question, Senator Hall, and anybody else who would like to, I'd be happy to try and clarify. But really the bill is not as complex as it might appear, but it is a very important piece of legislation. It sets the framework for moving forward in an area that I think is very important to the State of Nebraska. I did summarize for you how recently the Legislature has done some very good things, adding a licensing specialist, changing the rules and regs, adding support for Title XX. These are very positive steps that we've taken in the last two years on child care. Now we need to take this remaining step of establishing, for the State of Nebraska, a framework to deal with this important topic and let me start back and talk about how much our lives have changed in just the last two decades. You know, I'm not that old, but when I was being raised by my family it was a situation across the board that women did not work, that they stayed home and there they worked with their families and raising their children in the home and the vast majority of individuals were raised and almost everybody, I think, on the floor of the Legislature was raised in a family situation like that. I would wonder if any of us ever were in a situation where we were placed on a day in and day out basis in a day care home, in a child care setting. But times have changed. Today most of the children are in such a situation, that today most parents find that both the woman and the man need to be out in the workforce. They need to bring in the income to support their family and this means that their children need to be placed in day care. That situation was not the case 20 years ago, but today it is very much the case and we've seen just in the last four years, from 1985 to 1989, the number of day care facilities programs in the state has gone from 2,600 or so to over 3,400 in just a few years and this increase is going to continue as we recognize the demands out there placed on families today for both parents to be working. Now this is an option that people have a right to choose whether they want to do that or not. Of course, many families decide that they'll stay home and raise their children in a more