

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Mr. Speaker and members, thank you. I think that Senator Wesely probably explained the bill fairly well what it is. I passed out a sheet that also explains what the bill does. I think you all are aware that on October 1 the federal government are coming out with some new regulations, and this will just let the Health Department...would allow some waivers if they think that they need it in the rural areas. This does not say that they have to, but they can allow waivers in rural areas, if there is a nursing shortage, which we have in Nebraska at the present time. We are not backing up on their education, we are not backing up on what they have to have in the nursing homes at the present time. We're just saying that, if they cannot find nurses to staff the nursing homes 24 hours a day, that they can use part-time or have them on-call 24 hours a day, but they don't have to be there 24 hours a day. So I think it's a way to help, to keep our nursing homes in rural Nebraska open and operating without...and still meeting the federal guidelines. I'd be glad to answer any questions, thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Mr. Clerk, you have an amendment on the desk?

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Coordsen would move to amend the bill. (Coordsen amendment is printed on pages 862-64 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BARRETT: The Chair recognizes Senator Coordsen.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. My amendment is a bill that I introduced this session, LB 948, to also address a problem that has come about in the nursing home industry by OBRA '89. And in that particular Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act they changed the nomenclature for...or the title of the person who could sign the Medicare/Medicaid forms and those sorts of work in a nursing home from a social service designee to a social worker. And that triggered our state Social Worker Certification Act. I have passed out a copy of the amendment. I would share with you that it will be my intent to adjust our current social worker certification laws to make them more understandable, to ensure that the Department of Health's implementing regulations are written in such a way that the social worker statutes will be enforceable, and that the people who are in 120 bed and larger nursing homes are going to be put out of a job by October 1, 1990, will not be put out of a job. Would also share with you that LB 948 was held in Health