

April 2, 1991

LB 400

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Beutler would move to amend. (Second Beutler amendment appears on page 1446 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I separated this amendment out, because it really goes to what this bill is all about. And I'm not sure how the Legislature wants to go on it. But I want to make sure that this bill is understood. It's played throughout the bill, including in the title of the bill, the Rural Health Systems Professional Incentive Act, that's how it's played. But when you look at the key provision of the bill, the key provision of the bill is Section 16, page 11, which says that the commission has the power to designate medical profession shortage areas within the state. Well, that provision doesn't tie back into the definition of rural. Now the definition of rural, in an earlier section of the bill, seems to limit the application of the bill to counties that are 15,000 or less, and not in a metropolitan area. But by...what my amendment would do would be to say that these shortage areas have to be in the rural areas, which is as defined in the front part of the bill. So, in other words, the profession shortage areas would have to be in the rural areas, as defined in the bill as counties of 15,000 or less. That, supposedly, is what the bill is all about. Without my amendment, without my amendment medical shortage areas could be in Omaha, they could be in Lincoln, they could be in any of the Platte River towns, they could be any place in the state. This bill isn't about anything rural at all, it's about a medical shortage area, wherever it exists. So I don't know what the Legislature's true intent is, I just think that we ought to decide whether this is a rural bill, or this is for shortages every place in the state. If you want to limit it to what it bills itself to be, then you would adopt my amendment, which would limit it to the rural areas. If you want the broader interpretation, which is what the bill is without my amendment, then this bill will apply...shortage areas could be declared anywhere in the state, including our biggest cities. I just want to be sure you have that choice before you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Discussion on the Beutler amendment? Senator Chambers.