

loans to be available to physicians who may want to serve the north Omaha area. There's a couple of census tracts that would fall under the definition of the bill. Those are currently, now available to be served under the current program. So this is a change not only in the bill, but in the current policy. I'm not sure how many people have ended up serving in that area, or if any have even, for that matter. But it seems to me that if the goal was to serve those areas of the state that are underserved by health professionals that, whether that be urban or rural doesn't matter as much as there have...some uniform criteria applied, and in this case that is exactly the situation. And if that criteria is applied, and an area is found to be in need of this program, I don't see why we should deny access to that area of those physicians or physician assistants under the bill. I would oppose the Beutler amendment, although it is a legitimate issue. It seems to me to head us in the wrong direction. There may be a misnomer to the bill, but essentially all these people end up in rural areas. Nevertheless, it is also to meet underserved areas, and in that respect I would not want to make this change as proposed by the Beutler amendment. I would oppose it.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Schellpeper.

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I also would rise in opposition for this amendment. I don't think it's really needed. I think the bill spells out, like Senator Wesely has said, that it's mainly to put them in the areas where there are not enough doctors, and doctor assistants, and things like that. So I don't think that this amendment is really needed. I think it's just a way to get at north Omaha, and I don't think we need to do that, because I think if there is a shortage there of a doctor, if he's put there to cover the people, I think we should let him do that because they're doing it right now. So it would change the program that we're having that is in place right now. So I would oppose the amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Schellpeper. Is there any other further discussion of the amendment by Senator Beutler? Seeing none, Senator Beutler, do you wish to close?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I think the policy decision is clear. I want to make clear that I have nothing against north Omaha. When I looked at this matter