

April 18, 1991

LB 503, 698, 719, 849A

CLERK: Senator Schrock has amendments to be printed to LB 719; Senator Beutler to LB 698. New A bill by Senator Will. (Read LB 849A by title for the first time. See pages 1706-12 of the Legislative Journal.) That is all that I have.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We'll proceed with General File, LB 503.

CLERK: 503 was a bill introduced by Senator Moore. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 22, referred to the Health and Human Services Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments pending by the Health and Human Services Committee.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President, members, we started in on this yesterday and let me try to bring you up to date again, and now I think we're actually going to proceed with the legislation. This could be the perennial issue involving the optometrists and ophthalmologists and the physicians of this state which I know have been around at least since '79, when I first came in, and will, I would guess from the situation we're in right now with this bill, be around for a while in the future. And I want to emphasize that there is nothing wrong with that as training and technology and we improve in different areas, we have to constantly adjust the law to reflect the situation as it evolves. We have the issue again before us deals with several particular items. The question that LB 503 tries to address is the ability of optometrists to do three main things; the ability to remove foreign bodies from the eye, to use oral drugs and the ability to treat glaucoma. That is, essentially, the three issues. The committee amendments provide for the amendment changing the foreign bodies removal to only that which is superficial. The attempt here is to try and recognize that we don't want to have an optometrist trying to remove a foreign body that is embedded in a significant way in the eye. There is some question about what superficial exactly means. We need to clarify that perhaps further. I understand there is some activity now by optometrists to remove some very lightly embedded items in the eye, and whether that is superficial or not, I'm not sure, but the intent is obviously the committee doesn't feel we want to authorize optometrists to remove simply anything that may be embedded in the eye, so that