

SPEAKER BAACK: ...method of doing things in the body. With that, I would certainly urge you not to adopt the amendment offered by Senator Wesely and Senator Moore.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Speaker Baack. I'll recognize Senator Dierks, followed by Senators Rasmussen and Wesely. Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Madam President and members of the body, I just wanted to stand in support of the Wesely-Moore amendment. I think that maybe just for sake of clearance (sic), for some people's information, if you don't understand the difference between an optometrist and an ophthalmologist, you should know that an optometrist's training is in the care of eyes, and the ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who has training in the care of eye disease. So the ophthalmologist does have a medical degree, a doctor of medicine degree before he becomes an ophthalmologist. Optometrist does not have that. I hope that will clarify some of the talk between the...the difference between optometrist and ophthalmologist. I don't believe that we have, with this legislation, made a retreat from reality, as someone suggested, with the Moore-Wesely amendment. Senator Schellpeper is to be commended, he did work hard to bring an amendment to the committee that would help bring the bill out of the committee. But the amendment, I think, was not signed off on by the optometrists, as many of us thought that it was. And the optometrists never did agree with that amendment. And I didn't support that particular amendment in committee. I don't believe this legislation has a tendency to lower anything, or to take any steps backwards. The people that are asking for this particular scope of practice change are very competent, very qualified professional people. And I think that if you talk to the ophthalmologists who currently use or work with optometrists, they will agree with that. I have some difficulties with our having to deal with this on the floor. I have difficulties with us having to deal with it in committee. I think that the 407 process was designed to take care of that. Now, like Senator Moore says, it becomes a political battle, and it becomes a lobbyist's dream. And here we are, caught in the middle, and we're expected to make some sort of a rational judgment. It's unfortunate that this couldn't have been worked out as a result of the 407 process. I think that most people concerned with it thought that it was. Then all of a sudden it turns out that there were some who thought that it wasn't.