

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President, members, I want to clarify, the question asked of me that Senator Rasmussen misinterpreted to talk about the oversight of one entity over the other, and I...what I want to emphasize is optometry will still oversee and discipline optometrists. Ophthalmologists will be overseen and disciplined by the Board of Medicine and Surgery. The question and the amendment and the bill and the committee amendment deals with who oversees the arrangement between the two, the contract between the ophthalmologist and the optometrist. The committee amendment had that agreement approved by the Board of Medicine and Surgery. The amendment by Senator Moore and myself has that agreement approved by the Board of Optometry. So the agreement itself is moved under the Optometry Board, but the independent practices continue to be overseen by their independent boards. This is really the primary change from the committee amendments that's being offered, and is one of the areas most strongly objected to by the optometrists. But there are other objections that the optometrists have, as well, that we do not change in the committee amendments. And let me start back, Senator Kristensen, Senator Baack and others have talked about the committee process and Senator Schellpeper's compromise. There is no compromise on this issue, there never has been. There has been an attempt to compromise, we have not been able to compromise. I don't know if you ever will be able to compromise on this issue between the optometrists and the ophthalmologists. They simply have completely different views of the issue. The amendment that was adopted by the committee was an amendment brought to the committee, had not been seen by the committee prior to the fact...to its being passed out by Senator Schellpeper. It was drafted by the ophthalmologists. We reviewed the intent and the basic structure of the amendment, felt that it was a reasonable proposal, and I still feel it's reasonable. I have no problem if we move forward and the committee amendments are adopted on the legislation. We did not, though, know at that time how the optometrists felt about that proposal, so there was no compromise. We simply felt comfortable enough to advance...to amend and advance the bill. The optometrists were then consulted, they spent time reviewing it, and came back and, and came back with the original Moore amendment which changed a number of things in the committee amendments and really brought the bill much closer back to the original bill. And so clearly there was no compromise. Now the proposal before you, by Senator Moore and myself, takes the