

survival rate and many even beyond that. We know that mammography tests reveal problems two to four years earlier than what can be felt through other kinds of self-examination. Since Nebraska ranks bottom in terms of the use of mammography tests and many, many women say that it has something to do with the cost of it, somewhere between \$50 to \$125, even though we are not fully funding it, by putting this structure in place, it enables us to go after some federal dollars that I think can help address this issue in Nebraska, and I urge you to support LB 256.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Rasmussen. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to rise again in support of the legislation. I want to thank Senator Schimek, Senator Rasmussen, Senator Labedz, the other co-sponsors of the bill for being so cooperative with the Health and Human Services Committee. We did spend a lot of time in working on these committee amendments. They do dramatically change the bill, but the thrust of the bill remains. It is a very, very viable and important step to take by the State of Nebraska. I'd like to outline a little bit of why we are moving in this direction, and how the context in which we are acting on this. As I said when I opened on the committee amendments, the original concept was to mandate insurance benefits coverage of mammography, and that legislation was opposed by the Banking Committee, which I sit on, because, again, many of the benefits affect just those coverages covered by insurance companies, not the self-insured. It does not cover those that don't have any insurance and just hits a part of the population, does not cover the state in any comprehensive fashion, and was felt to be discriminatory. Now many states have taken the step of mandating the benefit of mammography screening in insurance policies. That is how most states have dealt with this issue, but that is not how we are proposing that it be dealt with because that is not the solution to the problem. The better solution is what is being proposed in this legislation because this covers everybody in the state that is in need of this type of assistance. Every woman in Nebraska has the potential, if they fall under the guidelines of the bill, to qualify for this program and I think that is the better way to go. Why target it to simply those that are covered by private insurance and leave everybody else to fend for themselves. That's...the better route I think is this legislation, not the other concept that we've rejected earlier. Now this concept of the state coming in