

SENATOR LYNCH: Madam Chairman and members, I just took that amendment up there. I didn't realize, to be completely frank, that we were going to talk about 167 tonight. But since we are there, I had to get up immediately. And what it is is the amendment, I think, the exact language that Senator Kristensen just withdrew. It has to do with spending public dollars on abortion. I have the deepest admiration and respect for Senator Kristensen and I know his point of view on that issue. However, the only dollars a local subdivision can spend to supplement whatever health insurance any employee of that county has is public dollars. And, as you know, I've had some problems with the parent's right bill but I've never denied I was pro-life and there is a difference. It's interesting that in this case if you go self-insured and use public dollars, apparently it's perfectly all right to use those for abortion. But if you buy insurance from a company or some other source, you can't. Seems to be an inconsistency. And I think what this amendment does is give those people who are strongly pro-life an opportunity to insist that there will be no exceptions, either you're pro-life or you're not. This isn't a parent's rights bill. This has nothing to do with family planning. This has to do with getting the job done if you want an abortion. And if, for whatever political or other reasons, you feel obliged you have to support this to bail, for example, the City of Omaha out who has been self-insured for some time but, unfortunately, illegally and I think they should be helped and put into place a system where people can go self-insured without very little oversight from the Department of Insurance. And I have to tell you, I was amazed when I got the letter from Mr. McCartney. That's the first time I've seen a bill politicked interagencywise on the floor by a department head of the state. The next thing, I assume we're going to get letters from the Department of Social Services about bills that deal...that Wesely always introduces and maybe letters from the Department of Institutions that have to do with MR programs and the rest. But this is interesting politics, I have to admit. I'm, on one hand, kind of surprised to see it, and, on the other hand, kind of shocked by it as well. I think it's inappropriate that we should receive a letter from the Department of Insurance regarding any legislation like this. It's one thing if we ask an opinion but it's another thing to have it used politically such as this and I think it's inappropriate, indeed, and I think we should look at that. But, nevertheless, that's all it does. Doesn't affect 167 in any other way and it shouldn't have anything to do with the Department of Insurance or oversight. As you know, they