

simply, the Department of Insurance carry out the rules that apply as to insurance and how insurance is administered. It's kind of a consumer advocacy in some ways because it protects those who buy it and regulates those who are involved with it so that there is some sense of fair play and honesty in the whole process. But this is it. This is fish or cut bait time. If you're pro-life, you will support it. If you don't think that we should...if you think it's perfectly right to use public funds for abortions, however they cover their health care programs at the local level, then vote against my amendment. With that, I will try to answer any questions you might have.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Lynch. The speaking order now is Senator Landis, Bernard-Stevens, Labedz, Schmit, Kristensen and Nelson. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Madam President, and members of the Legislature, Senator Lynch described this as interesting politics and I concur in that. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that there is no exception for the public policy that does not permit public employees to have...not to have coverage that covers abortion in LB 167. Let me say that again, sir, because it's hard to recognize what the public law is here but this is a copy of existing law. It's 44-1615.01, passed in 1981. Senator Labedz, I recall, was the introducer. It was before the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee when I was a member of that...of that committee. And the language says this, this is existing law. No group insurance contract, no group insurance contract or health maintenance agreement providing hospitalization, medical, surgical, accident, sickness or other health coverage paid for in whole or in part with public funds shall include coverage for abortion. It goes on from there. Listen to the language, no group health insurance in whole or in part can spend any public funds for any public employee. Who is covered? All public employees in the state; public employees, not state employees, public employees. There is no exception. This is existing law and it's already written in the books. Why would we write a second time that which is already public law? And here I think the interesting politics begins rather than ends. My theory, and it's only my own, is that the purpose of this is to create a rift between those of us who support this bill. Some of us want to support this bill because it saves tax dollars and we also happen to be pro-life on other issues. Some of us support this bill because it saves public tax dollars but we also happen to be pro-choice on other issues.