

January 17, 1992 LB 677

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, Senator Withem, I didn't mean to cut off the discussion, I guess, and I'm glad you asked the question. I don't recall the particular circumstances of your amendment. I apologize, I don't, but last session Senator Smith did have a bill on the state ombudsman. I had this bill that did the state ombudsman and a local ombudsman. There was, in fact, conflict about what direction to take and the very essence of the issue was what you raised right now. We have had further discussions with the nursing home industry and with the nursing home advocates and we have reached a compromise based on the amendment that I'm offering after the committee amendments, hopefully, are rejected. And what we've arrived at in essence is this, that we will allow for local area agency on aging to choose, if they wish, to have a local ombudsman program under the auspices of the state ombudsman which is established under this bill and already exists for that matter, but not in our state statutes specifically. And so these local area agencies would have the choice, if they chose to have one, they could have them but then there would be rules and regs from the state ombudsman, certain conditions and parameters established under those as well as under the bill that I can get into. The nursing homes feel comfortable with the concept now. The local area agencies which had some mixed feelings are not comfortable with the concept and I think we've worked out some of the difficulties and I can go into more specifics or tell you that that's essentially how we've worked it out, that the understandings are more clear about how this would operate and people's concern have been, at this point, alleviated.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Withem and Wesely. Does anyone else wish to speak to the committee amendments? Seeing none, do you have closing, Senator Wesely?

SENATOR WESELY: Yes. Again, in follow-up to Senator Withem's question, these committee amendments need to be rejected so we can go to the next amendment which has been the one that parties have come to agreement on.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wesely. We'll now vote on the motion to adopt the committee amendments. All those in favor please vote aye, opposed nay. Have you all voted? Please record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 0 ayes; 21 nays, Madam President, on adoption of