

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: That is correct.

SENATOR WESELY: Okay.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: I thought I'd do that...do 5 and 6 because Senator Moore is very, very sharp and he's made it very difficult to isolate that. So you isolate it by taking 5 and 6 out. There's some areas in 5 that people might want to put back in and that's...that will have to be done by amendment process, but this is the way to focus the discussion.

SENATOR WESELY: And I appreciate that. I think...I think that's appropriate. It is the key bite that we really have left on this issue, although it may seem there are other complicating factors involved. And I'm going to come down on the side of opposing the Bernard-Stevens amendment and supporting the amendment as proposed by Senator Moore. And that isn't to say it's an easy choice, it's a difficult one. The committee came out with a proposal that is now before us that had the Board of Medicine oversee this...this arrangement between optometrists and ophthalmologists and I think it can be argued that that's a fair and reasonable thing to do. But let me argue that that would also make a very cumbersome system if we should go forward with this because we had the same arrangement in the area of physician assistants. Now many of you recall, I recall, Senator Conway, you worked on that issue and I'm trying to remember who some of the other people were, but you adopted...Senator Schmit was involved, with expanding the authority for PAs in this state. And if you remember, this was done some time ago. This authority was granted but it was placed under the Board of Medicine to take action to adopt. We went years, years with difficulty in getting anything to be done over there. And, finally, I remember going into a Sunday morning meeting before this Board of Medicine, they meet Sunday mornings, the Board of Medicine, that's the only time, I guess, they can meet, and went in and told them, look, the Legislature is tired of this, we passed an authority to grant physician assistants broader ability to perform their duties in rural Nebraska, it's time something happened. And, fortunately, not very long after we finally got some results out of that. But that experience maybe clouds my judgment or clarifies it because if you put this sort of a combative issue and put it under the Board of Medicine where they clearly don't, I think, have a high regard for optometrists and suggest that they will grant authority in this