

February 6, 1992 LB 503

Reading have been presented to the Governor. That's all that I have, Madam President. (See pages 690-706 of the Legislative Journal.)

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will return to debate on the Moore amendment. The speaking order now is Senator Wickersham, Robinson, Wesely, Schellpeper and Morrissey. Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Madam President. I will try to be brief because I know that there are more to speak and I'm not sure that I can spread much more light on this very difficult topic. But I think a couple of red herrings have been advanced here this morning in debate, specifically the one as to whether or not we want to have the pupils telling the teachers what to do. The real issue there is whether we want to have any professionals governing themselves. I'm a member of a profession, I'm an attorney. We are self-governing. No one is suggesting that we should be governed by doctors, by accountants, or anyone else, that we're not responsible enough or able to regulate ourselves. And I think, therefore, the argument about pupils and teachers is, indeed, a red herring. The real question is whether or not the professionals, themselves, are responsible and capable enough to regulate themselves. Now, again, as a backdrop to that issue, you have to consider whether or not we do put in statute sufficient safeguards so that if somehow these professionals are not responsible enough that the public is guaranteed that some baseline of safety and care is available. Now you can...you can debate about where that line should be. I'm fairly well satisfied, at this point, that the Moore amendment presents that line because of the training requirements and the preceptorship and, in addition, I think you have to consider that if the optometrists are truly professionals, which I believe they are, they will not knowingly act against their own best interest, nor will they knowingly act against the best interests of their patients. That is one of the tenets of their profession and I cannot see that if we...if we give them this baseline of training and we're adequately assured that they will not, out of total ignorance, do harm, that they should not be allowed to regulate themselves and to engage in the treatment of glaucoma. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Senator Robinson.