

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Hefner. Senator Coordsen, you're next.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to carry on where I left off a little bit ago, currently since 1987 the problem that also coexists in some areas in compensation is a reluctance on the part of some care providers to certify that the injury, the underlying cause of their bill was, in fact, a work-related injury. Basically, the hammer that currently exists between, and this has nothing to do with the injured party, between the insurance carrier and the medical, the insurance carrier or the self-insured corporation and the health care industry is a withholding of medical payments in some cases until the care providers complete the process of certification of the legitimacy of their medical bills that they have claimed. I would repeat to you that in the field of workers' compensation reimbursement to the employer, to the employee, or the injured party, number one, number one, the injured worker is entitled to weekly benefit amounts for living expenses based upon their wages in history, you know, their work record. All medical payments, hospital bills, doctor bills are not, are not the responsibility of the employee. It's a situation where all of the medical expenses are compensable on behalf of the employee, not by the employee. I believe that the law was changed in 1987 to address the concern of Senator Lindsay. There may well be some cases of misunderstanding that still exists within the legal profession, within the medical profession as to what the role and responsibility of each of those people are. The only hammer that currently exists between the insured and the medical profession to ensure that all of the requirements of the workers' compensation laws are followed is from time to time a disagreement in payment between the two parties until all of the certification of work-related injuries is, has taken place. I do not believe under the provisions of 360 with the annual review of medical fee schedules, to try to follow the actual costs of providing medical care that currently exist, that this amendment will provide any benefit to the injured party that does not currently exist for them and, in fact, may delay and complicate the settlement of Workers' Compensation Court cases. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Coordsen. Anyone else wishing to address this amendment? Seeing no one, Senator Lindsay, do you wish to close?