

and it's a business. They're going to spend money to make money, maybe add technology or more technology when we already have enough and you wonder sometimes. In Omaha, Nebraska we have more MRIs than they have in the whole State of Canada, and people live as long or longer there than we do here. Isn't that interesting? I think the issue that Senator Lamb brings to us is a real one. And the health care in the rural parts of Nebraska is certainly not the same as that provided in Omaha or in Lincoln, and we have to do something about that. Senator Hillman and I talked once about regionalization of some kind. There's a bill right now that would put a moratorium on hospital construction, and it's long overdue. Apparently the medical professionals don't want to assume the responsibility themselves to contain this cost. I can understand to get a doctor outside of Lincoln or Omaha and into a community where the help is needed you might have to build a building, but I would hope that if you lease space, if a public entity can lease space for the purpose of providing health care it should have to be justified the same as in the city. At one time we had a strong certificate of need program. Senator Wesely tried to protect it. The politics of the health issue was that we were unable to protect it, and as a result of that the rate of inflation for health care is double and triple what it is--in fact quadruple--than what it is for almost any kind of other industry. And I think it's an American scandal and I think we should be very careful, even on this amendment with Howard, that the health professionals understand that this is not another reason or an excuse to spend their reserves or even to use their reserves in other areas across the state. But we have to know the difference and make sure we justify it. Obviously there aren't too many people that are interested in this, and, for those that aren't really, don't complain about the cost of health care.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Lynch. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, Madam President and members, I want to again say that I share Senator Lynch's concern and Senator Hall's concern. They're very appropriate, and I hope we'll have a chance to address that issue in its broader context. In this particular case we're dealing with 23 hospitals out of the 94 hospitals in the state. All the other hospitals are able to take this step, and these hospitals, these county hospitals, municipal hospitals, are usually small. You know, Lincoln General is an exception to that. But, otherwise there are