

April 9, 1992

LB 1019

name is on it as well.

SENATOR HALL: Mr. Clerk, I would like to take it up.

CLERK: Okay.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Hall.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members, the issue in the amendment deals with a moratorium on hospital construction and it relates directly to the issue of Medicaid reimbursement, the problems that currently exist with regard to the hospitals in the State of Nebraska and the lawsuit that is pending. There have been discussions and much talk about what needs to be done, what we ought to be doing. But this issue, the moratorium is one that because of the nature of the conversations to date, although I have to admit there has been movement, the problem has been one of a one-sided affair. It's as if Senator Schmit were to take me on, I would be defenseless because of his wit, charm, grace and ability next to my humble capabilities. The issue here is one of the Hospital Association has the upper hand and the Legislature is left with three days in the session to deal with what could very likely be, based on the next budget, a hundred million dollar plus problem. One of the things that we have not been consistent in looking at is how dollars are spent by these not-for-profit hospitals. Another bill that was advanced out of the Revenue Committee was a bill that dealt with the issue of tax exempt status for hospitals. To date, hospitals operate in most cases as for-profit operations. There is absolutely no difference between many of these corporations that exist for hospitals, except for the fact that they enjoy the opportunity to pay no taxes. That also is an issue that I think needs to be addressed over the interim, as does the issue of certificate of need which is really nothing more than another way of talking about the moratorium on building. I understand that this is not a problem for many...many counties in this state and I believe that this amendment addresses only the City of Omaha and the City of Lincoln. Those two, the city with the metropolitan class...county with the metropolitan class city and a city of the primary class within the county would really basically nail it down to an Omaha and Lincoln problem. It would not affect the balance of the state. But in Omaha there are a number of building projects that are currently under construction or they're proposed. They've gotten to the point where they are doing joint efforts in terms of two hospitals