

much.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Schmit. Senator Moore, you're next.

SENATOR MOORE: Well, Mr. Speaker and members, I am not rising to really support the amendment, only to talk briefly about the problem, since that really is the thrust of the amendment, and I don't... actually I am not going to say whether the amendment is helpful or harmful. It doesn't make any difference, but the situation is, and the reason this is a problem is, that Senator Schmit and Senator Hall mentioned, just in general for all Nebraskans health care costs is something that is simply becoming too burdensome for anyone, particularly here on the state level. This is one of the reasons I have a problem with the next bill we will discuss is I want to once again point out the problems health care costs, Medicaid costs are going to cost, the strain it is going to put on the state budget next year and next biennium. If you look at the green sheet, page 3, you look at, as we said before, the federal match rate declined this year, 64 percent to 61 percent. It is costing us \$13.8 million just the last 9 months of the biennium we are now in, \$13.8 million. If you remember back in October of last year, the Revenue Forecasting Board bumped the projection by \$15 million, Medicaid consumed practically all new dollars available this session. Next year, that 13.8 by itself becomes 18. There is a further match rate decline, so we know right now at a minimum, at a minimum next biennium, we are probably talking \$25 million increase each year just to run in place. That is not giving one new service to anyone, that is not offering service, a new service to anybody as well. Couple that with the specter of a hospital lawsuit, that is one of those things given the (inaudible) amendment, that is their legal right to do that, but when we talk about numbers, you add to that anywhere from 5 to 15 million dollars, and if you want to do in between, talking \$10 million dollars. You are talking next year \$35 million. That is a minimum, that is a minimum increase Medicaid is going to strain that it is going to put on the state budget. It's a problem, we can no longer handle. I do not know what the answer is. I don't know if a moratorium helps or hurts discussions, I do not know. But in the next 12 months, between now and next January, the state, the provider groups, the Legislature, the administration, we have to come to grips somehow with our Medicaid problem and how we are going to fund it, and if we are going to fund it, or if we should fund