

managed care, obviously LR 6 is nothing but the provider tax, and whether we want to get into that will be determined as time rolls on. But I think LR 6 is...actually I'm much more comfortable with LR 6 saying develop a plan, we'll look at it and discuss it next year, (inaudible) LB 5. And I think this whole issue, I mean optional services as well as the federally mandated services, what we can do to try and curb that growth, if managed care is the answer I do not know yet, and that's something I want to take a good look at. But LR 6 really asks the department to develop at least that plan for us. I think we will see other plans from the provider community that we need to take a good, hard look at. But I think, you know, as we all know, Medicaid and that accelerated cost has caused us some major headaches. In the upcoming session we're going to have to really get our arms fully around that. Whether it be paying for an increase or curbing the increase, I think LR 6 is one component to give us some very needed information to move forward. So, with that, I ask for the passage of LR 6.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Moore. Before we proceed with debate, I'd like to announce that while the Legislature is in session and capable of conducting business, I propose to sign and do sign LBs 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 26, and 29. I'll now recognize Senator Schmit, followed by Senators Wesely, Dierks and Ashford.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Madam Chairman and members of the body, I commend the committee who did this work. I've not had a chance to read this or discuss it in some detail with some of the members, and look forward to reading it. I think it's important that as this work continues that we recognize that, as has been said here oftentimes on the floor, every single area needs to be explored for ways and means whereby savings can be realized. It's awfully easy for us and from time to time I have been one of those individuals who have criticized the health care providers for their, what I consider sometimes, excessive testing and experi...not experimentation, but excessive costs associated with hospitalization or medical treatment. We should look also at the fact that frequently it is because of mostly federal mandates that the providers of health care have seen substantial increases in their operating costs, both as physicians and surgeons, and as nursing home operators. As I travel around the district, and I do that with some degree of frequency, I visit the nursing homes. And almost without exception I am told of some additional impediment that has been