

LB 256 was introduced by Schimek, Schellpeper, Labeledz, Crosby, Rasmussen and Robak, and this bill did establish a screening program for low income women, put together a fund and a committee to oversee that program. And the program as set up covers women who are at 225 percent of poverty, or less, and there is a sliding fee scale. Fortunately, at about the same time this bill was making its way through the Legislature, the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta was looking at a proposal by the Department of Health which would set up a pilot program, or a program I should say, not a pilot program, that would screen for mammography, do PAP smears and all of those kinds of things. And so once the bill was passed there was about 9 to 10 million dollars available over a 4 year period to establish this program. It also...the bill also set standards for mammography that would meet the stringent requirements of the American Radiological College of Radiology. And so all of the providers that are involved in the program that LB 256 provided have quality assurance programs. And there are over 250 of those providers across the state. I might say that to date we know that over 3,000 women have been screened by that program. And I should make it clear what we're talking about here, both in LB 256 that we passed in 1991, and this bill, LB 68. We're talking about screening mammography only, not diagnostic. And the screening mammography is vitally important because the screening mammography can detect cancer up to two years before it can be found otherwise.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: And we do know that the early screening allows us to treat that cancer with far more success and far fewer dollars than if we wait until it is discovered in some other manner. As Senator Stuhr mentioned in her opening remarks, Nebraska is one of only five states that does not require insurance coverage for screening mammography, the other four are Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina and Wyoming. And with that, I think I'll stop before I get into any more remarks and hope that my light is not too far down the line. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. We have an amendment, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, I do have an amendment from Senator Schimek. It's AM776. (AM776 can be found on pages 977-78 of the Legislative Journal.)