

is what the bill calls for. The opposition I am sure we will hear from here a little bit on the floor on this measure. But the bottom line of why we are trying to do this is to recognize that if we don't provide for the medical care providers to be compensated for the care that they provide individuals, you will have a loss of millions of dollars to hospitals and other medical providers. And then you will have a problem, I think, resulting in these hospitals so quickly and completely giving care to individuals in trauma situations and otherwise needing medical assistance. Because they have this lien status, they know that they have the opportunity to go to court and have their costs, if a settlement is reached with some money being made available, to have their costs paid for. If you don't have this protection, you are going to have a situation that I think will be detrimental to the health care of the State of Nebraska. I think you will have hospitals being uncertain about whether or not they can and should provide all of the care necessary to take care of individuals. You'll have hospitals that are providing trauma care now who, and this is really a large part of these sort of liens are trauma care, where individuals get injured by other parties and then try to get compensation for their injuries. The trauma care that we have in our state, which is of great interest to all of us, I would believe, will be jeopardized by not being able to assure hospitals and other medical providers that they will have their costs covered if a settlement is reached in a court case. And so I am not only worried about the fact that in fairness that if you have a court case and that court case is settled to try and provide for the costs of care provided to an injured party, that we should then provide for covering the cost of that care, and pay the provider for that cost of care, but the consequences of this go far beyond that and to affecting our health care system and our trauma care system in a way that I think would be very negative on the overall health of the State of Nebraska and citizens of this state. So with that background on the issue, and it is a very complex issue, and it is not an easy one to learn all the ins and outs, but the bottom line is that if we don't pass this bill, we will see hospitals losing millions of dollars, and in turn I think jeopardizing the care provided by those hospitals, and particularly the trauma care provided by those hospitals, and in my view, and in view of the Health and Human Services Committee, overwhelmingly, we need to see this bill adopted and I would ask for support for the advancement of LB 172. I'd be happy to answer questions and, again, I commend Senator Jensen for his picking this as a priority bill.