

SENATOR WESELY: Well, I...Madam President, members, I tried to listen to some of Senator Pirsch's comments and I don't know exactly what the point that she was trying to make was, but let me assure you that every consideration is given to anybody who has a concern or expresses the need for an amendment to the bill, but there's a reason why the language is here and why the proposal is here and it's not something pulled out of the sky just for whatever agenda you might think is being promoted here. This issue, as I talked about earlier, was part of the 1993 report that I was on the task force of and which I can tell you there was a consensus reached about the need for health care reform in order to achieve welfare care reform and I've cited that. Senator Maurstad said, well, that's out of date. Well, I have for you now from the round table which was just issued a few months ago in 1994 a recommendation, number four, a creation of a task force to study the feasibility of a state sponsored HMO or other alternative plan that would cover low-income Nebraskans who do not have health care coverage available to them; justification, access to affordable health insurance is one of the primary barriers facing welfare recipients as a transition off public assistance. Anybody who seriously looks at welfare has to conclude that health care must be made available in order to achieve welfare reform. It doesn't matter whether you're looking at it in 1993, whether you're looking at it in 1994, or whether you're looking at it in 1995. And as for trying to move something forward without much discussion, this wasn't the last item discussed about in committee. Senator Pirsch, this was the fourth of nine amendments that we looked at and it was considered in committee, if you recall, we had had a discussion about it. And when you're talking about intent language, you're not talking about something that's absolute, you're talking about a goal and a direction and, obviously, an intent. And so, again, I encourage you to consider the fact that this is clearly where everybody has studied the issue, says we need to go. It's the direction that this Legislature has already talked about previously with other legislation and we should now call on the Governor to work with us to move forward on it and try and see what we can achieve together. One thing also, in talking about this being fluff for a feel-good amendment, when we put in a similar type of language on developmental disability services back in 1991 with LB 830, where we talked about the need to provide services to all developmentally disabled, we had intent that the Legislature would try and achieve that goal. Again, there was the same sort