

Appropriations Committee, have been doing. On the other hand, if you see that it is a necessary thing to be done across the state, and you have a strong feeling for it, it is appropriate to put it in. So with that, I will rest my case.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Madam President, members, I rise in support of the amendment and thank Senator Hillman and Senator Brashear for bringing it forward, and I also thank Senator Wehrbein. I know he is in a spot on this, but there was...I don't know if I'd characterize it as an oversight or what, but there was sort of an understanding that the cut in one area in the Health Department will get transferred over to this and it just didn't happen. To not have this go forward would be a real travesty, I think, for the state. Senator Vrtiska and Senator Wickersham and I can think of many senators here on the floor who have had an interest in the issue of trauma care. We have got a problem in the state. We had a hearing in 1994. We advanced and passed a bill after an emotional hearing about case after case of individuals who have died on the streets and highways of Nebraska from motor vehicle accidents and others, and from accidents in their home, and on their farm, and their business, who could have been saved if we had had in place a trauma system where we could have taken individuals who have been hurt or injured, and we could have known exactly where they needed to go in taking care of their problem with that speed that you need to have to medically treat the wounds and injuries that they've suffered. There would be people walking alive today that we've lost as a result of not having in place what this study will call for. We know that. I think all of us know that, and it isn't just a rural issue. This is a problem in Lincoln and Omaha as well. We have a more sophisticated trauma system, but we make mistakes too. We haven't pulled our systems together, integrated them with others, and we definitely can see the benefit of a good trauma system, and we know that we are lacking in many areas of the state with a system that we'd like to have. We once were number one on this. Nebraska led the way on some of the EMT, EMS, trauma activity, but we didn't take the final step of putting it altogether, all the pieces that we've got out there into one system that will work in integration with one another. So there is great interest in moving forward. The hospitals, the physicians, the Health Department, are all very committed in trying to move forward. The federal grant that we had has helped us make some progress, but, unfortunately, with