

February 8, 1996 LB 1108

of Physician Assistants. It came before the Health Committee, I don't believe there was any committee amendments. So I'm just, it does a relatively simple thing, it changes the statutory requirement for a physician assistant from certification to licensure. In other words, it just change the name from certified nurse...or certified physician assistant to licensed physician assistant. The bill doesn't change the professional qualifications for physician assistants. It doesn't change their scope of practice or alter in any way the relationship for the physician which is required of them by law. This change is simply one of terminology and it is made to help ensure that services provided by physician assistants will be covered by medical insurance. I'm sure you appreciate the difficulties which arise if services provided by PAs are not covered by insurance. So if there is doubt in the minds of the public about whether these services are covered, such doubts will lead to reluctance on the part of the public to be served by PAs which will in turn make access to health care more difficult and more expensive. On one additional note, LB 1108 also updates the name of the current accrediting agency for a physician assistant education programs. The name was changed and we need to do that in the regulation. I also want to note at this time that I do not plan to introduce an A bill for this bill. Could I have the attention of the body please, Kim. (Gavel.) I'd just like for you to understand one little point about this bill. I do not intend to introduce an A bill. The fiscal note calls for ten thousand dollars. I am not convinced that such a simple change in regulations could possibly cost that much. I have agreed to meet with the Department of Health officials about this issue, but so far this has not taken place. It has always been my practice to look at, take a hard look at fiscal notes, and this is one that I do not feel is justified. PAs have practiced in Nebraska since 1975 and have proven their worth in the health care delivery system. Your advancement of 1108 will help ensure their continued productivity and will protect health care options and access to quality health care for our constituents. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Senator Dierks, I just want to ask a question and it's nothing to the bill because the bill, I agree, is noncontroversial. But your last comment, however, is somewhat controversial. And I guess it's more of a comment and,