

February 29, 1996 LB 1322

Fire Marshal involved. You've got the local people involved, and what we've had are situations where, and, again, I will cite the case in Lincoln of a family that wanted to convert a home into a family day care center. They had the State Fire Marshal come out and tell them everything was fine. They had the local fire marshal come out and say everything was wrong. They had to do a certain thing. Then the building inspector came out and told them something different. When another inspector came out on another factor, they said that was wrong. This family went through hoops and turned around, upside down, inside out because of the lack of uniformity in how codes were interpreted and the fact that we have duplicative inspection processes. There is no reason, in my view, that we can't maintain adequate codes that protect the public and do so in a much more rational fashion than we have right now. We have too much of a situation at the state and local level, we're not coordinating things and can do a better job. Now that's my assessment, but I think we ought to allow people a chance to work through those issues and come back in December with recommendations to this Legislature, and then we can decide whether or not what I think is a situation is, in fact, the situation, and we can decide whether we go forward or not. Now we may find, after we hear back, that everybody is happy with it, and that would be...that would be great. That means we don't have to do anything and nothing would happen, but I do think that there is a legitimate concern out there, not to diminish the quality of housing, not to diminish the protection to the public, that would not be my intent. As someone who carried and eventually passed the state building code that we've got, I'm very supportive of codes. I think they're very important, but we also know carrying out codes, carrying out inspections, the administration of these can sometimes change the direction and the tone of things in not always the most constructive fashion. So I am very interested in trying to pursue this. I don't see any downside to it, frankly, other than we may find something out that maybe some of us don't like, but we don't know that at this point until the study is done, but not studying it will mean we'll turn our back on an issue that has been brought to us by a cross section of those involved in the housing industry, who have told us that this is an area that we need to take a look at it. That is...that is the issue before us. I oppose the Maurstad amendment. I hope you will as well. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Maurstad.