

anticipate that's going to happen. But I do have a lot of confidence in the directors in these departments. I believe that they're committed to doing this and I think nothing really will be served by delaying this. We've watched our Medicaid budget, in particular, go up. It's almost a straight line, almost at a 45 degree, not quite. But it is going up. And I think that we're going to have to move simply on that reason alone, to slow down this growth and to get our operations more efficient and to try to provide these services that need to be provided to Nebraskans on a more efficient manner. And reorganizing is one facet of that, if not a key part of that. And so delaying this, to me, makes it even more nervous...makes me even more nervous because we have to get these delivery costs in line and we just need to proceed with the decision that's been made and delaying would serve no purpose.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Coordsen, members of the Legislature, let me just respond again to some of the comments and suggest to you how important this is in terms of the credibility of the public. If this whole thing goes wrong, the Legislature is going to take a large share of the blame, and well we should, because ultimately it's our oversight responsibility to take a look at these kinds of things. And when you talk about mergers and consolidations, there's a lot of skepticism out there with the public, especially these days. They want to know, is this a shell game or is this for real? Is this going to work out alright or is this just another cycle where we, where we go on and on and nothing seems to really improve? And I think it's especially critical at this particular time in history that we demonstrate that we can do things that do improve the situation in a very real way. And I don't want to be a part of any shell game. And I don't, I'm not suggesting to you that this is intentionally a shell game, it certainly is not. But if the result turns out poorly, at least I want to be able to say that I took a realistic look at it, I required the information before they got started with the process, before the institution was structured I took a look at how the programs were going to be handled, and I exercised some judgement and I made a decision that could be based on some evidence and not distorted by facts already in place, and be able to say to the public, we did the best we could do. If you do not require this plan first, and