

March 6, 1996

LB 981, 1155, 1210, 1366

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. We had three bills that were put into 1155, we have LB 1210, LB 1366, and LB 981. I'll let Senator Hillman and Senator Wickersham explain their part of it. LB 1210 will amend the Rural Health Systems Incentive Act that we passed in 1991 and 1994. It will.... It contains two substantive changes in Sections 43 and 45, and they will improve the state's ability to recruit and retain doctors and nurses and all other professionals in the shortage areas. Section 43 will expand the eligibility for the loan repayment program. It will expand the program to include mental health practitioners, nurse practitioners, physician assistant, or physician in an approved specialty, and shall be licensed or certified to practice in Nebraska, not enrolled in a residency program and will enter practice in a designated health profession shortage area. Section 45 are administrative changes. There are currently two levels of shortage areas, there is a critical area and a shortage area, and two levels of incentive. And this amendment will make them both the same type. It's very difficult to track the time spent in each classification currently, whether they are in the critical area or the very critical area. Also, it was determined that it's easier to have the payback available for the participant practicing in these areas. The change in this section eliminates the distinction between shortage area and critical storage area, and it also allows the loan forgiveness for any participant practicing in any shortage area. So it's kind of a...it expands the Rural Health Act. This past summer there were several groups that got together, and it's been recommended by the advisory commission that we do this part of it. Senator Hillman has LB 1366, next part, and she wants to explain that, otherwise I can, too. Why don't you go ahead, Senator.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Hillman, you have approximately seven minutes.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members, very quickly, what 1336 (sic) did was define in statute ambulance to include aircraft. And this added language allows air units as ambulances, and it allows for those air units to be staffed by emergency medical personal...medical care personnel. It also defines air space, in statute, as in ground transportation, defines where you can go on streets, roads, highways, or so forth. And also in correlation to what's currently in statute,