

SENATOR MATZKE: Madam President and members of the Legislature, thank you very much, Senator Lindsay. What Senator Lindsay and Senator Wesely have both pointed out is that we have devoted a great number of hours to analyzing, discussing, examining and amending this bill. And the end result is AM4213 which is essentially a rewrite of the bill with the necessary amendments that are involved. Copies are being made. This was only arrived at a few moments ago. Copies are in the process of being made and will be distributed to the members of the body. There are 46 nonprofit hospitals which serve Nebraska and those hospitals would not have been built and would not be operating without the contributions, bequests and financial support of the citizens of Nebraska. We Nebraskans have really made a substantial and necessary community investment in our nonprofit hospitals, and they do a splendid job of providing outstanding medical care to the citizens of this state in virtually all of the regions of this state. Annually, Nebraska nonprofit hospitals provide over \$50 million in uncompensated care to hospital patients. Also because nonprofit hospitals are tax-exempt and have not been required to pay property tax or income tax, the counties and the state, in effect, have provided them a substantial financial benefit. Thus, the public has as a whole made a significant investment in our nonprofit hospitals. I introduced LB 1188, the Nonprofit Hospital Sale Act, to protect this public investment and the community equity which is in nonprofit hospitals. This bill would require any sale of a nonprofit hospital to be...to a for-profit commercial corporation to be considered, examined and reviewed and approved by the Department of Health and the Office of the Attorney General before it's completed. Now one of the changes that has been made from the original bill to this amendment is to delete the mandatory requirement of review by the Attorney General. An application and information would have to be filed, and full disclosure would have to be made. Then the Attorney General is given the discretion as to whether to review the application or not. The Attorney General does not have to. It is no longer mandatory, but the Attorney General would be furnished with that information. The criteria for his review are set force in the act. You may raise the question, why the Attorney General? Ever since a court decision by the Nebraska Supreme Court in 1912, the Attorney General of Nebraska has had the duty to protect the public interest in the handling of funds by a charity. But this is not unique in Nebraska. This is standard law in all of the states of the Union. Nebraska statutes, the