

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Matzke. Discussion?
Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President and members, again just to reemphasize I..again my appreciation to Senator Matzke for all of his work on this and everybody else's cooperation. He talked about the bill being a disclosure bill, which it is, because currently the Attorney General does have authority under the nonprofit statutes of the state to intervene and oversee asset issues and transfer of assets. This is a clarifying..with criteria amendment, to those statutes that specifically dealing with hospitals, it provides for disclosure, as Senator Matzke said, and I think will enhance the Attorney General's role in this whole process. In addition, the role of the Health Department already in place with Certificate of Need is further enhanced by clarifying and now through this process that they will be looking at access to affordable care and the impacts of these mergers and acquisitions. It will be looking at how those who are uninsured and medically indigent and others are impacted and trying again to protect the public interest. The primary concern has been from the beginning, in my part and I think Senator Matzke's is, changes occurring, the marketplace is changing, we are seeing more for-profit hospitals coming around. The nonprofit motivation usually run by community base board is a different motivation than a for-profit chain run somewhere else coming into a state. There can be very good results from a for-profit status. We have had at St. Joseph's Hospital a for-profit entity now for about ten years with quite positive results. The sale of St. Joseph's to their new owner has resulted in some concerns and some consequences of that have been some community ill will, I think, in cases some of the decisions Tenet has made, and so we can see that for-profit is not necessarily bad, it is also not necessarily good. The question is to be sure there is oversight, to be sure that somebody is there looking out for the public interest on some of the decisions to make sure that that people are well served by the changes that do occur. Now I had wanted to mention that the Lincoln situation here with the three hospitals, I have thought about potentially amending this bill. Currently it exempts out the nonprofit to nonprofit merger acquisition and that is the status of the issue here in Lincoln. I decided not to pursue inclusion of that with this measure because we already have the option of the Attorney General to intervene currently under statutes and the real issue here in Lincoln is.. will be