

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 11, 1999 LB 148

some expertise, somebody who has had a little training, not hours and hours, but a little training on how to care for that individual. I would urge that you would think positively towards this bill. I know there's some...there's a fiscal note with it. I would hope, however, that within the regions that there are people that could possibly do this and I certainly want to explore, with the Health and Human Services Department, if some of this can't take place with the...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Time.

SENATOR JENSEN: ...available help that's there. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator. Senator Hudkins would like to announce the following guests are visiting the Legislature. Located under the south balcony are 14 Brother and Sister Missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Welcome. Chair recognizes Senator Wehrbein for further discussion on the advancement of LB 148.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I will just simply say that this is going to be probably...maybe it's already the first but of several very, very difficult decisions that are going to be before us. Certainly this program has merit. And I'm aware of many of the things that Senator Jensen said. In fact, I've used them in many, many comments that I've made across the state in the last few years about where Nebraska sits as in relationship to the percent of elderly we have. We are unique not in the Midwest, in Nebraska particularly. This is a very serious issue, but I need to remind the body that this is starting a new program. It is not an entitlement, but it is starting a new program that I will promise you will grow. I would feel a lot more comfortable if we could document into the future that we would be able to take reductions in other parts of the Health and Human Services budget. The Governor...we haven't...we did Health and Human Services' budget the last two days. I can't exactly pick out at this point where our increases are going to be for long-term nursing home care, but the Governor in his budget, as a one-line item, if you have that little folder in your desk or somewhere, has put in \$43 million more for long-term care, it says, and I'm