

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

February 19, 1999 LB 226

it is not too difficult to understand why some doctors, and some do this anyway, but why some would not want to risk not only having their license taken but face criminal penalties. It's good that we have finally reached a point where we're recognizing in statute something that has existed since the beginning of time, namely, great pain. In other societies, they have herb doctors or leaf doctors, as they might be called, who will go into the forest or the jungle or whatever the area is called where you can find plants and you get extracts. You grind up the plants sometimes and produce powders which will address these severe pains that people have. I'm also glad to see that it will apply to all people experiencing this pain including those who are terminally ill. So a person does not have to have a doctor and now a nurse be dealing with a patient who has to be declared terminally ill before the effect of this bill can be felt. This is one of those ideas which I think is going to take a lot of steam from an effort that I have been pushing and will continue to push, which is to allow physicians to aid those who are terminally ill to leave this world with a modicum of dignity. They cannot live in peace so they choose to die with dignity. This bill places all of those healthcare professionals, who are covered by it, in a position to assist some of those people who may feel they have no alternative other than to say, end it all. But, from the position that I occupy, this bill is not the total answer. Legislatively, it is difficult when we're grappling with very serious, deep social problems that might even have religious overtones and undertones. As society grows, as society matures, there ought to be a civilizing effect which is noted. I would like to see the Legislature and other elected officials lead the way, but that does not always happen. Many times, the Legislature is dragged along for political reasons. But occasionally,...

**SPEAKER KRISTENSEN:** One minute.

**SENATOR CHAMBERS:** ...occasionally, across the firmament of politics will flash a bright star, like Senator Hilgert, let me not say a star, those are more or less permanent, an asteroid, (laughter) which lights the way toward a much better day and a much better system. I think this is such a bill and I support the amendment that Senator Byars is offering and the committee amendments and, ultimately, the bill.