

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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LB 480

someone's gender or status. I would be opposed to a bill if we had created a Nebraska Men's Health Initiative, or a Nebraska Senior Citizen's Health Initiative. We have a health department that is for all of the state of Nebraska, a Health and Human Services Department. If it is not addressing the needs of all its citizens, it is not doing its job properly. I don't think the bill means to say that the health of other citizens of our state is unimportant or less important than that of the health of women. I don't question the fact that women's health is important. I don't question that there are things that need to be addressed in the area of women's health, but I am concerned that the bill creates divisions that may hurt us rather than help us. The Department of Health and Human Services is doing a great deal now, and partially because of the task force, because of this bill, to focus on the attention of the issue of women's health. I have handed out a sheet to you that was provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and presented to the committee. I'm not saying that the department is doing their job perfectly, and I don't think the department will ever be able to do everything necessary for the health of women in this state. I know that LB 480 has sent a strong message to the department, and the department is obligated to respond to. And I'd like to give the department an opportunity to respond to that message and would like to hold them then accountable for that purpose. LB 480 creates a Women's Health Initiative Council that empowers the council with a great deal of authority to implement provisions of the bill. I am concerned about the wisdom of creating another governmental body without any means of justifying its continued existence or evaluation of its future impact. I have talked on a number of occasions this session already about that issue. Members of the Health and Human Services Committee have not yet voted to advance a bill creating a separate Commission for the Blind, in part, because of that very concern to create another commission, and another body. I have here in my hands the Nebraska Programs for Children and Family, a Guide for Legislators. If you don't have one in your file, you should have. This has many, many of the...

SENATOR COORDSEN: One minute.

SENATOR JENSEN: ...organizations or the programs that are there