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LB 594

up debating it and having it attached to the Health Committee's LB 594. What Senator Wehrbein and Senator Cudaback both have said is absolutely correct. We...as we get deeper and deeper into the study of this situation, we find that we may be throwing the baby out with the bath water. We could in our zealouslyness to try to save money, which is our responsibility, in order to try to make good policy that I think we've rushed into something that we're going to regret. I don't want to stop LB 594 at this point. It's needed. There are elements of that bill that are absolutely imperative to be passed in this session, so I'll abide with Senator Wehrbein's request that his desire to return to Select File will be pulled. But we have some real problems with liability insurance relative to individuals, neighbors, friends who are asked and who consent to transport individuals who are on Medicaid and receiving, and they will receive a reimbursement for mileage. And I know that they don't realize the liability that they're accepting for themselves and for the individuals that they're carrying. And on top of this, I think because we have seen some, at least some alleged abuse of mileage, waiting time, extra passengers being reimbursed that we forget that there are a lot of small taxi cab operators and common carriers in rural Nebraska that are the lifeblood of individuals getting to medical appointments, to the hospital, to the drugstore. And all we've concentrated on are the horror stories, the abuses, and not on the positives that are taking place. I have met with Health and Human Services, my staff has worked with them. This group of people have been very cooperative in wanting to help us try to construct something that's not going to throw the baby out with the bath water. I feel confident that we're going to address this in the off session, but I'm certainly going to be right alongside Senator Wehrbein, Senator Cudaback, and others that are concerned and holding their feet to the fire. And I hope because they do have some latitude on the fees that they're able to pay, I hope that they will negotiate contracts, even if they're brief contracts, to fairly be able to keep these operators in business. And I know it's the intent of this Legislature to do that, not to drive them out of business with no good reason. So, please, I hope and I'm speaking to members of the management team with Health and Human Services who have assured me that they're listening, but I'm speaking to them again. Please, use reason, use caution in negotiating these contracts over this period of