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January 13, 2000 LB 480

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Pederson, on the advancement of LB 480.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body, Senator Schimek, I would like to ask you a few questions, please.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Schimek, would you yield?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: I would preface this by saying that any time anybody questions something such as this they're viewed as perhaps being opposed to health of women and I think, as Senator Schimek knows, there's probably no one in this room that's more concerned about the health of women right now than I am. But I would like to ask you some questions about this particular bill and specifically in relationship to existing boards, commissions and things of that nature. I notice that you've called this an initiative and I assume that distinguishes it in some way from a commission, but it seems that they all kind of fall into the same category. Currently, we have two...two entities, I will call them, that are dealing with women's issues and those entities, first is the entity called the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commission on the Status of Women has approximately a \$200,000 budget and it's an advocacy group concerning women. And I noticed in the Legislative Fiscal Office guide for the years 1997-1998 that the...one of the purposes for the commission was to conduct a wide range of activities that meet that purpose. Efforts have been taken to address the issues relating to justice, family, education, employment, and health. Now this is an...this is a commission that receives some \$200,000 from the state to perform their duties. I notice that the word "health issue" was taken out of the current...the current legislative activities, but I assume that was in prelude to your proposal. And I'm wondering what is it that you believe that your bill accomplishes that cannot be accomplished by, if necessary, adding to the staff of the Commission for the Status of Women?

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Okay, three thoughts occurred to me as you