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LB 1101

to find 10 percent matching funds and that they are able to administrate this program. The 10 percent matching funds will help stretch the state's funds even further. Senator Bob Dickey chose to prioritize LB 1101 and I'd like to thank him now for all his efforts and the efforts of his staff in helping to advance this bill through committee and on the floor. If I have any remaining time, I would like to allow Senator Dickey to utilize it. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Aguilar. Senator Dickey.

SENATOR DICKEY: Thank you, Senator Aguilar. Mr. Speaker, members of the body, we, as legislators, are continually looking for proactive low-cost solutions to ongoing problems, especially to problems that we foresee growing much larger in the future. One such problem on the horizon is the growing number of people that are entering the latter years of their life and I'd like to share some facts concerning this issue that pertain to our region, the Midwest region. For example, the Midwest is the only region in the United States in which expected nursing home use is longer than the national average. Within 50 years, the number of nursing home residents will more than triple. At the same time, the size of the work force will decrease proportionately. Facts show that three out of five people will need long-term care at some point in their lives, and that one in five over the age of fifty is at risk of needing long-term care within a year. Life expectancy for a sixty-five-year-old farmer is nearly three years longer than any other job class. Farmers also have the longest expected nursing home stay, nearly three times that of people in executive, managerial or administrative positions. Even adjusting for longer life expectancy, farmers have the longest expected nursing home stay. What solutions do we offer to our growing elderly population? The Senior Companion Program is an answer to some of these problems. It is a low-cost solution to these ongoing long-term care problems. It is a fiscally responsible, time proven program that directly addresses many of the major issues involving senior care issues that are particular to the rural Midwest, which concern us both now and in the future. This program is unique in that it will not chew up precious dollars in creating an entirely new infrastructure for this program.