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LB 1101

SENATOR AGUILAR: That is correct.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Pederson. Senator Redfield, on the advancement of LB 1101.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the body. I am going to support this bill. I think the concept is excellent. I have seen many, many times when people have retired expecting to enjoy those golden years perhaps to lose a spouse and find that they really have nothing worthwhile that they need to spend their time with. This is an element that we can address with people who are out there looking for a reason to live, a reason to be vitally important to other people. And I think that we have talked about the value to the state for those who would receive the services, but we haven't even addressed the fact that this does actually serve a purpose in the lives of those who feel good and wonderful about life when they can serve other people. I do have a question and would take some issue with the title of the bill being called the Nebraska Senior Companion Volunteer Program. We did have some discussion last year about volunteerism and whether volunteers are actually paid. It would probably be more accurate to call this the senior companion underpaid bill because, at \$2.55, it's almost to the point of exploitation. And I do understand with the amendment that we're allowing the stipend to be set by HHS, so it may not be limited to \$2.55 and I would ask Senator Aguilar to clarify that for us. But I do think that perhaps we want to look at eliminating the word "volunteer" when we get to the Select File, by amendment, only because we don't want to set a precedent in this state of saying that we pay volunteers. Volunteers are people who give things--their time, their money and their efforts out of the goodness of their heart. But this is a wonderful program. I think it has a worthwhile goal and I'm going to support it, and I would ask Senator Aguilar to answer my question. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Aguilar.

SENATOR AGUILAR: Yes.