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March 7, 2000 LB 1101

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Senator Bourne, on the Chambers amendment to LB 1101.

SENATOR BOURNE: Great, thank you, Mr. President, members. On its face, this sounds like an excellent idea. I think any time that we can help homebound seniors, particularly poor, I think we're doing a good thing. However, I've got some questions. I wonder if Senator Aguilar would answer a few questions.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Aguilar.

SENATOR BOURNE: Senator, what exactly will these volunteer elderly companions do? I mean, what kind of services will they perform for the seniors? And, again, if you've...if you've said this I apologize, but I didn't hear.

SENATOR AGUILAR: That's all right. It's really unlimited. Some of their main functions will be driving the particular individual to the doctor's office, to the grocery store, running errands for him, spending time with him, maybe just taking him to the park, sitting with him and visiting.

SENATOR BOURNE: And how many hours a day do you anticipate a particular customer, if you will, or a client, the senior, how much during the day would these services be performed for that person?

SENATOR AGUILAR: That will vary. There's no set...there is a...there is a cap on how many hours the volunteers can work. I think it's they can't work over 35 hours, if I'm not mistaken.

SENATOR BOURNE: And who decides how much time a particular senior citizen will get from that volunteer?

SENATOR AGUILAR: I think it's going to be based on need, okay? In other words, there's no...there's no rule that says you need to spend three hours with every one. You know, if you just need to run an errand, that's all you need to do, it only takes an hour, that's all that's necessary.

SENATOR BOURNE: And Health and Human Services will be the department that assigns the particular number of hours to a