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March 21, 2000 LB 1217, 1416

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Senator Crosby, and apologize for taking a minute or two to get here. I would...I wanted to substitute the amendment AM2983 for the original amendment that I filed. I don't know which one the Clerk...I originally had AM2930 and I have AM2983 I'd like to...

SENATOR CROSBY: No objections? Substitution is made.

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you. This amendment I am bringing to this point in the bill because it deals with looking at the way we handle health insurance for government or tax-supported jobs employees, whether it be state employees, University of Nebraska, state colleges, community colleges, political subdivisions, counties, cities. I introduced LB 1416, which was advanced from the Banking and Insurance Committee to General File and this amendment is LB 1416, with a couple of what I would consider to be minor changes. This amendment would create a task force to explore health insurance opportunities for all government to seek efficiencies in providing quality affordable health insurance to the employees. In the process of doing that, I'm sure we would look at disparity between programs, between different employees of university versus state employees versus county, and so on and so forth. I spoke with the Governor about this at the beginning of the session when we were faced with double-digit increases in health insurance costs, both on the state side and with the University of Nebraska, 20-some percent increase for school employees health insurance and wondered if there wouldn't be...if it wouldn't be time to take a comprehensive look at this issue. This amendment would...would ask the Governor to appoint 20 members to this task force by June 1st of this year. It would examine the various means by which the state, University of Nebraska, state colleges, community colleges and other political subdivisions provide health insurance. It would develop possible alternatives and opportunities to provide health insurance to these employees and explore the advantages and disadvantages to these alternatives. They would complete their work and make a report back to us by December 15th of 2000, so that we could respond accordingly if they have any suggestions that we feel should be implemented in statute. Originally, the bill had the Legislative Research Office providing staff support. A question was raised here on the floor as to whether or not that was