

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 30, 2003 LB 806

of money they are made aware of it. And I will tell you this quite frankly. Some of the doctors that we talked to said they were never billed, they were never told they owed the money. And some of them, I have to tell you, Senator Beutler, some of them who served in an area that was not underserved, which they are required to do also, felt they were serving underserved people in their area, in their medical practice. Felt that would qualify them for an elimination of having to repay these funds. They felt...and in fact, some of them, and I suspect they're telling the truth, indicated to us that they were told that if they served underserved people in the area...in other words, there was an area that didn't have any doctor and there were some people who were underserved, that that would count towards their not having to pay that money back. So there's a lot of confusion. But they have told us in HHS that they have taken steps to correct all of that misinformation. They are now made aware of the fact, what the requirements are. And they're going to be required to meet them. And I really and honestly believe...and of course, I don't think it's an excuse not to pay your bill...but I think if some of these people had been notified, they would have probably paid. But they weren't notified. In fact, the one doctor told us, nobody has ever told me I owed anything. And they felt like in reality they had served what they were supposed to do in order to qualify for not having to pay for their education. So it's a mess, but I think it's...I feel confident that it's been taken care of.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Is it...was it a failure of the system to have procedures in place that would call to the attention of workers and supervisors that nothing had happened? Or was it an ignoring of procedures by individual personnel that was the problem? I mean, I find these things very frustrating, Senator, as I suppose you do. But my view of the matter is that there ought to be procedures in place. There never should be a situation where simply because personnel turn over, you lose track of everything that's happening. I mean, if that were allowable, we'd be allowing periodic chaos in state government. And you know, we...that's not acceptable. So are...you know, are the processes being followed? If they're not, are people being disciplined when they don't follow the procedures? You know, who caused these losses?