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SENATOR BYARS: ...there still isn't any insurance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Byars. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I, too, share the concern that we will always have those that need assistance. But it is evident that our state is going to have to look at and address the issue of our ever-increasing costs. And I wanted to share with you...and I want to thank Senator Erdman for bringing this proposal. This is an article that was in the NCSL March 2005 magazine. It points out the growth in total Medicaid funds from fiscal year 2004 to 2005. Nebraska, 22.3 percent. The thing that really caught my eye was looking at all of the neighboring states. Colorado, their growth, 2.2 percent; Iowa, 5.7 percent; Kansas, 11.3 percent; Missouri, 8.9 percent; North Dakota, 5.7 percent. There were only 11 states in the total 50 states that increased over 20 percent. Nebraska was one of those states. Now, I'm asking you, do you think it is too much that we look at some of the reasons? Why is Nebraska increasing at that large of a percentage, compared to our neighboring states that are not that much different? I know every state is different. But I just ask the question when I see numbers like this. And one of the senators from Illinois that is quoted in this article says, it's paramount for states to look at the growth in Medicaid, and to look for solutions. He says, the likely solutions for Medicaid growth lie within each of the states, and that there is no single solution. But I think what Senator Erdman is proposing is that we just look. Why are we having these increases, and how can we address them? Remember, I said, Nebraska, 22.3 percent; all of the surrounding states, under, except for Kansas was 11 percent. Those are my comments. And I'll be happy to pass this article out so everyone has a chance to see that. And I give the rest of my time back to the Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Senator Chambers, on AM1027.