

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

April 26, 2005 LB 114

identify the breadth of potential vision problems. And unfortunately, more than 11 percent of the children who pass visual acuity screening would fail a professional examination. And approximately 40 percent of those kids who fail visual screenings don't receive the recommended follow-up care. Unfortunately, when a five or...in fact, when a five- or six-year-old fails an initial vision screening, research shows us that the average delay before receiving appropriate evaluation by a professional was 4.1 years. The median cost for an eye exam in the state of Nebraska is \$59. This does not change anything relative to the way that we're doing physical examinations now. This is a cost that would be borne by the family. The question was asked, as the bill was presented, what happens if a family wants this screening but can't afford it? We have a number of resources available in our state for lower-income families who are unable to afford the exam. And there is a Sight for Students plan, their VSP plan, which is sponsored by the vision service individuals which makes free eye care and eyewear available to needy children. Vision USA partners with the American Optometric Association who provide free eye exams for children and adults who live in a household where there is only one working member and they have no vision insurance. And as the bill was presented to the Education Committee, we originally had the bill written so that the screening would be done by a doctor or an optometrist. We have found, through working with the Medical Association, the Optometric Association, and the schools and school boards, that frequently a physician's assistant or a practicing nurse practitioner that's capable of performing the type of screening we're requiring can do this. The committee amendment will deal with that issue. We had broad support for the legislation in introduction. The professional associations, including the Optometric Association and the Medical Association, the Association of School Boards and Lincoln Public Schools and concerned parents all came in, telling personal stories and were supportive of the bill. So there will be a committee amendment, but I would ask that you advance LB 114 with the committee amendment to Select File.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Byars. You've heard the opening on LB 114. As stated by the Clerk, there are committee