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January 30, 2006 LB 85A, 85

LB 85.

SENATOR CUDABACK: LB 85 does advance. Mr. Clerk, we now go to LB 85A.

CLERK: LB 85A, by Senator Byars. (Read title.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Byars, to open on LB 85A.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. President. And I'll try to explain what I have from the Fiscal Office relative to the fiscal note. I think it is very, very speculative. I'm certainly not saying that ultimately, in the very maximum of circumstances, that we might not hit this fiscal note. But the most current fiscal note that you have in front of you would show that we have a fiscal note of General Funds to be expended in the amount of \$105,226, if I have the current fiscal note. Now, why I'm confused--and Senator Chambers, you might make note also--the first fiscal note that we as a Health Committee received showed expenditures in General Funds, not counting the federal funds, which are \$223,000, but General Funds, \$150,000; in fiscal year 2006 and '07 of \$373,800. Now, the next fiscal note that we received, February 3 of 2005, showed a General Fund expenditure of \$48,000, federal funds of \$72,000, and a total of \$120,000. Now the most recent fiscal note that we have shows General Fund expenditures of \$105,000, and federal funds of \$145,000. All of it is based on increasing the amount of assets that count...that are not counted toward Medicaid eligibility, and that it will result in some people qualifying for Medicaid sooner than they would have otherwise. And the department has based their estimates on an average of approximately ten people a month in nursing homes would become Medicaid-eligible one month earlier. And based on an average cost in a nursing home of \$3,115, that would increase the total cost by \$373,800. It's speculative. I think that...I don't know how else you prepare a fiscal note like this. I'm certainly not faulting the Fiscal Office. I think they've tried to do what they can. I think, as Senator Loudon pointed out, this does not take into consideration what the cost for those same individuals may have been if they need a pauper's burial, or what the cost would be to the 93 counties across the state of Nebraska. And certainly