

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

March 13, 2006 LB 146, 962, 1069A

ASSISTANT CLERK: 31 ayes, 0 nays on the motion to advance the bill, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: LB 1069A advances. We now go to the next agenda item, LB 962. Mr. Clerk, please.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, LB 962, introduced by Senator Price and others. (Read title.) Bill was read for the first time on January 6, referred to the Education Committee. That committee reports the bill to General File without any committee amendments.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Price, you're recognized to open on LB 962.

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. It's my pleasure to open on LB 962, which is my priority bill for this session. LB 962 would appropriate \$150,000 from the General Fund for one year only, that is for fiscal year 2006-2007, and it would fund the Nursing Faculty Student Loan Cash Fund. I'm going to give you some background to refresh you about this loan program. Last year I introduced LB 146 to create the Nursing Faculty Student Loan Act. That was my priority bill of last year. Such a bill was needed due to the shortage of nursing faculty with master's and doctoral level degrees available to teach at the 18 Nebraska colleges or universities with nursing programs in Nebraska. Statistics nationwide and in Nebraska point out that the aging nursing faculty and the pending retirement of such faculty within the next ten years will have a serious impact on the ability of nursing programs to teach the predicted numbers of students seeking nursing as a career. The average Nebraska nurse is 44 years old. As the current baby boomer nurses reach retirement age, the shortage will escalate. A recent report issued by the Nebraska Center for Nursing predicts that the current 5 percent shortage of nurses will grow to 19 percent by 2020. This is a shortage of 3,800 nurses. The average age of registered nurse faculty statewide is 49 years of age. Fifty-five percent of the 228 faculty will be eligible to retire in 10 to 15 years. Thirty-seven percent of nursing educators have less than five years of teaching experience. State regulations require that