

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

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illiterate. This article was headlined "Funds OK'd for women's health tests." It was in the Omaha edition of the Omaha World-Herald, which I get in the morning, on page 2B and the date is March 16, 2006, by Leslie Reed and Martha Stoddard, the World-Herald Bureau. Beginning the article: Lawmakers agreed Wednesday to increase state funding for a women's health program by almost 50 percent, resolving a dispute over whether the services should be limited to 14 family planning agencies across Nebraska. The debate, with its overtones of abortion politics, consumed most of the past two days in first-round consideration of changes to Nebraska's \$6.15 billion two-year budget. Lawmakers advanced the budget after adding spending, yet improved the bottom line by about \$2 million. State Senator Mike Foley of Lincoln, an abortion opponent, launched the women's health debate with an amendment specifying that the dollars could go to a wider variety of public and private providers. His amendment also would allow the state to give priority to providers other than family planning agencies. Foley argued that the change would improve access to the services without prohibiting any existing agencies from applying. In a Wednesday e-mail addressed "Dear Friends," Foley said he found it "insulting" that Planned Parenthood of Nebraska and Council Bluffs receives state tax dollars, even though the money is not used for abortions. Quote from Foley, Planned Parenthood doesn't deserve any of our money and we need to start doing something about it, unquote, he wrote. But he wouldn't say it on the floor and I questioned him and he refused to answer forthrightly. Continuing the article: Foley said the budget amendment would "at least begin to cut into the disbursement of our tax dollars to Planned Parenthood," and he asked people to pray that the amendment would prevail. Departing from the article, pray to whom? This is a religion approach? Continuing: Foley said he shared the e-mail with a couple of people, then thought better of it. It was updated and sent out without his authorization, he said. Departing from the article, I don't see any explanation of who sent this out without his authorization. Continuing with the article: He had not brought up his concerns about Planned Parenthood during debate because the issue was controversial enough, he said, and he thought lawmakers already knew his position. Digressing, he could have stated it on the floor and he had many opportunities