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LB 709, 1248

Legislature. I think this is a healthy discussion, I really do. I think the opportunity for us to step back and to look at where we think the state should go, including all opinions, is important, because I'll tell you that prior to the last couple years, we as a state never had these discussions. And many of us were around for special sessions where we had decisions and we had responsibilities and decisions that had to be made that weren't positive for anyone, no matter what the result of those decisions were. As I understand LB 1248, and specifically the committee amendment that we as a committee have worked not only with the framework, if you will, of the Medicaid Advisory Council, which was part of the process over the last six months, but also with the advocate groups, with the providers and with others to try to come up with a process that clearly outlines what things we should be considering as public policy for the state of Nebraska, there was a lot of work done in the underlying committee amendment. And there were proposals and ideas that were added to and changed to make sure that the actual intent was met by the policy that was before us. The findings, I believe, are consistent with what was discussed in the meetings throughout the state. And I will say that as I look at the process that was outlined in LB 709 and I look at the actual application and implementation of the meetings and number of times where groups were brought in to discuss their concerns or ideas, I have never in my term in the Legislature, the last six years, or prior to that can have anybody recall to me a process that was so open and to be able to include a number of individuals on both sides in these discussions. Because this is a situation that affects all Nebraskans. And Senator Byars is right, the solution to our healthcare problems isn't solved by hanging it on Medicaid. It's a bigger issue than that. And if you look at the public policy statement that's in LB 1248, as amended by the committee amendment, it does a number of things to provide for opportunities for Medicaid recipients that have personal responsibility and freedom of choice--we've talked about that a number of times in the Health Committee and generally receive, well, a lot of support from advocates on that--and encourages cooperation among public and private employers. You know, the entities in the state of Nebraska that decide to only cover the employees and actually tell their employees to put their kids on Kids Connection or Medicaid, you