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SENATOR NICHOL: Okay, well, you just explained it.

PRESIDENT: Senator Burrows.

SENATOR BURROWS: Mr. President, I believe that the truth and responsible action are very good defense for libel. I think we ought to be very careful about setting up more privileged class. This is a class legislation piece, I feel, and I certainly think we don't need to set up more people with special immunities from libelous action. What we invite are people that don't feel they are responsible, when we pass legislation like that, that they can't stand behind their actions. I would violently oppose this as a bill. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Goodrich.

SENATOR GOODRICH: Mr. President, members of the body, I rise in support of the bill and the way I look at it is this. For example, if you have a Peer Review committee, and we have them all over the State of Nebraska, but if they are afraid, for example, to do their job because of the possibility of a lawsuit being filed against them, then we are really not accomplishing the job the Peer Review committee is suppose to do. Consequently, what I do, I look at this particular bill as a way to free their hands so that they, in turn, can actually do what they are intended to do, or in other words, criticize a colleague without being sued for it. I think it is, frankly, to the best interest of the State of Nebraska that we let these guys criticize their colleagues so that they, in turn, deliver better medical practice to the citizens of the state of Nebraska. I am all for the bill, frankly.

PRESIDENT: Senator Murphy.

SENATOR MURPHY: I would simply further state that in the interim studies on malpractice we studied many state laws relating to it and the principal claim made by the other two factors in malpractice is the fact that Peer Review boards are not working, that they should be toughened up and that they should be given stronger support. It seems a little foolish to create a Peer Review board and then say, you will be subject to suit, but to prevent that, we will buy you an insurance policy. I think this is a fine insurance policy to simply offer them that immunity now. If you expect them to work freely and of their own conscience, they are not going to do it if they are faced with suit as a result of their actions. It would be foolish for a man to accept that position under those conditions. I see no alternative but to accept this. It is in every malpractice bill that has been drawn in this last hectic year of malpractice. The Peer Review organization is specifically given immunity. In fact, immunity is, in many cases, extended to those testifying. I think it is the very least that could be done.

PRESIDENT: Senator Kelly.