

time the preschools in the State of Nebraska came to realize that it was to their advantage to at least have a health and safety licensing standard. So that issue got knocked down. So now we finally have a bill, LB 130...incidentally its predecessor was LB 520 which was heard by this Legislature two years ago and it advanced all the way to Final Reading and it failed by two votes on Final Reading mostly because it simply has taken a long time to begin this journey of thoroughly acclimating the various persons in our state who provide child care for people whether in the preschool form, whether in the employer based child care, whether in a day-care center, or whether in a day-care home, of the fact that the state does have an appropriate role in at least regulating and licensing for health and safety. I think most thinking people who have taken a look at LB 130 have come to realize that the kinds of licensing standards set out in LB 130 are reasonable standards for protecting children who are away from home with respect to their health and safety and so here we are today. Now let me just background you a little bit. You know, in 1943 the State of Nebraska adopted the licensing standards for child care that currently are in force, and at that time most of our children were being cared for in their own homes because in 1943 most families only had one working parent. However, by 1984 most Nebraska families now have two working parents which means that most of our children are being cared for at some time during the day outside of their home. Most of our children are now being cared for in a day-care center, a day-care home, or in a preschool program. And so the time really has come for us to basically upgrade our licensing standards. What LB 130 does is relatively simple. Number one, it makes certain that the definition of child care is comprehensive enough to include the preschool program and in addition to include the employer sponsored child care. We now have nine employers in the State of Nebraska, five of which are hospitals, that are providing child care for their employees, and up till now that has not been a regulated activity. There is no oversight for health and safety of children in the nine employer based child-care programs. So that is the first thing that the bill does. It expands the definition as to who is covered for licensing. Secondly, the bill says that the criminal sanctions, which have always existed for someone who doesn't obtain an appropriate license or for someone who doesn't abide the regulations,