

But the bill itself is a very important bill. It's a Partnership for Health and Human Services Act. It's brought to you by myself, Senator Withem, Senator Klein and a number of other colleagues who have signed onto the bill from the Health and Human Services Committee and others in the body who have worked with the administration, and particularly Lieutenant Governor Robak and Governor Nelson who have worked on and developed the study that resulted in the drafting of the bill, to take the five agencies in health and human services in our state--Aging, Health, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Social Services, and the Office of Juvenile Services--and bring them together into three new entities where the services are united under a Department of Health and Human Services, where that department works with another department on standards and evaluation, and on finance and support so that we have three entities, all working together to meet the health and human service needs of Nebraskans. One of the changes in this committee amendment is that one department, that is the Department of Health and Human Services regulation and...excuse me, Standards and Evaluation would become DHSS Regulation and Licensure. The reason the committee is offering this change and name change is that we didn't quite know what standards and evaluation meant. We know what regulation and licensure means, that is what largely is done by the Department of Health today. They license health professionals, they license health facilities, they regulate those entities, and so we know what regulation and licensure is. Standards and evaluation is a little vague, in our view. But let me tell you that it also emphasizes an evolution of thinking on what regulation and licensure is, and actually is a step forward and will eventually be incorporated into the mind-set of this new entity. Rather than trying to just regulating licensure, trying to set outcomes-based goals and then evaluating those goals as to whether they're being met is a new approach in regulation and licensure that that terminology was attempting to reflect. But fearing that the public may not understand that, we are recommending this name change. In addition, that department's director currently in the bill is not required to be a licensed physician. Currently the director of the Department of Health must be a licensed physician. Because of this evolution in responsibility it's optional whether the director of this department is a licensed physician. So what we put into this committee amendment is that if, in fact, the choice is made not to have a physician heading up the department, then the