

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 7, 1997 LB 200

situations and believes that the process can be helpful in other situations. There is no fiscal note to this bill. Additional costs are met by federal matching funds of up to 70 percent of the cost. The remaining state share is derived from mediation fees charged to the parties. The main substantive provision of the bill is the new language in Section 3. Section 2-4808 is amended to add that parties may request mediation of any adverse decision from a USDA agency. Most of the remainder of the bill is harmonizing changes to conform with the change made in Section 3. Also, the Farm Mediation Act currently sunsets in June 1999. LB 200 extends the sunset date by four years to June 2003. That's the bill, Madam President. Would you like me to go to the amendments now, too?

PRESIDENT ROBAK: That'd be fine, Senator.

SENATOR DIERKS: The committee amendment is a simple one. Section 2-4812, subsection 3, which you can see on page 6 of the bill, provides that financial data about the parties compiled in the mediation process is not public record and binds the parties to confidentiality. This provision is amended with the committee amendment to extend this subsection to additional types of information concerning any party's farm program participation, which may be accumulated as a result of the expanded scope of mediation. With that, I would move the advancement...the attachment of the bill, and then the advancement of LB 200.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Peterson announces that the following guest is visiting the Legislature: Bruce Reickert is here from Grand Island. He's the Deputy Chief of Staff to Congressman Barrett. Mr. Reickert, will you please stand and be recognized. Welcome to the Legislature. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. I want to congratulate Senator Dierks and the members of the Agriculture Committee. Actually, the very first experience this state had with the concept of mediation was through the Farm Mediation Program. It predated the state's network of mediation centers. It was the first experience that this state had, generally, with the idea and it has...it's been