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PRESIDENT ROBAK: Seeing no further lights, Senator.... Excuse me, Senator Kristensen.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. Senator Wesely, I...I don't know how to frame the opening of "Eye-Wars '98", but I assume that's what this is all about. For those members who have been here in the past, I think it's probably helpful for people to understand what these types of scope of practice issues are all about, and certainly this is not an us versus them debate. There is certainly a great place and a great use of optometrists in this state. There's also a general lack of ophthalmologists across the state of Nebraska, and those are sort of the forces that collide here with this. What I would ask you, just to bring me up to date, could you just summarily tell me about the scope of practice and how that's been authorized as it relates to this particular treatment, and as a review, because it is a process that a lot of people may not be familiar with, and that would help me as we go through this debate. And I would ask Senator Wesely to do that, please.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Well, yeah, I can...I can give you a general background. I'll just take a couple minutes to do that.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: That...use what you need.

SENATOR WESELY: Well, you have...the issue I first got involved in, in '79, was the diagnostic ability of optometrists to diagnose, and that was eventually dealt with, I think, in about 1980 or '79. Then the question of therapeutic use of eyedrops came into effect, and I think that was passed in '86. Then we dealt with some additional questions of scope, and glaucoma came up in, I think, '93, and was not allowed in that legislation that was passed in '93, which was referenced in the letter that...Governor Nelson talked about. And now what we're proposing, the original bill proposed to allow for pharmaceuticals to be used both orally and topically. Part of the discussion has been the topical use or the taking orally of medications. The committee amendments that are pending delete