

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

March 1, 1999

LB 199, 498

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: LB 199 is advanced to E & R Initial.
Mr. Clerk, LB 498.

CLERK: (LB) 498, by Senator Wickersham. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 15, referred to Health Committee, advanced to General File. There are committee amendments pending.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. To open on LB 498, Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. This is another health bill. This one relates a little bit to a topic that we addressed in this body two years ago, in LB 138, and that was emergency medical care. In LB 138 we substantially reformed the parameters for emergency healthcare, but we didn't take up the specific subject in this...that's in this bill, and that is the increasing reliability and availability of a device called an automatic external defibrillator. When I first became an EMT, I think these devices cost 7 or \$8,000. Senator Baker has some experience with them. They were very complicated devices, in fact they are still...I shouldn't say that, they're still complicated, in fact they're, in some ways, even more complicated now, but they're less expensive. And the key to them is that in large part they are completely automatic, and they have a very, very good success rate in terms of what they do for you, and that is to assist you when you're having a heart attack, or at least a specific kind of heart attack that causes arrhythmia in your heart. This device will shock your heart muscles, put them back into rhythm, and you will have a much better chance of surviving. Well, if you had a heart attack, and it's due to an arrhythmia, how much time do you have? Well, maybe you have about four minutes, and after four minutes then things start to happen to your body, because while your heart is just sitting there quivering, not really pumping blood but quivering, if you can see something like a bowl of jelly, waiting for the next beat, your brain is losing oxygen, and your other vital organs are starting to shut down to protect the brain. And as you go beyond four minutes, that gets progressively worse. And after a while even the brain can't sustain itself, and then you're