

April 20, 1979

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be recognized, please? We also have Mr. Bob Watson of North Platte, a guest of Senator Myron Rumery. Would you stand and be recognized, please? Senator Wesely, are you still there? Yes, you are. The Chair recognizes Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, this issue is a very complex one and it involves not only this bill but it involves a number of other bills facing the Legislature, a number of other philosophies and issues that I think need to be clearly identified and brought out in front of the members of the Legislature and the people of Nebraska. Basically some of the issues that have been raised have been concerned with the whole question about if we raise the state support for state Medicaid payments, it takes away from state support for other programs and projects. That is an argument that has been made by the Appropriations Committee members throughout previous discussions concerning this bill before it reached floor debate. It is the issue that has been set before us that either we have Medicaid reimbursement taken over by the state from the counties or we have a supplemental appropriations bill but not both, not both, and still stay within the 7% lid that we have placed on ourselves and within the budgetary constraints that we would like to maintain as a state government. I think that that is, in my estimation, a false trade off. I think that we have to confront the fact that if we do throw away that confrontation between the supplemental bill and the increase in the Medicaid reimbursement from the state, if we throw that aside we are going to have to say forthright that we are talking about a tax increase on the state level. That gets us back to another fundamental question that Senator Murphy raised. This is a taxation philosophy question, whether or not it is better for the counties through their tax dollars to support Medicaid reimbursement or whether it is better for the state through its state taxes to reimburse Medicaid costs. Being a member of the Public Health and Welfare Committee, looking at the testimony, looking at the different figures and facts and comparisons, I am convinced that it is the state's responsibility more than the county's to take over the payments of these Medicaid reimbursements, that it is in fact, irresponsible on the part of the Legislature to continue to perpetuate a situation that is not found in any other state in the country concerning Medicaid reimbursements. We pay more through the counties in this state than any other state in the country, I believe, with the exception, I believe, of New York. Otherwise, in

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