

April 20, 1979

LB 138

comparison, take a look at our neighboring states. There is no county participation of Medicaid cost in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Minnesota does have county participation but what do they pay? They pay 4.32%. That is it and we are paying 20% in Nebraska. I really don't understand how we ever got in this situation that we are in, that is the counties paying 20% of Medicaid reimbursements. Obviously it was I think a...it was an attempt on the state government basically to shift that burden to someone else. I think it is time to quit perpetuating that hoax on the people of Nebraska. Health care costs are rising dramatically. We have had discussion after discussion on that matter in the past few days. You know now as well as anybody in the state just how dramatic that increase has been. Who has a responsibility for doing something about that rising cost in health care? Can the counties do anything? Can they impose a certificate of need bill? Can they impose other efforts to try and hold down health care costs? The answer is no. They can't even do anything with the Medicaid reimbursement program in aid of itself. Only the state has that responsibility and I say it is irresponsible for us to push onto the counties the cost for these programs that they have no say over. It is wrong for us to make them pay the increasing costs of health care that they have no control over, no checks that they can impose but we can do something about it. It all relates back to a lot of other issues and as I said before, it relates back to LB 172 and certificate of need. It is ironic who sponsors LB 138 and who opposes 172. I find that a paradoxical situation. I am not going to point out more than that but I think that when you come down to it...

SENATOR NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...we can do something about rising health care costs. We are having to force a very dramatic example of why we need to take action in this Legislature on this matter but as long as we can have the counties picking up our fair share or a portion of our fair share of the costs, we can kind of ignore it. We can push it under the rug. We can put it out the back door and it won't bother us and it should bother us. Rising health care costs are a burden to everybody in this state and we have to do something about it and I think we have to be responsible in terms...

SENATOR NICHOL: Half a minute.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you very much. We have to be