

May 2, 1979

LB 594

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, as you recall, last week Senator Nichol was able to add to LB 594 provisions to fund about \$500,000 for the addition to Scottsbluff Veteran's Complex, a nursing home that would add about, I believe it is a hundred, no it's fifty beds for nursing care for veterans. Now I passed out, I believe it was Monday, copies of a information sheet on LB 594. I have the page, should be going around individually to see if you still have a copy and if not we have copies available that explains the situation. The point I wanted to make then, the point that I wasn't able to make then because we moved on too quickly and adopted that amendment without having a chance for me to get up and speak to it, is that we don't need that nursing home. We don't need to spend that \$500,000. We don't need to spend a total amount of about 1.4 million dollars to build that nursing home. There are two things that I want to point out, first off, the question of overbedding. In the panhandle and in the state we are tremendously overbedded with nursing home beds. One of the facts that I presented on that fact sheet was Nebraska has more state operated veteran nursing home care beds per thousand veterans than any other state in the union, more beds per veteran than any other state and we are considering before this Legislature, adding another nursing home health care facility. We are considering on General File, another bill in Omaha to add even more beds in the Omaha area when, in fact, Nebraska has already got more nursing home beds per veteran thousand than any other state. The other point I want to make is that Nebraska in general has got more beds per thousand elderly than just about any other state in the country. The average nationally on long term care beds per thousand is about 61.3 but Nebraska's average is 89.5. The net result is and this is a study that was conducted just last year, shows that Nebraska is already overbedded by 4,203 long term care beds, 4000 beds overbuilt. When we talk about certificate of need and we talk about all the other health care cost containment legislation, nothing could be more poignant, fact and example, of the problems that this state faces than this situation, the overbedding of nursing homes. Now I know standing up here and saying that to not build a nursing home for veterans is like standing and opposing God, motherhood and apple pie and I think that the chances of me striking that amendment are not very good and I admit that, but hopefully when you do vote on my motion to strike the Nichol amendment and when you then vote on the amendment itself later on, you will keep in mind what we are doing in this state. Basically what we are doing is adding beds we don't need, adding