

interest is that we provide the best care possible for the veterans of this state but I don't think this bill is really a step in that direction, in fact, I think it is going to be more costly and the service is not going to be that improved. I think it, more or less, is going to be...the benefits are going to be accrued in Douglas County and Douglas County is going to be the big winner out of this and not necessarily the veterans or the taxpayers at all. That is not to say that is necessarily wrong but on the other hand I think that we need to take a better look at this situation. All the different issues I raised, Senator Fitzgerald can question my research on one point. All I can refer back to is the DPI physical plant assessment that I referred to where they state that the hospital itself is on ten acres. The bill as amended would acquire about sixteen acres plus and so what I am saying is that the actual hospital is about ten acres but there is extra land there and I knew exactly how many acres were involved and I think the research effort has been done to show that there is overbedding, that there is additional cost and that there is little additional service or quality that is attained through this effort. I think we ought to look at the alternatives. We sponsored a study two years ago. The study showed clearly that the preferable alternative is to encourage private care. We haven't even talked about the new trends, about home health care services that would further decrease nursing home occupancy which would again cause increases in rates. Every time you have an empty bed you have increased costs because somebody isn't using that facility and there is still costs involved. So the other members that are there are picking up the tab. That means increased Medicaid costs and it means increased taxes. So that is my concern. I hope that it has made a point. I am going to withdraw this amendment and further consider other action but I can see the handwriting on the wall and I don't like to lose more than anybody else but when something is wrong I think somebody has to point that out. This is wrong.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The request is the unanimous consent request to withdraw the amendment. Do I hear any objections? So ordered. What else do we have?

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Mr. President.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Okay, Senator Fitzgerald, do you advance the bill?

SENATOR FITZGERALD: Wish to advance the bill.