

March 2, 1981

LB 125

PRESIDENT LUEDTKE PRESIDING

PRESIDENT: On this agenda item #6, the Speaker has allotted 45 minutes which would take us over the noon hour but we will commence with it and see where it takes us. The Chair recognizes Senator Labedz.

SENATOR LABEDZ: No. I believe it is Senator Haberman's amendment. He may want to explain it.

PRESIDENT: All right. There is a Haberman amendment pending, is that correct? So Senator Haberman is the one that is up. Was there any speaking order that you know, Mr. Clerk? Okay, so, Senator Haberman, why don't you proceed then on it and this is an amendment by Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President, members of the Nebraska Legislature, the bill as it now reads says that the insurer shall not be prohibited from offering abortion coverage if paid for by the employee. My amendment merely says that the insuring company shall offer the insurance, the cost of which to be borne solely by the employee. Now what we are doing is this amendment offers a choice that they may or may not take the insurance. Now let's stop to think that we are sticking our nose into every form of government, public power, ESUs, schools, city-county governments. We are getting involved in their wages as health benefits are a fringe benefit which are wages. If we have the "shall", it might take us off the hook, but if we don't pass this amendment, then when the county sheriffs come and say we want the Legislature to set the salaries, what are we going to say? They are going to say, "Well, you stuck your nose in and helped set the salaries on the employees. Now we want you to help set the salaries for us." This can happen. Now you probably will be told today that some Blue Cross-Blue Shield Companies do offer this as a side benefit but the Nebraska Blue Cross-Blue Shield people have told me they will not unless this says "shall". You probably will be told today that other insurance companies will offer this and I say to you, what if the lowest bidder of the insurance company does not offer it? What if the lowest bidder doesn't offer the coverage? Then the people who take the bids are in trouble. They won't be able to take the lowest bid, will they? Then if they say, "Well, we didn't take the lowest bid. We have to take the best bid." Oh, boy! Then you are in trouble. You are really in trouble. You can't take the lowest and you hadn't better take the best, but by this amendment "shall be offered", it takes care of all the problems. Now we are telling the insurance companies they can't offer the insurance. So we are already dictating to the