

hygienists. What we say to them is, we don't understand your issue particularly well. You go back and work it out with the dentist and it's kind of a catch phrase I'm very tired of hearing about hearing that this bill is worked out, we need to work this out, go back and work it out with the other group. And what we do then is we send the two groups together away someplace saying, don't bother us with your issue, don't come back until you've reached agreement. Occasionally agreement is reached, in many cases it's not reached and next year we have the bill back before us again. Some members on the Health and Welfare Committee told us they'd heard the hygienists and the assistants' bill for the fifth time. The other way, and I'll use the ophthalmologist/optometrist issue, the other way we have of dealing with this issue is to fight it out and I ask those of you that were here last year to remember what happened last year with the ophthalmologist/optometrist issue. We had those supporting the ophthalmologist claiming that in the State of North Carolina there were hundreds of people going blind because of treatment from optometrists. We had the optometrists come back and say, no, that's not true, it's a pure fabrication. We had the ophthalmologist making charges two, three, four, five and six and we had them refute it. As senators not having knowledge in the area of the practice of medicine, we really didn't have a basis to make these decisions so what did we do? We tended to make these decisions based on power politics. We tended to see votes traded for triple trailers, for homestead exemption, for labor law reform that had absolutely nothing to do with the public's health...protection of the public health. What we're proposing in LB 407 is that we have a third system and that is that before the Legislature considers these issues and makes the very political hard decisions that we're going to have to make, that we have a recommendation from those who have studied the issue thoroughly and do have the technical knowledge. And it is our intent that this will not be a committee of doctors making decisions or a committee of dentists making decisions, but that it will be a committee that can look at the issue from many perspectives and give us some recommendations and I emphasize the word recommendations on what is contained within the bill. Then it will come to us and once again I don't have any illusions that if this committee recommends that we grant expanded scope of practice from the optometrists, I don't have any illusions, you're not going to see David Buntain back there passing notes in saying,