

place to go and I think for those people who have been long-time state employees, if they are willing, in this particular case to pick up both their own cost and the state's cost we should allow them the option to stay on the group health insurance plan and I would ask you for your favorable consideration of this amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Thank you. Senator Wesely, please.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I understand the concerns of Senator Morehead and I appreciate her compassion, but this is going to cost money and will increase health insurance costs for the State of Nebraska. So any of you who are concerned with budgetary matters involving the state budget, I would warn you to listen if you have a minute. When you increase the possibility of people at a later age to join a group health plan, as this would provide for, you have higher costs associated with higher age and so there is more cost to the plan as a result of having these people in the plan. Now you may shift to the employee the total cost of the premium, but for the state as a whole, their overall pool of people will increase in age a little bit and that will increase the cost more than a little bit and there will be an additional cost the state will have to pick up because we pick up for the most part for most state employees most of the premium charges. Now that's the problem I've always had with this situation. I understand the compassion inside of it. These people do need some health insurance. We've had difficulty in providing for health insurance for these people, but I am saying to you that there is a cost associated with this. There is no fiscal note that I know of on the bill at this point, but there will be after this amendment is adopted. I don't think there is probably any need for one with the bill as it presently stands. We did make the policy decision to allow for state troopers alone to have access to the state employee health insurance plan because they do have a legitimate early retirement provision, but this is definitely a concern that I have. Although I see the compassion inside of it, I also see the cost side of it and I'm asking you all to consider whether or not you want to pay the price of this amendment. I urge your rejection of it.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Labeledz, then Senator Sieck, please.