

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, this is the first of a series of bills dealing with health care licensure. I hope we can move through these rapidly. We have tried to work long and hard to try and compromise most of these bills, and with a few exceptions, we have done that. This is one example. LB 701 was brought to us with great controversy. It was not subjected to the LB 407 process because it wasn't a scope of practice change. It was some redefinition of words, some different adjustments in the hearing aid dealers activities but it was not a scope of practice change so it did not go through 407. What we did was the old-fashioned let's sit down in a room and work this out approach to the bill and the audiologists and hearing aid people sat down and came back to us with the committee amendments. The committee amendments really do become the bill. What I would like to do is read a statement of intent from the audiologists that make it clear what the purpose of the bill is, and I think with this statement of intent and clarity, we should have an amendment in the bill that most everybody feels comfortable with. Now I quote. "A legitimate question has been raised about the scope of practice of a hearing aid instrument dispenser and fitter if LB 701 with these amendments would pass. It is not the intent of LB 701 to change the scope of practice, nor the functional accepted definition of a hearing aid as indicated by past action. Section 71-4702 requires that a person be licensed before he or she can fit or dispense hearing aids; therefore, the definition of hearing aids is critical to the question of whether the scope of practice is changed, either enlarged or diminished. Section 71-4703 was to be amended by Section 1 of LB 701 as introduced, and a hearing aid would have been defined with additional terms. In order to make certain that the scope of practice is not changed in any way whatsoever, these amendments will return the definition of the hearing aid back to exactly what it has been since 1969. The only alteration to the section dealing with the definition of hearing aid is to state that a hearing aid can also be referred to as a hearing instrument. There are several additional changes throughout LB 701 referring to the name of these licensees and the board that issues licenses. The board would henceforth be known as the Board of Hearing Aid Instrument Dispensers and Fitters, and the licensees would henceforth be known as hearing aid instrument dispensers and fitters. These changes in names are not intended to infer a change in the scope of practice." I think that kind of summarizes the