

PRESIDENT: Senator Nelson, do you wish to comment on the amendment? Very well. Any further discussion on Senator Smith's amendment? If not, the motion is to adopt the amendment. All those in favor vote aye, opposed vote nay. Please record your vote. We're voting on a Smith amendment to LB 829. Have you all voted? Record the vote, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of Senator Smith's amendment.

PRESIDENT: The amendment is adopted. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, LB 829 is a relatively simple bill that will go far to address the concerns we all share for the rising costs of health care in a rather difficult time but in a different manner from most health care cost containment measures. Everyone here is fully aware that Nebraska among the 50 states in the nation has a high percentage of elderly persons in proportion to the total population. Presently over 15 percent or 263,000 of our state's population are age 60 or over. I have passed some handouts to you on the floor here and I would like you to refer to handout number three which will show you the various legislative districts and the population by counties within your districts of the percentage of people age 60 and over. The little circles indicate from 20 to 25 percent age 60 or over. The lines indicate 25 to 30 percent and the black dot areas 30 percent or more and I think that...and I've taken the liberty to place names of some senators, specific senators, in high concentrated areas of elderly in the state. The cities cannot be shown by this map and Omaha does have a 27.4 average percentage of elderly in the city. Senators particularly that might be very interested in the high degree of elderly people in their districts are Senator Rod Johnson, Senators Remmers, Eret, Miller, Vickers, Haberman, Baack, Lamb, DeCamp, Hefner and Rogers. We all know that a care crisis is building. A number of Nebraskans age 60 and over will increase to 46 percent in the next 4 years. Currently Nebraska and its citizens pay over \$168 million each year for nursing home care. At the same time public funds are diminishing for the provision of care. Making the most of what we have is good advice anytime, but particularly so in economically difficult times such as we're experiencing here in Nebraska. LB 829 is a bill