

Nebraskans. So we visited from time to time and he would tell me the reasons why, and I would counteract some of them, and visited with him, but I still didn't feel comfortable supporting it. Then the other night I received a call from an ophthalmologist from Sioux City, Iowa. We had a nice visit. I've grown to know this ophthalmologist, this medical doctor, over the years because he operated on our son's eyes 12 or 13 years ago, and he did an excellent job. I grew to respect him, so I enjoyed our visit the other night. And so we got to visiting with this optometrists' bill that we are debating today, LB 131. We talked about the pros and cons of it, how it would help Nebraskans, and how it wouldn't help them. In the end, he thought I should support it because he told me that he thought that it would really help Nebraskans, and he's from the other side, he's an ophthalmologist. He told me that Iowa just passed a bill, a year or two ago, and that this bill that they had passed, this law now was working good, so this year I want to support this bill. I think the bill has many advantages to us in the rural areas because now if we have a problem with our eye, we go to the optician which is located either in the town we live in or close by, and he says, well, you have this or you have that, but you have to see a medical doctor. So you go to your family practitioner and he says, well, he says I really can't help you too much because my knowledge of the eyes are very limited. So then he sends you to an ophthalmologist. In our area, to get to an ophthalmologist, you have to drive a minimum of 40 or 50 miles. So I think this would save time and expense if we would let these opticians...optometrists do this. I believe that this bill has been very carefully drafted. We've added some amendments I think that have a great deal of protection in. For one thing, they cannot practice surgery, surgery of the eyes. It allows the optometrist to prescribe and use eye drops and ointments only. The bill does not allow optometrists to be grandfathered in the bill. They must complete extensive and additional education and clinical training. If we pass this bill, and we do have problems, I don't think we will, but we are in session every year, so we can correct them. Iowa has, like I said before, has a law such as this. Our neighbor to the north, South Dakota, and my district borders the South Dakota...the State of South Dakota. And South Dakota just passed a bill such as this. I visited with some of the legislators up there. They think that it will help South Dakota. So I feel if it helps South Dakota, certainly, it will help Nebraska. When I talked to