

round of debate, we discussed the education that the optometrists have. The kinds of courses that they are taking I feel are very thorough, and not only the courses but the clinical experiences to back this up. We talk about optometric services as compared to physician services outside of Omaha and Lincoln. You will note that the two principal speakers or the three principal speakers in opposition to this legislation happen to be from Lincoln and Omaha where there is a proliferation of optometric services, not only optometric services but ophthalmology services. This is not true outside of the major metropolitan areas in our state. So now if you have regular physicians and optometrists and you compare their training, you will find that they start out with the very same beginning courses in medicine, and then you will discover that the optometrists go on to have much more specialized concentration in eye care, not only individual eye care but how it relates to the total body, not only how the eye and the medication that it receives relates to the systemic entities of the body but in reverse. They are also taught to recognize other symptoms, other diseases that may be affecting the body and manifesting themselves in the eye. I think these people have had careful training. It is ongoing training. Unfortunately, if there was a mistake, if there was a mistake, if there was a mistake, it would be readily visible, but we have often said, what happens to some of the doctors' mistakes. I think Senator Higgins just gave you the answer behind me very quietly. I say to you that I think that we have submitted this process, I think that there is reason and rationale to move forward with this legislation just as it stands, and I would ask you to do that. Thank you.

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thank you. Senator Chambers, please.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, contrary to what Senator Remmers indicated, I think the explanation by Senator Hoagland was very good. I think the elaboration by Senator Johnson was right on point, and the rationale offered by Senator Wesely should have been enough to cap the issue but, obviously, it is not because we are not I don't think debating the merits of the bill as such. We are debating a dispute between two different groups of practitioners, and apparently the optometrists have gotten some lobbyists who were able to do a better job this year than they have done in the past. Senator Morehead