

SENATOR CARSTEN: Thank you. Senator Haberman. Senator Haberman. Senator Hoagland, you are next.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Mr. President and colleagues, this bill does have I think one very strong feature about it, one undeniably strong feature and that is the nature and the character of its chief sponsor, Senator Chronister. The bill has a very, very good friend, indeed, and he has done a very, very good job working for this bill. But I would encourage you to set those feelings aside and look at this amendment and the substantial reasons that we have in support of the amendment. Now, first, since Senator Withem reminded me about this and I think I may want to yield a little bit of my time, if he is willing, to Senator Withem to explain to us exactly how the review process is to work, because a claim has been made here that the review process was satisfied but, in fact, it was not. All the technical committee does is to make recommendations. It makes recommendations to the Director of the Department of Health, and you all have had an opportunity to review the opinion of the director, the six-page opinion that Senator Wesely distributed a couple of weeks ago, six single spaced pages, and Dr. Wright concludes quite strongly that this bill is not needed, that under the 407 criteria, this bill is not a good idea, and he makes that conclusion for a number of reasons. And one of the principal reasons he gives is the issue that Senator Morehead was talking about earlier, the access issue. And Dr. Wright said, "Look, as far as the use of therapeutic agents is concerned," and I am quoting, "physicians already have this activity as part of their practice act," and Dr. Wright in some detail describes how the proper comparison on availability is not between optometrists and ophthalmologists, granted, there are not that many ophthalmologists around the state. The proper comparison is between the number of available optometrists and the number of available general physicians because general physicians, after all, have taken pharmacy courses. General physicians are trained in the administration of these dangerous kinds of topical eye drops that we are talking about. Now there are plenty of general physicians out there throughout Nebraska. They have had the pharmaceutical kind of training that is necessary which brings us into the second problem. The second problem is that you need to be not only a physician but you also need to have substantial training in pharmacy if you are going to know how to spot the side effects, if you are going to know