

did you wish to address this amendment?

SENATOR DIERKS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I believe I will. I...I think that there's a couple things I would like to call to the body's attention. Senator Schellpeper circulated a couple of maps, one of them showing the distribution of optometrists and the other one showing the distribution of ophthalmologists. It shows that there is an ophthalmologist, for instance, in Polk County, but that's not true. Now there may be one who would come to O'Neill on occasion if needed but there is no resident ophthalmologist there and I wonder how accurate the rest of those circles are. I'm not going to support this amendment of Senator Bernard-Stevens, because what this does is put one health care profession under the direct control of another one of the health care professions. And I can't imagine any health care profession wanting that sort of stipulation. The optometrists have their own Board of Control and own Board of Examiners and so do the ophthalmologists and it would seem to me like this would be a rather cruel twist of fate to throw optometrists under the Board of Medical Examiners when they don't even prepare for those type of exams. We have gone through the 407 process and I should tell you that I had some difficulty with this whole piece of legislation because I have been over some of these roads as a professional and I know some of the problems that we have. But I think one of the reasons that the 407 process was established was to help those in the body who are not familiar with some of these medical terms and medical slogans to understand the process. And the process came out saying that the optometrists could do what we are asking them to do. For Senator Robinson's information, part of that 407 review had a medical doctor, ophthalmologist on there, Dr. Pete Witted. He was on that 407 Review Board. And all of the 40...all of the 407 processes that do any studies at all have a cross-section of medical people. They never are loaded with optometrists or ophthalmologists. There's always a medical doctor, there's always a pharmacist, there's always a dentist, there's always a registered nurse, there's a cross-section of people across the medical professions that are on all these boards. The board is selected, I think, by the Director of the Health Department and he sees to it that there is a cross-section of health people on these boards. So it can't be loaded one way or the other. Many times there are chiropractors on that board. Sometimes there are veterinarians on that board. So when you have someone from the optometry profession on the board and somebody from the ophthalmology profession on the