

February 24, 1994 LB 988

he was healthy; the next day this is the way we find him. The Director of Corrections for Scotts Bluff County was down here addressing a bill before the Legislature, well, the Judiciary Committee, on another subject. He and I got into a very good discussion about boot camps and what he told me was informative. In Texas, from which he came, they set up a boot camp program. They had a number of activities which seemed to be helpful to the young people who were put into this program. But as time passed, it developed that these programs were expensive, so when the Legislature began to try to find ways to cut money, these were the first programs cut from the boot camps. They deteriorated and developed into what some people dread, myself included, of where you have a lot of hollering at young people, they do some running, some push-ups, nothing constructive, and in some states, these things have actually become counterproductive, meaning that they do more harm than good. They don't even maintain the status quo with some of these young people. So what this amendment would do is prevent Nebraska from embarking on a program which has failed all over the country. It was a political venture in the first place. In some states, I guess it became so entrenched that rather than go through the trouble of doing away with it or perhaps using it as an excuse not to do other things that ought to be done, these programs continue to limp along. We should never send good money after bad, and here's what I mean by that. If boot camps, as they are badly misnamed, were experimental and they contained programming and the other types of activities that could assist a person so that he or she would not go deeper into crime, would develop the abilities and skills that we are trying to address in this programming in the secure facility, if that was the idea, and somebody said there will be a pilot program established to see whether it would work, that might make sense. But if we have a building called a hospital and people walk into the front door and they go out the back door on a gurney not breathing, something is happening in that building which ought not to happen. They went in with a hangnail and came out dead. They went in with a headache. They came out dead. This is not a hospital. This is the best friend of the mortician. So in order to allow us to focus on what might offer a way to address a problem, namely, a place where certain types of juvenile offenders need to be confined, along with programming for them when they are in that facility, to focus on that, it would be helpful to eliminate all of this material about the boot camps. I have talked to Mr. Clarke, who is the Director of Corrections. He has concerns about not only the boot camp itself, but the

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