

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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April 14, 1999 LB 652

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time. Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SENATOR DW. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature. I am going to use this period of time to basically give us a little bit of education about the part of the bill that talks about moving the secure confinement facility for youth that is now under the Department of Corrections in Omaha to the Office of Juvenile Services. Part of what Senator Chambers says, I agree with 100 percent. I would just as soon and would hopefully like to see it that we did not move 18-year-olds out of this facility, and we could have another facility for the use of these juveniles. We're talking about another 10...10 million dollars to build that facility. We're talking about another 10 to 12 million dollars to build another one, but we have a problem here, people, and here...this is what the problem is. Lancaster County, I don't know what their numbers are but I know Douglas County is spending somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3 million a year for those kids that are being sent out of state and some in state to out-of-home placements for juvenile secure confinement because the state doesn't have a place to put them. And for the part of the bill that has that we want to start sentencing, having the juvenile judges sentence kids to the Office of Juvenile Services, they don't have any beds to put these kids in that need secure confinement. So this part of the bill, which was my bill separated out but now amended into LB 652, would say that we would keep the kids under 18 and put the 18-year-olds back in Corrections. I would just as soon that not happen, as Senator Chambers said, but we have to cut the line somewhere. Are we going to build or we're not? Now Corrections has come yesterday and met with Senator Thompson and myself and said they're willing to negotiate a contract with the Office of Juvenile Services to take some of them kids now, and they are looking at some federal money coming in that maybe they can use to expand the secure confinement facility and take kids in the future. That's good. I will go along with that, and I know Senator Thompson will, and she'll talk about that later. But one of the things I want you to be aware of, as I handed out a map to you, and I want you to know some of the figures sometimes that a bureaucracy will use to pull your chain. You will see the cross that I put on the left facility called Housing Unit Typical A,