

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

April 18, 2001 LB 598

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Any items for the record?

ASSISTANT CLERK: I have no items for the record.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: We'll next move to General File, LB 598. Madam Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, LB 598, introduced by Senator Dwite Pedersen at the request of the Governor. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 12, referred to the Judiciary Committee. That bill was advanced to General File. And I do have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM0192, Legislative Journal page 715.)

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Senator Dwite Pedersen, you're recognized to open on the bill.

SENATOR DW. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. This bill is commonly referred to as the gatekeeper bill. I bring it at the request of the Governor. And it's very important to the success of his juvenile justice package. The concept came from a recommendation made in the juvenile services master plan. This report recommended that Nebraska reform its juvenile offender service delivery system to develop a single point of entry into state custody. LB 598 would require that the Office of Juvenile Services, rather than the court, determine physical placement of a juvenile entering state custody, based on an assessment of risk and treatment need, as well as the availability of a range of services. In the past, judges have lacked confidence in the placement making decisions and operations of the Office of Juvenile Services, and therefore have continued to directly commit youth to placements in programs. This practice has made monitoring of caseloads, program costs, and program effectiveness difficult to evaluate, and ultimately led to the Chinn report recommendation that a gatekeeper system be implemented. With the adoption of the Governor's juvenile service plan, an objective and accurate assessment and request...as requested by the master plan would be conducted, and that levels of programs both residential and