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Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

February 26, 2003 LB 46, 111

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Legislature, the bill is a must. I voted for it in committee and I'll vote for it here. We need to have it. But I want to bring a few things to the attention of the body. What Senator Synowiecki was talking about, you know, and supervision is important, but pretty soon this is going to be costing us some big money in the future if we don't get some of our bureaucracies and stuff together in how we're going to treat these offenders. And there will come a time when we can't lock them all up. We have 7.5 percent of our inmates in the Nebraska Department of Corrections with 4,000 inmates that are in there for sex offenses. That's prison. We've got a sex offender treatment unit out at the Hastings...down at the Lincoln Regional Center that treats, has about 80 patients, some of them former inmates that are picked up when they are released from prison, the biggest share of them, and they are put in there under mental health holds, most of them there for two years or longer, sometimes for a lot longer, maybe even life. They need to be if they are a danger to our children and our society. We also have a holding facility for people waiting to go to that treatment facility out at the Hastings Regional Center, and I'll bet there is 15 to 20 more out there, and we've got some more up at Norfolk. This number keeps growing and growing and growing. And we need to do something with them. We have a treatment facility at the regional center out here. I'm not so sure about its success. I know they are doing the best job they know how. I do know this, from researching in the last couple of years and looking into other states, there are programs that work. And there are some people who have finished our program out here at the Lincoln Regional Center that are staying clean from these types of offenses. But for those that can be treated, it takes a long time, and it's going to take a lot of money. And we have to know that up front because that's what we're going to...where we need to put these things. I agree with Senator Brashear, LB 46 will have some community programs. Hopefully, it will work with some of these people who are less offenders and maybe not need to be locked up. But I just wanted to bring you some