

April 28, 1981

LB 404

where, let's tell them where they are going to get it but if not, let's say, Legislature, we are going to fund this. County, we are not demanding that you go on a program that you cannot get around because of the lid. Let's face the music the way it is and say it the way it is.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Fowler.

SENATOR FOWLER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, we have kind of gotten ourselves in the situation that we often do where we try and explain the committee amendments before we explain the bill and for that I apologize for not having explained the bill so that you can see the scope of that and then fit the committee amendments into that. First of all, the funding formula. The 86-14% is not currently mandated. We are not asking counties, the committee, the Health and Welfare Committee is not asking counties to pick up any additional cost. The interim study committee proposed a funding formula for the first time. I think what this Legislature has to realize and what we did not explain is, that there are, and I am sure that you are aware of it, aging services already across the state run by area Agencies on Aging. There is a 9 million dollar program across the state. There is almost no state law governing that program. So when Senator Wesely and Senator Cullan discussed the need for a mechanism, what they are saying is, we are spending 9 million dollars without any sort of legislative control, without any sort of real definition and so that is why Senator Cullan is supporting LB 404, because he sees the need and the Health and Welfare Committee saw the need to write into state law some sort of framework. Now the question then is, what should that framework be and that is the question the interim study committee tried to address. Now when we set up and propose something, we proposed a very high state match and a very low county match. It would have actually probably been a reduction in the amount of money that counties were spending for area programs. The Health and Welfare Committee with these amendments are saying, go back to the current relationship, have the county pick up a little more of the cost as they are now and reduce the amount that the state is picking up. So what the committee amendments are doing is restoring basically the funding ratio that exists now. Now there is nothing in state law that requires any state participation. There is a very small federal requirement. What LB 404 will do and the reason the county officials support LB 404 is for the first time the state will become a full partner in Aging Services and state resources will be available. So for those who are concerned about the ability of counties to conduct these programs, 404 with the committee amendments does not add to the county burden from its current level. Even with the committee amendments it does not add to the county burden.