

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Vickers.

SENATOR VICKERS: Mr. Chairman and members, I wonder if Senator Fowler, I don't see him here now, if he would respond to a question. There he is. Senator Fowler, in your explanation of the bill, if I caught it correctly, you are saying that if the funds are not available that the department will not be able to, even though the language says they can promulgate rules and regulations regarding the minimum standards and so forth, they would not really be able to force a local area to instigate an aging area that perhaps did not have one right now. Is that correct?

SENATOR FOWLER: Senator Vickers, the process is that an area board and area agency develops an area plan and they submit that plan with the fiscal impact to the State Commission on Aging. The State Commission reviews that against certain criteria and will approve or reject that plan. That process essentially goes on now in the federal planning process that the area has to develop an area plan for the use of the federal dollars. The bill does not really change that relationship and the determination is at the local level as far as the services and the rate. Okay, then the Commission on Aging submits a request to the Legislature and the Governor. It goes through the budget process. If we do not fully fund that request at this level then it is prorated back to the area and the money then is sent to the area. Does that kind of explain....?

SENATOR VICKERS: In other words, before an area...if an area decides they want to instigate a program, it has to be brought up on the local area basis first. Is that correct?

SENATOR FOWLER: Right. It has to be part of a plan, an area plan developed by that area and that is significantly different than some of the other human service programs where there is an automatic matching formula, where they do not have to say exactly how they are going to spend the money. If they raise so much, we send them so much. In 404 we require the areas to think about how they are going to use the money and devise a scheme, a plan, a program that they submit to the state so that you could pick up a document that says, In your district there would be these senior diner programs if we fund the program. So you know what the dollars are supposed to go for. Senator Dworak talks about problems with accountability. 404 recognizes that by saying that before we give you money, you tell us what your plan is. So you would have a specific thing in front of you that could tell you in detail what services would be in your area for that money.