

February 8, 1982

LB 635

had to drive to Kearney or Hastings, at least, and that isn't always easy to do when you have a crippled right arm and you drive a manual transmission. I feel these places are very important to the well-being of rural Nebraskans. Please tell the voters on the committee to support LB 635." And with that, that is all I am going to say at this time. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to oppose Senator Kahle's motion to raise LB 635 from the Public Health and Welfare Committee to the floor of the Legislature. After a public hearing on this issue and after spending a good deal of time in the mental health... looking at the mental health structure in the State of Nebraska, both in this interim and the previous interims, the Public Health and Welfare Committee voted to indefinitely postpone LB 635. I think they did so for very good reasons after giving the matter much thought and consideration and having a good familiarity with the mental health system in the State of Nebraska, and I think it would be unwise of us to ignore the actions of the Health and Welfare Committee and bring this bill to the floor of the Legislature. I would like to visit a little bit about LB 635 and indicate to you a few of the many reasons that we have concerns about this bill. One of the concerns has to do with the precedent that we are setting in the way that we deal with federal funds. As many of you know there were in the past a great deal of federal funds involved in the mental health system. Many of the funds were specifically designed to get programs operating and running and then turn the funding and operation of those programs over to state and local governments. In the case of the mental health regions most of the regions had eight year grants. They were declining grants. The regions knew when these grants were awarded that the funds would be eliminated in eight years, that they were going to be phased out and completely eliminated after an eight year period of time. Some of the regions planned for the lapse or loss of federal funding very well by increasing local support for the mental health services in their regions as time went on. And I think that what we are doing with this particular bill is to tell those regions which did not plan for the loss of federal funds that that is okay, the State of Nebraska will set up a mechanism to take care of that, and I don't think that that is a good concept. I'd like you to look at a handout which I distributed to you earlier which is a sheet prepared by the Department of Institutions which is titled Local Tax Funds For Community Mental Health Regions. I circled on