

April 16, 1982

LB 761

Program 292, Special Ed, as referred in the Governor's April 14, 1982 letter to the Legislature noted as line-item reduction B.9.

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Koch.

SENATOR KOCH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I handed out to you a moment ago what the reduction of \$40,000 will do in terms of handicapped programs. First of all, it severely reduces the hot line that we provide for handicapped services which is utilized by many people, particularly parents. It reduces the directory for handicapped services which is of value again to people who are searching for areas that might be of service to those who are handicapped. And most of all it eliminates all staff support for Special Education Coordinating Council. Now not too long ago we reinstated the Coordinating Council when there was an attempt to strike it. A year ago we put this together in an effort, and I would remind you once again, to try to track and audit the dollars that are being spent by the various agencies in helping the handicapped, and if we are really interested in some fiscal management making certain we cut down on overlapping and duplication of services to various kinds of people, then the only way we can do it is to make certain we have some staff to make positive that the Special Education Coordinating Council can function. One of the things that happened before under previous administration is that we did have a Coordinating Council but there was never any money nor any care whether or not that Council did function and did report to the Appropriations Committee or the Education Committee and to any member of this body who was searching that information. So I think it is rather foolish and foolhardy of us to take \$40,000 out of this program because what you are doing is you are crippling a vital service and I remind you also, Special Education and I am talking about the programs in terms of in-school, we have already cut about four and a half million dollars. That cut, of course, we say we will make up next January a deficit appropriation, but I think it is imperative for us to maintain the hot line, the Director of Handicapped Services and a staff that can help to coordinate the agencies. I am talking about the crippled children's Department of Welfare, all agencies serving the handicapped. Determine where we are spending money, whether there may be duplication or overlapping. So I think that this \$40,000 is \$40,000 well spent and I remind you once again if you are a person who is either handicapped or a parent of handicapped, they really don't care how much we know until they know how much we care. I think we are saying now, we do care about these services,

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