

May 4, 1989

LB 813

SENATOR HARTNETT: Yeah. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Lynch.

SENATOR LYNCH: Mr. President and members, I reluctantly rise to support this. I say reluctantly because I know the Appropriations Committee has a very difficult job in trying to define the priorities and they have done the best job they could. To support the Peterson amendment would mean we would spend no more money. To meet with the...meet the OBRA demands by the feds means simply a case management problem. We have to realize we'll be serving no more older people in this regard or other people who may be affected by the OBRA federal regulations. It's a matter of those caseworkers now, those staff people from the Department of Social Services simply adding lines onto the responsibility they already have to place these people and manage, hopefully, as best in the...as best they can in the best interests of those they serve that they are placed in, in fact, the best local or institution setting. It, I think, was admitted by most of us here that members of the Appropriations Committee, they're not quite sure how this million three would be spent because the Department of Social Services hasn't defined...hasn't actually defined how they would need that much money to, in fact, meet those OBRA demands. I tried to take the time to look into it personally and decide myself. I used to be the old Chairman of the Douglas County Social Services Program, to tell you the truth, while I was Chairman of the committee and on the County Board. It seems to me simply a management problem. To be completely frank, it's hard for me to imagine you would need a million three to do that and given that it seems to make some sense that we spend no more money but simply set our own priorities here on the floor to meet what we think is, in fact, an important priority and need. And so, therefore, I support the Peterson proposal because I think it would be in the best interest of all of us in the state. It appears, from the numbers I have seen that there is some room in the Hastings facility but certainly not 32 beds. The actual need, I think, depending on who you talk to is well over 60 beds. So, opening these 32 beds at Norfolk does seem to make some economic sense and, in fact, as so many people say, good state policy. So I support it.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Peterson, followed by Senator Wesely.