

SENATOR WARNER: Well, Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I think it has been pointed out just now by Senator Wesely's comments that at least much of the material that we have been handed out deals with the Emergency Protective Services. As has been pointed out, that was the purpose of the amendment that was this morning to respond to. I don't know that opening another ward will relieve that problem. The assumption is that that ward is to be filled with permanent people. Then you aren't changing that issue. My understanding is that the general policy is to maintain at least five beds for emergency protective services, and reading the letter from Norfolk, it indicates that there was I think three occasions in the past year where they had to go somewhere other than the Norfolk Regional Center, and the sheriff had indicated twice and it happened to be in the last six weeks, but I don't know what it was over the year, but the point is that the addressing of the issue that much of what we have been given in the way of a problem is not really answered with the opening of the ward, but rather with the Emergency Protective Service concept which is being funded so that we begin to get those areas reached throughout the state. So I would believe that we ought to not add the additional money but attempt to utilize and maximize the efficient use of the space that we currently have, and then with the other relief that will be provided with additional funding for Emergency Protective Service, the issue ought to be met.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Hannibal, followed by Senator Goodrich.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Mr. Speaker and members, I would rise to oppose the amendment. And, Senator Peterson, I do appreciate Senator Peterson has taken a different tack this time around now where he is not taking money away from the program that would have worked on a community-based programs and taken away from funds that would be needed to implement the provisions of the OBRA act, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, or more importantly, the Nursing Home Reform Act part of that. However, I...so what we are really talking about is an increase in the budget by a little over a half a million dollars of General Funds to open this new ward, and we have talked about this before on General File, and, basically, it boils down to a matter of capacity and need. What Senator Warner was just trying to relate to you was the same, a similar argument that I will use, and that is if you would, and I thank Senator Wesely