

I think, she was definitely correct in her support for the \$120,000 appropriation to help the community action people in Omaha to deal with the drug problem, and I think we need to do more of that on an ongoing basis but it seems absolutely crystal clear to me that we are really making a mistake in not opening up the cottage which has been closed for a number of years now and which does exist at Kearney, which physically exists at Kearney, to fill what appears to be absolutely obvious need and a need which will increase. We have already funded the Norfolk Regional Center with...or at least funded it in the Legislature, the Norfolk Regional Center to deal with adult or with those types of cases. We have, as you know, already appropriated a significant amount of dollars for the prison system for the adult offender. What is happening in many cases, in talking to judges, not only Judge Buckley, but others is that we are sending juveniles to the State Penitentiary and this is one of the concerns. And Senator Scofield and I and Senator Pirsch, when we were at this seminar, what we were talked to about is putting juvenile offenders in the State Penitentiary because for no other reason other than there is lack of space in the youth development centers. So I think what we need to do is, and I'm sure the study will show this, is develop to a system whereby the worst offenders who need the rehabilitation, the juveniles have a facility to be placed and in this case in our state it is Kearney, and that we not place people in the prison system who are minors who have a good opportunity to be rehabilitated and that we use our community outreach programs to keep the less difficult offenders in the community. I think that is the overall goal that this, at least this seminar talked about this last fall, and I certainly support the general theory. But I think we really can't ignore what is obvious from the numbers, and that is that the Kearney Youth Development Center needs to have this facility open immediately. Senator Langford may talk about this, but she indicated to me earlier this morning that she spoke with the center this morning and it was indicated to her by the director that if...that the facility could be ready for occupancy in 30 days, I believe she indicated. So, again, this is a facility which does now exist. It simply needs to be staffed and brought up to code, I guess, for lack of a better word, and put into use. So I would urge the body that I think this is an appropriation that might have gone by us. It went by me, certainly. I wasn't aware of just how critical the staffing problem was and I would urge the body to consider this appropriation immediately this year for the next biennium because if we don't, we're going to be ignoring it for another