

whether we, in fact, I guess...I've told people if you can bring me some evidence maybe that we can get out, we ought to look at it because any time I can avoid unnecessary federal control I do. But, at this point, I'm not at all convinced of that argument. I would further add, given this bill and the way we've approached it, that this is still good policy regardless of whether it is driven by a federal act or not. If you look at the problem we have right now with overcrowding at Kearney, overcrowding, potentially overcrowding at Geneva in terms of cost and even if we fulfill the request this year to expand Kearney, it doesn't seem to solve anything with the revolving door problems that we have out there. Add to that the number of people that are being sentenced to our penal institutions and the budgetary impact of continuing to build those, it seems to me that anything we can do to reduce the likelihood of people ending up in correctional institutions is worth a try and I think that if you look at experiences with other states who have done something similar to this that is has not only been in the best interests of young people, which I think is the first priority of all of us in here, but it has also been more cost effective. I would cite, for instance, the State of Massachusetts where they enacted reforms similar to this bill and the cost per year of a juvenile in alternative programs like this in Massachusetts has ranged somewhere in the neighborhood of 9,000 to \$15,000 per juvenile. If you look at the cost per juvenile per year in Nebraska right now, at Kearney it's \$21,375, at Geneva it's 29,921 so if this plan works, as it has in Massachusetts, I think we can legitimately argue that maybe even if this was motivated originally by a federal piece of legislation, that this is good policy and has very good potential to provide judges with alternatives where they all say they need them and greatly cut the cost of dealing with this juvenile problem we have in the state. It's my opinion that if Nebraska sets up these kinds of programs, our costs should be lower per juvenile and we should have a lot better programs for juveniles. So I'm not sure it's in our best interests to get out anyway, but I don't think that's a clear cut black and white answer that we even can. As I understand it, it was the Governor's initiative that got us in and we passed a resolution as a Legislature, but I don't think that was really the determining factor.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Langford, please.

SENATOR LANGFORD: Mr. President, I'd like to ask Senator