

Center at the Nebraska Center for Children and Youth, which is part of the campus there, the services there, would not be affected. We recognize that the building that is now housing the school is...the discussion has involved that Lincoln Public Schools, if they take these children and the additional work involved, they do need additional facilities, and our school system is bulging at the seams. And so the provision of this is that the building where the school is now located would be available to the Lincoln Public Schools for utilization. And finally, that as a result of closing Whitehall School there would not be any out-of-state placements resulting from that closing. One of the arguments I've heard from some people is that without Whitehall some of these children, some of these students would be sent outside the State of Nebraska at great expense. And so, under these conditions that I've just outlined, if the Director of the Department of Social Services can forward to the Legislature their indication that these conditions can be met, then they would be allowed to go forward and close the school. However, if they are not able to be met, the school would have to be...continue open. I think it's a reasonable compromise to try and recognize that some understandings have been reached about what is intended here. And I've outlined what I understand the situation to be, that the goal is to save money, that the local schools will be able to take care of these children, that other programs and facilities will not be affected, we won't have out-of-state placements, all these things, I felt, have been assured to me as people tried to argue for closing the school. I just want to see that that's, in fact, in writing and presented to the Legislature, and that it meets this test, and if they can meet this test, then it's a very difficult thing to argue against the closing. I still have great concern, and I worry a great deal about the children involved, and future children who will not be allowed to have the services and this program. But, nevertheless, I think that this is a reasonable way to try and address the issue, and I'd ask for your support for this amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Nelson.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, you probably think this is "gritch" day for Arlene. This is another project that I've been on for about three or four years, when I was made aware, when we wanted to get the detention center out there for use for juveniles. So that's when I became interested in the