

enforcement, county attorneys, and consumers of mental health services in this area. Law enforcement needs to know that there is a place to take someone for a short-term evaluation, to provide or interface with the services that this person needs, and that's what this plan would do. The problem is that at this point it's critical in Region IV. Region IV expects to have about 300 people taken into emergency psychiatric centers during this upcoming year. This plan would enable a 5 to 7-bed facility to be located in Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Norfolk. Our Lady of Lourdes has been working with Region IV and the Department of Public Institutions to hammer out a temporary arrangement to handle EPC's. And the money in this amendment would allow us to make this arrangement a stable one. Numerous law enforcement officials and county attorneys have contacted me expressing the need for this plan. Currently, someone taken into emergency protective custody by a law enforcement official would be likely to be taken to the Norfolk Regional Center, if space is available. And many times they have been shuffled from one location to another because of lack of space. We do have a crisis here, and this...we're the only region in Region IV that has short funding for emergency psychiatric services. I would ask for the advancement of this amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Robak. Before we continue with debate, I would like to call the senators' attention to the south balcony. Special guests today of Senator Coordsen are 16 ninth graders from Friend, Nebraska and their teacher. Would you please rise and be recognized. Welcome to the Chamber. Thank you. Senator Moore, followed by Senators Robak, Peterson, Wesely, and Lamb. Senator Moore.

SENATOR MOORE: Madam President and members, I rise to oppose Senator Crosby and Senator Robak's amendment. Basically, they're two different issues, and I'll try to deal with them differently when I give my arguments against them. Senator Crosby's issue is an issue of continuation funding, and that is true. Obviously, when you talk about continuation funding, there may be the insinuation there that for whatever reason the state government has cut back, or not funded as much now as they have in the past. That is not the case. Basically, these mental health regions were treated just like other state governmental agencies last year, actually treated better. They were not cut back. They were given the marginal increase, 3 percent increase. Also there's been an increase in federal