

amendments. Each bill that we bring, Senator Chambers and others said that, have things in it that we need to address to be sure that the bill comes out the way we want it to. So I will just very quickly tell you the background of LB 25. I've been involved, over the years, before I was in the Legislature when the Commission for the Hearing Impaired was originated. I have known people who were on the commission and people who grew up with parents who were hearing impaired and had the problems over the years that we are talking about today. As I said earlier, the hearing impaired, deaf people, are isolated people. If any of you heard Beverly Sills, the well known opera singer, speak last April at the university about her daughter who was born hard of hearing, she's never heard her mother sing, it would bring home to you how isolated people like that are and how each one of us has to work and how families have to work to help those people grow up and become productive members of society. So I do appreciate everything that's been said here this morning because I think it strengthens what I'm trying to do with LB 25. I've worked with the Commission on the Hearing Impaired for the past several years to try to do something about this particular problem which has to do with the issues of mental health, alcohol and drug abuse as those problems pertain to deaf and hard of hearing persons. Communication, education, and access are the three main problems they encounter. I've introduced...a few years ago I did get a bill out of committee, but it never got passed, to get them a few additional signers at the Regional Centers, and so on, because there is a real need for people who know how to sign and interpret for the hard of hearing. I'm returning with this bill because I feel it will assist the commission in really bringing a resolve to these problems. LB 25, here's what it provides for, service coordination to ensure full access to mental health, alcohol and drug abuse services for deaf and hard of hearing persons. The commission would provide interpreter services, auxiliary aides and the assistive listening devices, and the mental health specialist which we provide for in this bill would provide the education and training to persons who treat these individuals. One person can't solve all the access problems statewide, but service coordination is a beginning. Educating treatment providers of the specific communications needs and manners of deaf and hard of hearing persons makes treatment more effective for them. The mental health specialist can also provide more support to deaf and hard of hearing persons in locating phones with assistive listening devices and arranging interpreting services. I want to...I want to say something about