

services out there that are now currently being provided, mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse, that the hearing impaired have difficulty above and beyond the nonhearing impaired individual accessing those and what this bill is designed to do is to break down those barriers of communication so that hearing impaired individuals will be on the same footing as others as they attempt to access these services. Okay, that's how I view the context. However, I'm concerned somewhat with some of the language that's used to do that. I would like to ask Senator Wesely a question or two about alcoholism, mental health programs and drug abuse programs. Senator Wesely, as a nonhearing impaired person, am I ensured full access to comprehensive mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse services? And explain what full access means in context of average citizens accessing these programs.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Senator Wesely.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Am I ensured these...this access?

SENATOR WESELY: Well, we can get into some antics here. Access, if you use the term "access", you have access to those services. On the other hand, where you get the services, no, not necessarily.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Is there a concern then that this language, the word "ensure" would cause a...would create some cause of action by a hearing impaired individual who felt that a particular mental health treatment program, very expensive program, a residential treatment program in another state, was the best for that individual? Would that person potentially be able to use this language, take the Department of Public Institutions to court and demand that the court grant that very expensive sort of treatment for that individual?

SENATOR WESELY: I don't think that's the case because I don't think that's the case for anybody in the state currently.

SPEAKER WITHEM: But...but...but does...but that was why I asked that first question.

SENATOR WESELY: Yes.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Anybody in the state does not have a special bill passed ensuring them full access.