

Kristensen amendment because I think we do need to take over state funding of indigent defense, but I suspect I'm probably in the minority as far as how much we're willing to commit in the way of funds, and I suggest also when the A bill, if we do get an A bill on the bill, that I'm going to be pushing to increase it to the level it ought to be funded at. It should not be funded at \$500,000. With that, it's a drop in the bucket and really not doing anything for the counties or for the criminal defendants or for the system that seems to get sometimes bogged down because of that.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time. Senator Bromm.

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, fellow senators, first of all, last summer I had the chance to meet with the seven county boards that I represent that are in the counties that I represent and discussed with them what was the most pressing issues that they felt we had facing them that they had frustration over or no control over and, without fail, each of the counties mentioned this as one of their primary concerns, concerns about escalating defense costs, concerns about the unforeseen hit that they might take if a capital case shows up in their county tomorrow morning and how they would pay for it. So there is a genuine concern, at least in the rural counties, and a frustration over how to meet and deal with that concern should they get hit by the big case. So there is a problem and there is a very significant concern out there, and the bill has tremendous merit from the standpoint of being a subject that we need to address. I feel personally that the counties have a responsibility to participate in how we fund this solution and I'm not to the point where I feel comfortable going to an entirely state-funded arrangement. I'm told that we will have problems getting counties to participate in this arrangement without Senator Kristensen's amendment, and that counties will opt out which they have to have the right to or there's a constitutionality question. However, I would very much like to see us continue to work with the counties to find a way for them to participate in the funding. I feel that if they do they're going to take ownership in how the funds are used to some extent, and we're not talking about enough money here at the onset, or I even think several years down the line it's going to take care of all of our indigent defense costs. My philosophy about this bill is that we provide an insurance policy, if you will, for those areas that want to participate who might get hit with an abnormal legal expense that they don't anticipate. I