

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you. Originally, Senator Bromm, in the green copy of the bill we talked about a half contribution matching the state fund and, as you recall, the problem with that is that probably a county in Senator Jones's district wouldn't want to send their assessment in because they were afraid that money was going to go to Senator Abboud's district, and Senator Abboud's district didn't want to put that money in because they were afraid that that assessment was going to go out to Senator Jones' district. And so that formula which was based on population, which appeared on paper to be a very reasonable thing to do, really got drug down in territorial turf and was an unworkable distribution formula. We gave up on that. We moved to a fully state funded. The reason we came to a third is that we still want to maintain that this is the state's assistance back to the counties. It's not a sharing operation. Is there magic to the third, Senator Bromm? No. There's no...there's no magic. It basically is the figure...I wanted nothing. There were others that wanted more and a third is basically the figure that got landed upon. I can go with a third. I really hate to go much further than a third and the policy choice with that is that it's still in the light of a deductible. In other words, we're trying to give the counties some assistance and relief from these major cases. Any dollar, obviously, they get contributed it's from relief, but, quite frankly, it's still the state giving them some assistance.

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Senator Kristensen. One of the philosophical things that I have been concerned about here, I have encouraged the counties in the area that I am involved in and practice in to get together and collectively work out public defender arrangements as sort of an insurance policy, so that if somebody gets hit, there is a public defender available to help defray the tremendous cost and...and there are counties who are interested in that because they've seen what's happened in Richardson County and some of these other counties that have had severe problems. My...my fear is a little bit that...that 646 will give them a false sense of comfort and satisfaction that if they have a big problem that the state is prepared to help them out and bail them out so why pursue the regional or multi-county public defender system? And I think that's one of the things that when we restructure government in Nebraska in the years to come we need to be doing more and more of the regional approach and I don't want to send counties the message that your problems are solved, don't continue to work on those things because we have a...we have a half a million dollar budget at the state