

I'm looking for the magic bullet from somebody. This is part of that solution, fully recognizing that there's not much money left in the budget for anything else if we meet our obligations here. That's why I have proposed and a majority of the committee at this point are proposing the 200-bed unit. It's a way to start. It's not nearly enough. I fully intend to be back here next January making a strong pitch for an expanded bed, beds, 480, but it is a way to get started to get them on-line. January of '98 is still quite a ways off. We're going to be overcrowded more by then. I just want to recognize one thing: 281 years, they've been added since most of us have been here in the last 2 years just to prison time. Something is going to have to give.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator. Senator Hillman.

SENATOR HILLMAN: Yes, Madam Chairman, members, if you haven't detected a little frustration on the part of the Appropriations Committee members by now, I'm sure you will before this debate is over. We spent a lot of time on this issue, and probably from my point of view and one of my frustrations is that if you look on the "Significant General Fund Mid-Biennium Budget Adjustments" under "Cash Flow Items", and this is increased spending that we hadn't really planned on doing when we first started the budget that relate to the Department of Corrections. Item 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, all address what we call crime and corrections. And it doesn't begin to solve the problem. There's also a bill that's sitting on General File which in my estimation should be a part of this package if we're going to look at how we're going to be housing criminals and that's LB 880, which is the Community-Based Corrections Act which would have adults confined in local communities. But this body doesn't choose to look at that because they don't think we should be having that type of plan. We have to put them all in a confined facility, lock them up and keep them there rather than finding alternative ways to address an incarceration of prisoners. The frustration I have in looking at this is we don't have an overall plan. It's very difficult to prioritize expenditures in this area when you only take it a year at a time, which is basically what Appropriations Committee does. We have a request one year at a time and I don't see how we can see the total picture fitting together. Most of what we do is on a crisis basis. This has to be done this year; and if we don't, if we can possibly get by without spending any money, we don't.