

And I think the mental health services would be grossly underfunded. Thank you.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Senator Robak. Senator Maurstad. Senator Maurstad waives. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. I guess we've moved off of the committee amendments on to the bill itself, but I would like to respond to a few of the points made. Senator Crosby talked about we can't afford the \$20 million. And again, I reemphasize that this is a delayed implementation so that we have a chance to work through with the local officials how this would be implemented and to give it a chance to work through with the changes in our health and human service agencies. But if we stand here and say we can't afford 20 million dollars and we have proposals out there that talk about 200 and 300 and 400 million dollars that would be shifted to the state through some of these proposals on the ballot, surely somebody is fooling somebody. There is a, clearly, \$20 million is something that can be found in this budget and there is a way to make this happen. And the result that you have from taking this step, you say it's not property tax relief, well, it's 20 million less being spent on property taxes, but in addition, it's not just a tax shift or a cost shift, and that's the thing that hasn't been clear to some who've spoken on this floor and to others outside of this Chamber. Because by taking this step, by uniting the local and regional systems with the state in bringing them together into one unified system you have the chance for significant savings and improved services, you have the chance to reduce overall tax spending. And that is something I think we all try and achieve. The problem is, what you're hearing in the floor debate is exactly why it's so hard to change these systems, though I mentioned before we've talked about this and we've considered it for years. And although the fact is, if you remember the handout, the two-page handout of the multitude of bills that were introduced to try and deal with property tax relief and changes in systems, this is the sole survivor, this is it. This is the one element that has come out that isn't in the Revenue package that came out of Revenue Committee and looks at the tax issue and lids and limits in that regard, but is actually it goes to the fundamental question of the structure of government and how we can change the government structure and systems that we have to provide services and to do it more efficiently. That is the key question that I think we need to