

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 14, 1999 LB 512, 610, 652

have the ability to monitor them, where a probation officer may never see them in the months that they are in those placements. They stay in contact by phone but it is still a very difficult situation to monitor. The Juvenile Justice Task Force probably understood the frustrations that we all feel here in the body and spend a lot of time talking about the cost of these programs. This isn't something that happened overnight, but it has happened fairly recently. In the last 10 years the number of juveniles arrested in the state has increased exponentially. We have systems at all parts that are tremendously overburdened. If any of you talk to your county commissioners or your local law enforcement people, they will tell you their number one issues that they are dealing with have to do in part with the juvenile crime in the state. So what we're trying to do with this bill is just address one portion of it, and I admit to Senator Chambers that a lot of bills were introduced, and I'm pleased that the Judiciary Committee did sort and let these bills come out so that we can at least this session have the opportunity to work on some of the most serious issues that are affecting the system. To get back to this particular amendment, what this amendment is is an amendment agreed to by the counties and by the Department of Health and Human Services to clarify two parts of the committee amendment. One part is to ensure that counties will continue to transport juveniles. Originally, this took all the responsibilities that the counties had for these chronic offender types or children who needed specialized placements away from them, but this, they agreed transportation does work better if the counties do it. They have the ability to do it. They have done it before doing other...transporting other prisoners and other juveniles and it would be difficult for the department of pick this up and make it work just by a logistic situation. Second is to clarify that this amen...this bill, which is formerly LB 610, LB 512 combined, is referring to children who are in out-of-home placements that are directed to the Office of Juvenile Services upon disposition. It is not directed to open the fund of the Department of Health and Human Services to fund all the types of needs that might be there for children on probation. That's another area that has a tremendous need. There was a bill to address that. That bill was killed in committee. It would have brought more money into the system by rephrasing court costs. So that, we wanted to make clear this wasn't a way to try to make that possible. This