

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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of the bill, but we...I'll have only three opportunities to speak and I don't want to be offering amendments so I'm going to have to talk about some of those things every time I get the chance when an amendment is before us. I see us moving in a direction that I think is acceptable and that will be beneficial. We, for the first time since I've been here, are talking in terms of really doing something that will help resolve a recurring and ongoing problem that has not really been touched effectively by anything done by the Legislature. If we look at this in a comprehensive manner, this problem of certain categories of juveniles, I know we can come up with a solution. The problem has been getting enough members of the Legislature to see the seriousness of the problem itself, then appreciate the necessity of our doing something legislatively to address it. Maybe it's good that finally the terrible deplorable dilapidated conditions, the unsafe, life-threatening conditions at Geneva and, to some extent, Kearney have been brought to us so we can see that as long as the current situation exists children, whom we are supposed to be helping, have been placed in life-threatening situations. They there...they are there with our knowledge now, and since we know and have the ability to correct that situation, if we fail to correct it, we not only have knowledge but we have guilty complicity. You can be guilty of a wrong not just by placing an affirmative act which is wrong, but by failing or omitting to do that which we are bound and obliged to do. Neglect and failure to act have characterized the legislative approach to the problems confronting juveniles and their families. With the green copy of LB 652, we can move toward constructing a facility. I am opposed to building new prisons for adults or children. The reason I keep using the term "facility" is because I don't want there to be, from the beginning, any association with the idea of locking up, throwing away the key, punishing, punishing, punishing, but the idea of trying to reclaim, to rehabilitate our children, to give some of those a chance at life which they may never have had in the brief amount of time they've been on this earth. I hope that we will get away from the idea of buying into newspaper headlines, the little sound bytes on television about the tremendous flood of youth crime. That is a false characterization of what is happening. We are dealing primarily with young people who, in my opinion, through very little, if any, fault of their own have become enmeshed in a