

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

April 14, 1999 LB 299

you go back to working. Members of the Legislature, methamphetamines, as Senator Chris Peterson pointed out earlier, is really...they are...it is a devastating drug. The harm that methamphetamines cause, that harm is worse than any other drug. Crack is labeled the worst drug, but it is as nothing compared to what methamphetamine will do to a person who takes it. Now not everybody who deals...who uses methamphetamines will have the same reaction at the same time, based on the same amount used. But if it is used long enough and in sufficient quantities, a person's disposition, character, mental stability all can go out the window. People have been known to become violent toward family members, lose interest in school, work and other things. There have been psychiatrists and doctors who practice medicine, because a psychiatrist must be a medical doctor first, but I mean the ones who stick you with needles and give you pills and things like that, have examined people who were addicted to methamphetamines and have found damage of a kind produced by no other drugs. Psychiatrists and psychologists have found mental aberrations that are triggered by the use of this drug. So I am not opposed to putting in place meaningful legislation to deal with those who manufacture it, those who trade in it, but I do not want those who are likely to be the victims or the addicts to be treated the same way under the law as those who are manufacturing or selling it. So one of the major changes that the amendment being prepared will do is to distinguish between those who have relatively small amounts, amounts that would not suggest that this person is manufacturing it or is possessing it for the purpose of selling and distributing it. With that change or distinction having been made, I have less of a problem with the bill. Let me mention a bit of the cynicism I have about law enforcement. To try to justify increases in salary or hiring more officers, they will go out and make a lot of arrests to show that they're really fighting crime, but when they can arrest somebody dealing small amounts or using or possessing small amounts, you just spread that net and you can catch as many as your net will contain and as fast as you can run them down to the hoosegow, you can fill up your car and keep doing that. Then the statistics will show a large number of drug arrests without indicating the amounts that these arrestees were involved with. And you will never realize that the really big and bad actors...