

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

April 27, 1999      LB 880

Brown's amendment simply because it appears to me that we do, in fact, need to do something with these facilities we already have existing that we're not doing. And I think Senator Wehrbein indicated we're not talking about any new facilities out there where we already have people who are in situations that are certainly not adequate or safe. And if we've got money we should be spending, then perhaps we ought to be taking a look at the facilities that are out there and take care of them before something tragic happens and the state finds itself in the position for millions in dollars in lawsuits, which could obviously happen if...if it's indicated these facilities, as I've been told, are not...are not adequately protected from...from the danger that are there for those young people that are...are those people that are being held out there. So it would appear to me at this time we ought to be looking to fixing up some of the problems that we had before we take on new issues. Now, I'm not against Senator Baker and his community out there getting a facility that they bid for, which I have to tell you at the outset I was opposed to the system that was used in trying to select it. I still think that, you know, they were asking communities to give them land and all kinds of perks in order to get a prison and, yet, they went out to McCook and I understand bought the land. You know, it seems kind of strange that we have different methods that we deal with different issues, but that again is not really the critical issue here. I think the critical issue is...is what do we do for the facilities that we have in order to make them safe for the people that are being kept in those facilities and can we, in fact, continue to ignore a situation that...

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: One minute.

SENATOR VRTISKA: ...seems to be overwhelmingly accepted by a lot of people as not being acceptable, not being a facility that ought to be taken care of. I guess somewhere down the road when the...when the time is right, we need to look at more facilities, certainly we ought to look outstate Nebraska. I don't think everything ought to be built in...in eastern Nebraska. But, at the same time, we're at a crossroads now and the question is, what shall we do? And because of that, I'm in...I'm inclined to support Senator Brown's amendment to the amendment or to the...yeah, the amendment to the amendment.