

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

May 4, 1999

LB 880

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: The question has been called. Do I see five hands? I do. The question before the body is, shall debate cease? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays to cease debate, Mr. President.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Debate ceases. Senator Bruning, you're recognized to close.

SENATOR BRUNING: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. Senator Bohlke, I certainly appreciate your explanation, and I do believe, as well, in the committee system. However, sometimes in the Legislature, imagine that the 49 of us are a deck of cards, sometimes you don't get the draw in a committee that might support a specific bill that doesn't have anything to do with whether the specific senators on that committee are bright or not. They certainly are, but they didn't agree with...they didn't agree with the bill. So I think this is also an acceptable way to go about solving a problem. As far as this being a fiscal conservative bill, I would say it is, and I will say that for two reasons. Number one, on a very basic level, I'm here asking the body to spend \$500,000, but in a matter of minutes, I'm going to stand up and ask the body to cut \$950,000. So, and I tie the two together, so I see that as a net gain to the taxpayers, a net savings of \$450,000. Okay, so there's part one, why is this a fiscal conservative action. Number two, when you think about spending \$500,000 on mentoring, I want you to think about \$23,000 a year, or whatever the number is, to incarcerate kids, to incarcerate adults. Think about how much money you spend on the back end with bricks and mortar, with guards, with the food for these people, with everything we have to spend once they get in prison. I think you'd come out ahead by spending \$500,000 up front than you would if you have to spend the money for bricks and mortars or for the juvenile justice system. My goodness, think about all the people involved, the probation officers and the attorneys and the judges and all that paid for by the state that you can avoid if you keep these kids out of trouble. I think this bill accomplishes that. It saves money. So I stand behind my contention that this is a fiscally conservative action. And I