

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

February 10, 2000 LB 652

responsibility to fund these kids for out-of-home placement and, unless we have some place to put them, the state doesn't have a facility in place, and this is in place and it has already been built and it has areas where they can be treated. This is what the facility was built for. So, in order for this to work, we have to have some place for the juveniles to go and...to help the counties not have to pay huge amounts of money to send these kids out of state where we may or may not ever hear about their progress or what is happening to them. Probation officers are limited in their ability to follow these cases out of state. I think it is important that we pass this amendment and make it easier for the state of Nebraska to fulfill its responsibilities. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Suttle. On the Thompson amendment, Senator Connealy.

SENATOR CONNEALY: Thank you, Mr. President. I'd give my time to Senator Thompson.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. Thank you, Senator Connealy. A second briefing piece that's been passed out to you today is an overview of how the Nebraska juvenile justice system works and who pays at various points in the system. The first half of this amendment deals with the issue of when children have serious problems, when they need an out-of-home placement who pays, and the amendment deals with a fairly recent problem in the state. It's only been in the past few years that, due to the fact that our facilities are overcrowded, that we haven't got the array of placements and particularly that we don't have what we call level five placements, which are in a secure facility and which have intensive levels of treatment, a lot of youth in our larger counties have been directly placed by judges into services, many of which are not in the state. These are expensive when they are placed directly. If they were state placements we could, in many cases, recover Medicaid costs for part of the youth that are Medicaid eligible, which is a significant portion. As a result, the counties pay, but they pay 100 percent. We also are creating a system of a lot of different placements out there