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PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Landis. Senator Hartnett.

SENATOR HARTNETT: Mr. President, members of the body, Senator Thompson, I ask you a question. Maybe you've discussed this already and I...and I listened to Senator Landis in his elegant manner (laugh), but, you know, where is the money coming from? We take out the two-cent cigarette tax and I think that's what Senator Landis was saying. Do we have enough money in the state to do this, or is it going to cost anything? I...and bring me up-to-date. Senator Janssen asked me, you know, you know, so maybe if we do it on record here, Senator Thompson.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Thompson, would you yield?

SENATOR THOMPSON: Yes. The bill, as written, has no A bill. It does not take effect until a year from this summer. That gives some lead time for the department to adjust and develop services and come back with a budget proposal for next year, knowing that it will be serving the youth from the counties. I would point out that there are only two counties that have judges that do this, in our county, Sarpy County, and there's a letter of support for this bill...in parts of this bill from a Juvenile Court judge in Sarpy County. Other counties are working differently with the system. The...clearly, the state is going to have to accept its responsibility and come up with it. It will not be as much as the counties pay because the state has the ability to get Medicaid funding for a portion of this. So, on that issue, this particular bill, as the amendment is presented, as written, has no budget impact this year. However, as a state, when we develop the budget and when the Governor and the department develop the budget, they have to recognize that these youth, that are currently...for the last few years have been placed in other settings by judges at the cost to the counties, in Douglas and Lancaster County, will have to be absorbed back into the state system. They are state responsibility. We do have deficiencies, and I have last year's report of our task force and also this report of the master plan that says we are significantly understaffed in this area, and the worries that are out there are there, but ignoring them and continuing to wait and hope for a response is just not working.