

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

March 14, 2000 LB 1217

the wrong spot you get...you get bitten. These are those basic experiences that I understood demonstrated to us that these many young people don't have and when they wake up to that fact a in a few weeks or a few months many times, according to the projection that was given us, they come to understand a little more about reality and the fact that they can control their own life, too, and that they come to know themselves. That's the reason for this experience. And I guess it convinced most of our committee because we put it out of...put it out on the floor.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Don Pederson.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Mr. President, members of the body, I spoke the other day on this subject. I'd like to mention again the concerns that we have had. I think we probably, in the Appropriations Committee, spent more time on this particular issue generally than on any other single issue before our committee, and we had a big concern that has been mentioned earlier of at what point do you start the treatment of kids who are going to get in trouble? And we realized that we had to increase the amount of money that we provide for the early youth and the various intermediate programs, but when it came down to it, although we said we're not interested in this Wilderness Camp at first, we started looking at the alternatives and we did not see an alternative. And the Department of Health and Human Services did not have what I would call "Plan B" if we don't do this. And then we looked at the demographics of what's going on at Kearney and we saw, as I mentioned, that the number of people incarcerated at Kearney continues to go up which, because of the limitation of the facilities, means that we have that much less time with which to treat these young people. So that's why we...we went back to the drawing board and said, okay, if we don't do the Wilderness Camp, what do we do? And we did not know of any alternative. This Wilderness Camp would be operated by a company that is familiar with working with...with at-risk youth such as has been described. They have a good history of having worked effectively with these young people. Another thing that concerned us was the fact that I noticed that there's about a 29 percent recidivism rate from Kearney. We've looked at this same rate with the Brown School and they have, or a