

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

March 21, 2000 LB 1217

lot of...

SENATOR CROSBY: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...responsibilities in terms of these programs, in terms of maintenance and renovation of buildings and so forth. I don't know. I remember giving money back once before and then having to come back. I think it was even a special session to correct the budget because we...the money wasn't coming in as fast. So I thought it was very important to raise this issue. I may be back with it on Final Reading, but, Madam Chair, are there any other lights on?

SENATOR CROSBY: There's one.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Oh, okay, I'll just let it go then. Thank you.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Senator Byars.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Schimek, for bringing this issue to the body. I think it's one that we definitely need to be aware of and I'd like to broaden the scope a bit. Obviously, I'm very interested in mental health providers, but, colleagues, I think we're about to face a crisis all the way across employees in state government. I don't think we're looking at just mental health providers. I think you can go in every corner of this state and you can find the same type of crisis on employee retention, what we're doing to pay our employees to be competitive with...with the private sector. I think it was illustrated and heightened even more...more definitely, if you noticed, I can't even remember where I read it over the weekend, the tremendous disparity in beginning wages between the rural and the urban areas, about...between 40 and 50 percent difference between what we're paying beginning workers in the rural areas versus the metropolitan areas. I met with some people from the Department of Roads this morning. We're having a 29 percent turnover rate within our own employees in Department of Roads. We've increased lane miles that we have to maintain, has...has grown and grown and grown, but we have not grown the resources to take care of those roads--the employees, in other words. And we see