

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

April 11, 2000 LB 652

bill. So we're making the best decision so we have the best system in place to try to help them overcome those problems that have put them in the situation and keep them...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...from committing crimes again. And this bill will help with that.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Jensen.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the body, I, like Senator Bromm, really have struggled with this issue. And I have heard from six of my county commissioners, county attorney, certainly the county administrator, lobbyists, various other people, and they're certainly doing their job and they're representing their county. And, you know, we all come to this body as usually representing a community, a city, a county, and then we represent the state. And how do we do that and how do we go about that? I want to just have you think for a moment about the process that we go through. A couple years ago Senator Brown and I talked about the process that we go through is kind of backwards in that we have the bills first and then later on we start looking at the budget. I would really hope that some day we could reverse that and we could to the budget first, decide where we want to go, and then we can fit everything in that. And the reason I say that is that we've done some things this year, in a short session, that I could look back now and say I wish we would have done differently, and that's what the problem is and that's where we're coming from today. First of all, we came into the session with a huge budget deficit, \$32 million in Medicaid deficit alone. A lot of that deficit was the result of child care; we tried to address that situation to no avail. And because of that, what, \$9 million more in child care costs that would have taken care of what this proposal is before us. We chose that we would completely remove and leave removed, they were removed in January of 1998, but remove any limits on child care to anybody who is 185 percent or below the poverty line. There is no asset test, there is no limits as to the number of hours that they can get child care. They can get child care while they're going to school, while they're going to work, while they're going out for