

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

April 11, 2000 LB 652

that we need that level at the state level, and it should have been there. But a decision was made late in the session in '97 for what the Legislature felt were good reasons at that time and it was transferred back. But it is now time to make it the way the Legislature envisioned it when the planning was done in 1992 and '93, and in 1994 that facility was planned for the juvenile and adult system for juveniles. We can do that today. It transfers back with a budget and it will provide at least 30-35 placements for those youth who need secure placement. That's a \$1.5 million benefit to the juvenile system in this bill. It doesn't show up in the A bill, but that's the way it will be in a couple years out when that transfers back. The second thing it does is to answer the policy question, which I have heard no one say isn't the way to go, to take one section of the law that allows judges to make these direct placements. Instead, if there's an out-of-home placement, it would place it with the Office of Juvenile Services. We need to bring these kids back into the state, develop programs that are available in the state. We need to expand programs near their communities. We need to make sure they are research-based, that they're evaluated, that we are building that continuum of care, and this bill provides that option. I'm hearing we can't afford this and if you've worked on juvenile justice issues, and I guess now I'm starting to do my old fogey talk here, but I started on these issues as a county commissioner in 1982 and it's always going to be the fact that it's hard to fund juvenile services. It's hard to put them, when you're on the county commission, ahead of roads...

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...and ahead of other things, but we need to take our responsibility as a state government and do this. We need to accept our responsibility. These are the kids that should be placed with the state. I'd like to yield the rest of my time, short though it is, to Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: I understand I only have a few seconds here. This bill is a priority. I know it's not until next year, but if we wait and do it till next year then we have to