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LB 209

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I would bring you a little bit of information from the side where I work. As a drug and alcohol counselor, 80 percent, and I would guess a little more than 80 percent, of the people I work with come to me because of DUIs, of the adult clients that I work with, because I work with a lot of adolescents too. But about 80 percent of them come to me with DUIs. And I'm not talking about the repeat offenders, those who three, four, five and keep offending, because we need to do something else with them. But I suggest to you that Senator Chambers' amendment does do something to help in another way. Out of the adult offenders that I work with, I would bet that at least one-third of them, after losing their driver's licenses, drive anyway, and most of them because they have to. And I'm not defending that in any way, shape or form. I'm just telling you what happens. They got to go to work. They've got to pay their bills. They've been ordered by the court to go to treatment. They've got to show up for treatment. They've got to see their probation officer. They've got to do their community service. Now with the appeal process the way it currently is, there are some lawyers, believe it or not, who really care about their clients. And they use this appeal process in order to get the person through treatment, through their self-help meetings, so they're prepared when they go to court to say they've done better and are doing well. Now I supported the bill out of committee but I did not support the amendments, if you looked at the history of how this bill came out of committee, for this reason. If they appeal now, and there is a good amount of them who use this appeal for this process, for this purpose, is that they have wheels while they're going through their treatments, their self-help meetings, and still taking care of their family. So they have a better platform to present to the judge when they go to court that they have done something about straightening out their lives. For that reason alone, I'm going to support Senator Chambers' amendment. But, again, I caution you to not hear me say that I condone driving on a suspended license because I do not. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Pedersen. Senator