

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

March 26, 2003      LB 46

SENATOR SYNOWIECK.: Senator Mossey, that's a good question. I do think...although my earlier comments indicated that the primary goal of the amendment, AM0965, is not to deflect any type of work load assignment, in practical reality, there is a situation in Douglas County where probation officers' caseloads do far exceed accepted standards in probation or community supervision. And that...boy, you open up to a can of worms there as far as a larger issue in terms of, if we're going to embark on diverting individuals from our penitentiary system and utilizing the capacity of probation even more than what it's utilized, there is going to be some serious personnel problems in that area. And in terms of probation officers in Douglas County, it is not unusual for them to be carrying cases right now exceeding 300. I personally think it is a public safety issue. And so this whole concept of community corrections...and I think Senator Schimek also spoke to some of these concerns with regard to our current infrastructure that we have out there, and also, beyond that, our infrastructure in terms of community-based substance abuse and mental health treatment. I know right now, currently, there's a four- to six-week wait for residential treatment for substance abuse. If we embark on this move to divert individuals from our Department of Corrections into the community, into community-based treatment, into halfway houses, I don't know if the capacity is currently there. That's another concern of mine with regard to the larger concept issues behind community corrections. The current infrastructure in terms of community-based substance abuse and mental health treatment, I don't know if it's capable of taking on these extra bodies that it's going to necessitate. So yeah, you touch on some bona fide concerns, Senator Mossey, concerns that I indeed share and am trying to illustrate through the amendment. And again, hopefully we can come to some resolution on these matters. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Synowiecki. Were you through, Senator Mossey? You were through?

SENATOR MOSSEY: Yes, I'm done. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Okay. Thank you. Senator Brashear on the Synowiecki amendment.