

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

April 1, 2003

LB 724

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you. And first of all, yes, the counties did oppose the bill at the hearing. However, at that particular time, I had that we might change the service regions. Certainly they were not too pleased with that. They've worked...

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: And neither am I. (Laugh)

SENATOR JENSEN: (Laugh) Okay. They've worked with these areas, they know the people. And the regions have done a good job. And so in the amendment we took that out. We're going to keep the regions as they are. And that certainly made the county much more happy. Yes, they're still on the...when you look at the committee statement, they still are in opposition. But they want to become part of this, and they want to work on the development of the plan. And I think that we can do that. The governance, we're talking about bringing not only...from each county, there is a person that sits on this regional board. That's okay. But I think that we need to bring in maybe psychiatrists, psychologists, other health providers who can help with the expertise of that board. As you know, many county officials when they're elected, many of them would like to serve maybe on a transportation committee or judicial or whatever it is. And they said, well, we're assigning you to the health committee, and they say, oh no. And so...but boy, we've got some tremendous county officials which have real passion for mental health across the state. I've talked with them, and I'm just so pleased with that. And we have in Region 6 also, that have really studied that. We're not going to change that. We need that local community support and investment. And so I hope we can continue to do that.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: What do you foresee then as the time line, if you'd come in back next year? I assume that...I mean, let's say...making the assumption we'll phase out one or two of the regional centers. And maybe you don't want to...I don't want to pin you down. But are you looking at, say, a three- to five-year, or...window? Or...?

SENATOR JENSEN: Senator Wehrbein, I frankly hope it's a two to three window...