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FLOOR DEBATE

April 28, 2003 LB 724

waste this body's time taking a vote on this. I think we ought to be thinking along at least parallel lines and I appreciate the interest that has been shown and I would ask that this bill (sic) be withdrawn.

SENATOR CUDABACK: It is withdrawn, Senator Tyson. Mr. Clerk, next item.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Jensen would move to amend the bill, AM1337. (Legislative Journal page 1327.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Jensen, to open on your amendment, AM1337, to LB 724.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, AM1337 makes really two, I consider, somewhat technical amendments to the bill. I want to thank, first of all, the body for its continued support of LB 724 and the efforts of many through this legislation to reform the state's behavioral health system for the sake of those who suffer with mental illness and substance abuse. AM1337, two changes that will be made, and it's done to make the bill more generic in keeping with the general policy and the nature of the bill. The bill, as introduced, includes legislative intent to discontinue the county matching fund requirement currently in statute, but still require local funding of behavioral health services through a maintenance of effort requirement established by the Department of Health and Human Services. AM1337 simply deletes that specific reference to the maintenance of effort requirement, but continues to refer to local funding for behavioral health services from counties and other private sources. The current behavioral health system is built upon a policy of local control, local participation in the provision of behavioral health services. The policy is maintained with this amendment, but made slightly less specific. Secondly, it changes a reference in the bill to an appointment of a chief administrative and clinical officer for the behavioral health system to the chief behavioral health officer for the system. The change is made to simply make the language of the bill more clear, and to avoid any confusion. I want to repeat to the body that there are already a number of stakeholders who have been