

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

May 13, 2003

LB 407

we're about to do, and I would just caution you all not to get stampeded into this. If we accept the Don Pederson amendment, that does give the department more time to make a transition, but it also puts their whole program in limbo. Let's just say that next year...well, let's just say that we do pass this amendment with the Don Pederson amendment and the department then is lingering over the summer and fall into next year, and then there's a bill introduced next year to reinstate the Lincoln Correctional Center. I mean, you've...given time, that could happen. We could reverse our position. Meanwhile, they're still in limbo. They still don't know for sure what's going to happen. So I don't think this is a good thing to do right now. I think it may be a good thing to do, but not right now. I was told by Steve King that the Lincoln Correctional Center has 500 medium/maximum security beds in it, 500. Now the reason we built Tecumseh is because we needed medium/maximum security beds, and that's what we've got at Tecumseh, 960 of them. And if we try to put 500 more prisoners in there...I mean, you're not going to be able to release these prisoners. They're going to have to go somewhere. You can maybe release some of the others that are in the other institutions. As I understand it anyway, you're not going to be able to release these. So you're really setting us up to have a lot of problems in our correctional system unless a lot more thought is given to this. And I would be...I would be interested in seeing next year what we could do with this. But to do it on the spur of the night...spur of the moment, late in the evening, I just don't think that's a good way to conduct public policy. And I would encourage you to not only defeat the Dwite Pedersen amendment but to defeat the Don Pederson amendment as well. I think it leaves too much up in the air. Thank you.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Vrtiska, members of the Legislature, I think this is an unreasonably precipitous action. Nobody knows the implications of this, and I don't think anybody can pretend to know the implications of this all around: how you deal with the workers; what rights they would have; whether they get...what sorts of benefits or termination rights they would have; whether you could actually fit the prisoners, and then