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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 407

year. I support the underlying amendment, and let me tell you all why. Ever since I've been in the Legislature, there have been problems with Corrections. When I first came down here, the prison itself was segregated based on race, and I raised so much Cain they finally broke up the segregation. Then I pushed for a new prison. The other thing was like the old Bastille. But there will always be problems in Corrections. Very seldom can you get them to be responsible and accountable. And when they don't like a particular inmate, and this happens more times than I want to admit, they cannot convict a person of a violation that would justify him being put in the hole, so they put him in what they call administrative confinement, and can hold him an indefinite time. They have contempt for the Legislature. There's no way the director can be on top of everything happening in every one of these institutions. The Legislature has threatened to do something about Corrections and never has. For Senator Mines, I believe very good arguments were made by you about how a business will function, but we are not a business. We don't need anybody's permission. And if we tell Department of Corrections you'll do this, they will do it or suffer consequences. We have suggested things in the past, in terms of treating inmates fairly, and they've told us in so many words, go jump in the lake, because the Legislature is never going to follow up, the Legislature is never going to do anything. Adopting Senator Don Pederson's amendment prevents anything from having to be done in a very short period of time which would be unreasonable. Adopting Senator Dwite Pedersen's amendment, with Senator Don Pederson's amendment, shows all of them that the Legislature now is serious that we are going to bring about some changes. We're going to stop this idea of putting bogus write-ups against inmates, to fill up and backlog the prisons so that people cannot get out on parole. We need to look at the Parole Board. Somebody had said earlier that in one state or another, the Governor tells the Parole Board what to do and what his philosophy is. This Governor appoints people who are going to do what he wants them to do. There's a chairperson whose appointment has run out. Politics are being played with that appointment. We have a corrupt set of circumstances, and I don't mean in the sense of criminality; corrupt in the sense of proper principles, ethics being observed is the problem I'm talking about. And I strongly support what is before us this