

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

May 14, 2003

LB 407

prisoners get turned out and paroled on the basis of the classes they've taken, the behavior patterns in prison, the seriousness of their offenses when they go into prison? Don't we want to use some other kind of standard for releasing these prisoners? I think I do. I think that as I mentioned to you last night, these are all medium- to maximum-security prisoners, and there are only so many beds that we have in our prison system. And this will put both the State Penitentiary and the Tecumseh facility over capacity, and over capacity by large amounts. And I think that's...

SENATOR BAKER: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...should be of concern to everybody, especially those of you who were here when we visited...or, when we voted to build a new prison back in...whatever year it was, '99, or 2000, I'm not sure. We did that because we knew that there was a distinct possibility that we could go to court unless we provided adequate space for these prisoners. And I would just ask you to reconsider this issue. And with that, Mr. President, thank you very much.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Schimek. The speaking order is Senator Chambers, Senator Dwite Pedersen, Senator Wehrbein, Bourne, Don Pederson, and others. Senator Chambers, you're recognized to speak.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, we made a decision as a Legislature last night. I stick by it. Now the Governor and his spokespersons are telling us what a terrible mistake we made, and the Governor was very intemperate in the newspaper. And if the discussion goes on long enough, I will deal with that. But at this first time around, I want to mention why I'm very much opposed to Senator Schimek's attempt to get us to reconsider. I knew what I was doing. I know what I did it for. And the Governor knows. And if he and others, even some on this floor are saying, why don't you just shut the institution down right now? I point out that when we were phasing in a program that would take women off ADC, we didn't just say, bam, you're all off. We didn't even make the program apply across the state at the same time. We tried it in certain