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LB 407

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Bromm. You've heard the opening on AM1896, by Senator Bromm to LB 407. Open for discussion on that amendment. Senator Combs, followed by Senator Chambers, Senator Don Pederson, Senator Jensen, Senator Landis. Senator Combs.

SENATOR COMBS: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members of the Legislature. I had my light on to speak earlier to...before we had the discussion cut off for the vote, but what I do want to say is I think this idea of a study is a wonderful idea. I'm comparing what we're going through now to what health care went through back in the sixties and seventies. Many of you who worked in health care remember where we used to get paid under a fee for service system. In other words, we billed. We were paid for what we did. No matter what we did, we turned in the bill and we were paid for it. The government decided that that was not an efficient use of money, that we were not being wasteful, we were not looking at our outcomes very well, and as Senator Dwite Pedersen pointed out earlier the outcomes of the sex offender program, as one example given, have not justified the expense taken in that program. What happened? The early eighties, late seventies, we became under diagnosis related groups. The government came in and said, we have so much money to spend on medical programs; we are going to give you so much money per diagnosis; we're leaving it up to you as to how you use that money, but you will have so much funding to take care of the business that you have to accomplish. That's where we have arrived in the Legislature this year. No matter if it's the prison, whatever state program it is, get ready. Buckle up because we're going to have to do it, not only to the prisons, but to other state agencies too. Not the favorite thing that people are going to want to hear, but it's going to be how we're going to have to operate. We have a fixed amount of funding. We're going to have to start looking at outcomes and leave it up to the people to decide within their own programs how are they going to meet outcomes and become efficient. I don't believe that's something that we can do. I was told when I had some ideas to assist one of our recipients of state funding with spending it better, I was told that we cannot "micromanage," so I was not allowed to make that amendment to come to the floor.