

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

May 19, 2003

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SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. In the 2000 Legislative Session, this body created the juvenile diversion detention and probation services implementation team, and this was created and advanced by the Health and Human Services Committee after considerable work had gone on over a couple of years with...Senator Tyson was involved in that and several members of the committee, working with the Nebraska Association of County Officials and also working with our state Office of Juvenile Services and the Nebraska Crime Commission. And there had been studies in recent years, one was done by NACO and one was done by...through the Appropriations Committee of this Legislature, on some of the issues in the juvenile justice system and it was determined that we needed a group to implement some of those recommendations, and most of them can be done without legislative support. This is one that came from the diversion portion of that study. The task group that worked on this particular division of the assignments was appointed by the Governor and represented all three congressional districts. It had people from the courts, law enforcement, the service providers, the counties, county commissioners, from urban and rural counties, and also on this particular task force was the president of the Nebraska juvenile diversion program. One of the problems that was raised to us, and one of the reasons for this bill, is that juvenile diversion, which is a program that takes kids who have been arrested for a crime and, instead of putting them in the juvenile court system, gives them an opportunity to have consequences and guidance through a process that takes them from the...out of the court process but is nonetheless supervised and provides a consequence to them, and they are available in many places in the state, not all places in the state, although that would be the ultimate goal. The problem was that there is no statutory provision for juvenile diversion. The programs had been operating out of the adult diversion language and it was felt that we needed, as a state, to get the juvenile diversion language and also develop the standards for juvenile diversion services. And that was what was required and the bill passed in the 2000 Session. At least 61 counties have some form of juvenile diversion, and the scope ranges from some simple process that might be coordinated out of the county attorney's