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LB 17

Senator Engel.

SENATOR ENGEL: Mr. President, members of the body, I rise in support of the committee amendment to LB 17. I believe LB 17 deals with an important subject, and that's why I designate it as my priority bill. I want to thank Senator Brashear for introducing this particular bill. As originally introduced, the bill is designed to offer protection for individuals in the care of the Health and Human Services System. The bill would make it a felony for an employee or agent of the system to engage in sexual activity with a person in the system's care, even if the activity is consensual. The system has personnel policies that prohibit such activity, however, that is not enough. Even if the sexual activity is consensual, this activity undermines the care and treatment of protected individuals. Employees and agents who abuse their authority should face serious consequences, and this bill would provide for exactly that. Senator Chambers proposed similar legislation related to the Department of Correctional Services that was enacted into law in 1999. It makes sense to follow the same course of action in regard to LB 17. I'm also pleased that LB 17 could be used as a vehicle for other bills dealing with criminal law, which Senator Brashear has itemized. So with that, I do urge the adoption of the Judiciary Committee's amendment to LB 17. And, Senator Brashear, would you care for any time? Okay. With that, I return the rest of my time to the Chair. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Engel. Senator Preister, on the Judiciary Committee amendments.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, I rise in support of the Judiciary Committee amendment and the underlying bill, and also appreciate the process. I just wondered, Senator Brashear, does this have the severability clause?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Is that a question, Senator Preister?

SENATOR PREISTER: Yes.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Brashear.