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LB 407

Pedersen.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. First of all, I want to ditto what Senator Wehrbein said. But I want to get just a couple minutes of my time to try to straighten out some of the spin that's been put on closing the Lincoln Correctional Center. I will be sending out a letter, as soon as the Pages can get it printed and handed out, as a response to the letter that we got from Ms. Reynolds from MADD. The amendment that I put on LB 407 by no means releases any inmate before they have finished their sentence time. It does not change their sentence in any way, shape, or form. You have to do, by law, and we did not change that law with my amendment, the time that you were sentenced there for. You have to do half of the small number to be eligible for parole, plus whatever time you might lose for good time if you're not good. Can't change that. And it sounds as if we wanted to release the first 500 inmates, as soon as they get out the door shut it off, and that's all we wanted to do. That has nothing to do with it. You have to be eligible for parole before you can be paroled. Director Clarke sent a letter to Ms. Reynolds with a list of a whole bunch of inmates. I'm trying...I think it was 70-some inmates. Thirty-seven of them were not eligible for parole on the list that he sent her. There's no way the Parole Board could parole them if they wanted to, because they weren't eligible yet. Last year, the state of Nebraska paroled a little over 800 inmates. Twelve hundred jammed. That means they got out of prison anyway, without supervision. What I was asking this body to do, and which it voted to do, was to let 500 of them out a little bit sooner on parole, they're already eligible for parole, instead of jamming them. Because they do better when they have been supervised than when they are not supervised. They leave just as angry, and most of the time a lot more angry, when they haven't been paroled. The inmate I told you about that was jammed a week ago yesterday morning, or two weeks ago yesterday morning now, it was the day that he had to be released, not eligible for parole. And I'm not saying he should be paroled, because that inmate has had some serious problems. But he got out anyway. When he got to the front gate of the prison, they gave him his street clothes. He ripped off his prison clothes in shreds so they