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we protect our children. First, I implore you to reform our mental health system. Senator Jensen and I have worked on mental health reform virtually every day since the last day of the last session. He has courageously put forth LB 1083 to achieve this reform. We have worked directly with citizens who have mental illnesses, and I have to tell you, they have moved and impressed me. They are not weak people. They are not troubled people. They are people who have an illness. They merely seek understanding as they work daily toward their recovery. With treatment, many are undaunted by the burden of their illness, only to be held back by a stigma that has no rightful place in our society today, yet sadly it continues. It is time to open the doors and shine light on the dramatic advances in treatment. In our state, it is estimated that more than 67,000 adults have a treatable mental illness. Yet 37 of our counties are without any, or have only one, mental health professional. We currently ignore those gaps in service, and devote enormous state resources, \$54.2 million last year, to three regional centers. The Norfolk Regional Center, with a general fund budget of \$14.8 million annually, is so dilapidated that eight buildings are boarded up, with only one still used to provide mental health services. We studied the population at the Norfolk Regional Center last August and discovered that the majority of residents are from other communities. They have no ties to Norfolk. I was taken aback when I learned that 111 of the 170 patients were classified as intermediate or transitional. That means, by our own admission, they are no longer dangerous to themselves or others. The Hastings Regional Center, with a general fund budget of \$11 million annually, tells much the same story. On the day we studied, we found 61 patients in residence, 42 of whom were either intermediate or transitional, again, no longer dangerous to themselves or others. We have a compelling moral responsibility to see that these individuals are cared for in the least restrictive environment. We must also be very mindful of the law of the land in this regard. Many years ago, in 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of O'Conner v. Donaldson, set the standard to lock the door, to deprive citizens of their liberty because of mental illness. The court set forth two key holdings. First--and I am quoting from the court's ruling--"A finding of 'mental illness' alone cannot justify a State's locking a person