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FLOOR DEBATE

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Legislative Journal page 1127.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Tyson, to open on your amendment to FA1574. We're debating FA1574, which is the second component of the divided committee amendments. Senator Tyson, you're recognized to open on AM3211.

SENATOR TYSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. One of the concerns that we have about setting up community services is sustainability. By the nature of their illness, people with mental health problems are not your normal hospital patient. Because they do suffer from some mental aberrations, they may not have a full...as a matter of fact, they will not have a full understanding of what the procedures being performed for them amount to and what the consequences are. I mentioned before the testimony of the Health and Human Services Committee. One thing that was testified to by several different parties, including a former patient, regarded methamphetamine, and the length of time that it takes to get someone who is addicted to a methamphetamine back to reality. In other words, he has to be sequestered for some time, up to six months. Now I don't know anything about methamphetamine, except we have a lot of it where I come from. And some of these people, when they go into a facility, not necessarily the regional center, but community setting, acute secure, call it what you will, they're not your normal hospital patient. They present difficulties in handling. They have difficulties that cause, in some cases, damage to the staff. One person testified that there was something like a 289 percent increase in workmen compensation claims. And that would be, I think, sometime in the 90s as against 2003. The point that I'm proceeding to here is that people may say, yes, we can do this; they may not have a complete understanding of the procedures involved, the costs involved, the burdens that it places on other things that they do. And they may have a tendency, when things really get going rough, to say, we just don't need this, we weren't doing too badly before; let somebody else handle this. And they bow out of the systems. This is not something that's a figment of my imagination. It has happened in other states. It has happened, to my knowledge, I was told, and I can't remember the nursing home involved, they thought they could handle a patient, and they welcomed him, for less