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FLOOR DEBATE

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We had many people with DD who were very strongly objecting to that. What we're trying to do, of course, is to make a...come up with a program that is more clearly defined. We have individuals that may be receiving too much. We have a lot of individuals who are not receiving what they should be receiving. And so this would develop a process on how we go through that. Then LB 297 amends the Developmental Disabilities Services Act and defines graduation from a high school to mean completion of a secondary education but not need to include receiving a regular high school diploma. It also provides that eligible persons who graduate from high school are entitled to receive specialized services under the act until they reach 21 years old. Obsolete language was stricken. The bill clarifies that the department is obligated to provide developmental disability services to persons who graduate from high school until they reach age 21. Current law has been interpreted to absolve the department of such obligation prior to age 21 if such persons have not yet graduated from high school. Section 1 makes technical changes. Section 2 provides the funding in specialized services that must be determined by the Health and Human Services Department. Section 3 makes technical and substantive changes in Section 83-1216. It requires the department to establish an objective assessment process for the funding of persons receiving specialized services under the Developmental Disabilities Services Act. It requires the department to establish a work group consisting of representatives from the advisory committee on developmental disabilities, the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, consumers, families, consumer advocacy organizations, providers of developmental disability services, and other interested parties. The department, in consultation of such work group, is required by December 1, 2004, to submit a plan to the Legislature and the Governor that includes, but is not limited to, adequate and equitable distribution of available funding for the provision of specialized services pursuant to an objective assessment process, the incremental statewide implementation of such process, and for the provision of specialized services. It also would have the projected number of persons who would likely become eligible. The amendment requires eligibility...eligible Nebraska residents to apply for and accept any federal Medicaid benefits for which...for which they may be eligible, and