

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 6, 2004 LB 1083

some stumbling blocks along the road. He said that when he had made an appointment to come to my office he'd made it a point to call a friend of his, who had worked with him in Kansas, and this friend was now down in Enid, Oklahoma, and they talked a little while and they both decided that the best advice they could give us in this process was that we make certain that we have good data collection and reporting back to the Legislature. And I just want, for the record, for you to tell me how you envision that we will have that kind of reporting back to us and that there will be the money that will be useful in gathering this kind of data. And just as an aside, for instance, one thing I understand we don't have is information on how many people with mental illnesses we actually have housed in our prisons right now. I don't know that we have that. I might be wrong about that. But could you just give me a little bit of summary about your vision for this?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Jensen, would you reply?

SENATOR JENSEN: Yes. And thank you, Senator Schimek. That's a very good question and we, too, looked at Kansas. We looked at Oklahoma. I spoke...matter of fact I was at a conference with a representative who represented a facility that was closed in his district and so we had a great deal to talk about with that, and we hope that we can eliminate some of the problems that they had because of their experience. And you had mentioned that individual, and certainly I would love to have him come to my office and also visit with him, but we...it is because of the oversight committee, I think, that is going to give us a lot of follow-up and to ensure that this being done properly and then reporting back to the Health and Human Services Committee, back to the Legislature. We're going to have that ongoing dialogue back and forth. And then the regions themselves, though, have done a marvelous job in serving, in talking with their providers, and also talking with how many people within their region...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR JENSEN: ...need mental health services. So I think we have a better handle, matter of fact, better than we've ever had