

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

April 14, 2004 LB 1083

on how we prevent this from happening again. What kind of safeguards does the Health Department have in place? What kind of inspections are there? I learned at that meeting that night that this group home was not licensed, it was certified, although I believe, Senator Jensen, they were applying for licensure. But they are only certified because if you have three or less...or fewer I should say, Senator Chambers, if you have three or fewer clients in a home you don't have to be licensed. And so by putting three on one side of the duplex and three on the other side, technically, they've...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...got six, but they were only certified. There are things like that, that I think we need to be acutely, acutely concerned about and that we need to, as we move along on this mental health reform, we need to make certain that those safeguards are in place. And I know that Senator Beutler has a list of concerns that he's already placed on your desk and that he wants to be visiting with you about as well. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schimek. You've heard the opening on the motion to return. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Members of the Legislature, I know we were all looking forward this morning to Final Reading and getting through, and so was I, but I have to tell you I was shaken last Friday when I went to this meeting because there were a whole number of concerns raised that, in my opinion, were legitimate concerns, and to which I didn't have adequate answers. And they were safety concerns generally relating to group homes, and they relate to this bill that we're passing in the sense that more people will be in group homes and we need to be able to reassure the public that, indeed, the way this is being done is going to be safe for the kids in their neighborhood. Our kids trump, is what one lady said, and you know that's true. And the group home movement isn't going to be accepted by the public if we can't satisfy the public that the kids trump. Now, I want to talk, and I'm going to have a bit of an extended debate and I hope others will join in on the public safety issue. It's not