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FLOOR DEBATE

April 14, 2004 LB 1083

SENATOR TYSON: Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Tyson. Senator Jensen, the motion to return.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. And first of all, I want to thank Senator Schimek and Senator Beutler for sharing their concerns and, yes, I was at that neighborhood meeting on Friday, Good Friday, along with them, and my hearts go...or my heart does go out to the family and to the relatives and the neighbors of that community. But you know, that is one of the reasons that we brought LB 1083 to this body, because I think that we can improve the system and we can improve the system of behavioral health for all individuals. I do want to stress that this individual in this home was classified as DD, developmental disability; had been in the system for some time. LB 1083 really had nothing to do with that case whatsoever. He had been in a regional system for some time and then was released and, as a matter of fact, part of that came as a result of a federal district court case that really took under the provisions of persons with developmental disabilities that require...that were required to be released from regional center psychiatric hospitals when they were no longer receiving acute mental health services. So that individual was actually released because of a court order here in Nebraska, part of that 1998 case that the advocates brought. All of us have attended many of the Arc meetings, of many of those groups with...who work with the...the advocates of developmental disabilities. There are a few, but I mean a very small few, of individuals that are under that category who are dangerous, and one of the things that I think we will establish with LB 1083, however, are some step-down facilities, an array of services that we didn't have before. You went from...right now, you go from a regional center to a group home. Perhaps there is something in-between, particularly for those individuals that are dangerous that we need to have in our system. Now, out of this tragedy I, frankly, think that we can develop some good and we can look at our system and how it is being done. Senator Schimek mentioned that this was a group home, a duplex; people on each side. That individual that was