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April 14, 2004 LB 1083A, 1162

SENATOR CUDABACK: LB 1083AE passes with the emergency clause attached. Mr. Clerk, LB 1162E.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, I do have a motion. Senator Dwite Pedersen would move to return LB 1162 to Select File for a specific amendment, that being to strike the enacting clause.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Dwite Pedersen, you're recognized to open on your motion to return.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I have no intentions of holding up this bill in any way, shape, or form, but I needed a couple more minutes, and I didn't think it was appropriate to talk any more on the last bill, about what happened in Tecumseh and what's on the paper...front page of the Lincoln Journal-Star this morning. But it did have some relationship to the way these people are being supervised. You might have read in the paper that the officer responsible...some of the officers at times are responsible for watching as many as 275 inmates. This is supposed to be a supermaximum-security prison. Them are our employees that are out there. And, yes, they are as important to me as any one of the inmates, if not more so, because they're the ones that take care of the inmates. I think it's very important that we realize what's going on, and that's why I want to make...take a few minutes to bring it to our attention that you read the article. The department I think glossed over the fact that it's a serious problem. In fact, I will read part of it to you: Prison officials heard the message Tuesday afternoon, said Steve King, Nebraska Department of Correctional Services spokesman. But it's one they are taking with a grain of salt, he said. These employees work for us. One of them was hurt very seriously. And the department goes on to say that they are...it's not a big problem, because other states have a worse problem. In 2002, he said, Kansas had 26 serious assaults against prison employees by inmates; Iowa had 23, which is a lot more than we've had. But he refuses...or not refuses, but does not go forward and say that these states house twice as many inmates as we do, and they have far more violent inmates than we do. We have a problem, people. We have that monster factory, and they're still in lockdown down there, which is creating more