

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

March 30, 2005 LB 551, 618

followed by Senator Burling and Senator Pederson.

SENATOR CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members. I'm going to be very brief here. But I would like to say that I appreciate the work that Senator Flood and Senator Burling have put into this portion of the bill. I very much appreciate that. And last year, I was involved in the debate on LB 1083. And I had some concerns, and we pretty much got them worked out. But after it was over, one of the major concerns we had was the rural representation on the oversight commission. And Senator Jensen has gone out of his way to make sure that's taken care of. We're going to get some more representation in that way, so I'd like to thank him for that. And I think this is very good for the bill. So with that, I will return my time.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Cunningham. Senator Burling.

SENATOR BURLING: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I want to thank Senator Flood for his work on LB 618. He came into this behavioral health reform subject at a difficult time for him, and he's trying to address the concerns of his people. And so I cosigned onto LB 618, to try to be supportive of some of the concerns I had with LB 1083 last year. The...this discussion today will help remind us, I think, of the fact that the behavioral health reform plan is an expensive proposal. It's going to cost us more, I think, than we thought it would. And it's going to be an ongoing process for several years. And increased funding is going to be sought over the years to develop community-based services, especially in rural Nebraska, where people are affected the most in...at least in the Norfolk and Hastings area. The two parts of LB 618 that are in here that I want to significantly bring up to you are the importance of tracking the number of people receiving regional center services. Those numbers are pertinent to shape what the behavioral health reform should follow, and significant in the continuing discussion regarding adequate care. Those are in this amendment. And I hope that the division that is charged with requiring to contract with one or more national entities to review Medicaid funding for behavioral health services will accept this responsibility and will rise to the challenge. It