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FLOOR DEBATE

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amendment. And this amendment concerns itself with actually a bill that Senator Flood introduced that did two things. It talked about a tracking system on those individuals coming out of the regional centers, and then also that we would maximize Medicaid for behavioral health. And through that maximize...would be to bring in a contractor in order to help the state of Nebraska maximize that. There was some discussion that this could be maybe a \$175,000 expense, and so there would be an A bill attached to LB 551. With the passage last week of LB 709, the Medicaid bill, perhaps it would be better that that cost, if we do bring in somebody to maximize Medicaid, that it be part of LB 709 rather than of LB 551. I have visited with Senator Flood, and I think he's acceptable to this. So all this would do is remove that section from the committee amendment that requires the division of Behavioral Health Services to contract with one or more national entities to review current Medicaid funding for behavioral health services and to make recommendations about increasing that funding. So this section...and the section requires a report to the Governor and the Legislature on or before December 1, 2005. So by removing that section, it would remove any General Fund fiscal impact from this bill and it allows for a broader and more thorough review of Medicaid program under LB 709. That is what it does. It removes a section so there would not be an A bill attached to LB 551. I'd ask for its adoption. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: You've heard the opening on AM1146. Senator Flood, for discussion.

SENATOR FLOOD: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I want to thank Senator Jensen for working with me so well on this. I'm okay with this amendment because I do think that looking at Medicaid is very important and it will find a nice home on Senator Erdman's bill, it would be my hope. But it is very important that we look and spend the money needed to make sure we maximize our resources so that we're getting as much Medicaid as possible, especially when it comes to behavioral health. And there is probably no one in here that would disagree with that, and I just want to put a pitch in early for this amendment that will come back on Senator Erdman's bill. It's worth the \$175,000 if we're going to maximize our funding and get more