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FLOOR DEBATE

April 25, 2005 LB 40

think Senator Redfield has been hard at work at coming up with another idea in an amendment that follows this one. Technical only, October 1 operative date, I ask for the adoption of the committee amendment.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Chairman Landis. Mr. Clerk, motion to the committee amendments.

CLERK: Senator Redfield would move to amend the committee amendments with AM1227, Mr. President. (Legislative Journal page 1209.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Redfield, you're recognized to open on AM1227 to the committee amendments.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the body. First of all, I want to thank Senator Synowiecki. He has prioritized LB 40 and without that designation, this bill would not be before you today. And in the discussions I have had with Senator Synowiecki and also Senator Jensen, who coauthored this amendment, we have had a great deal of intense discussion as to the best use of the funds and how to designate them. What we discovered in our conversations was that, in fact, while we had set aside \$2 million through the appropriations process for rental assistance for those with severe mental illness, that, in fact, those dollars were still sitting in the Department of Economic Development. They found that they did not have the expertise in the health arena to actually set up the rules and regulations that they felt comfortable with. The Department of Health and Human Services said they were comfortable with the health arena, but they were not really experts in housing. And so they didn't feel that really they were the best distributors of these funds other than as a pass-through. In the conversations, we came up with a solution and that would be for HHS to be the pass-through for these funds to be distributed to the regions for behavioral health. And we know, in fact, that these people do know how to put a roof over someone's head and they do know how to deliver these community-based services. So the amendment that is before you contains some detail that we were asked to put in. First of all, it contains some definitions. On page 5, starting in line 7, you'll find that