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Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Redfield. You've heard the opening on AM1227 to the Revenue Committee amendment. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of AM1227, Senator Jensen.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. And I do want to thank Senator Redfield for composing the bill and Senator Synowiecki for prioritizing it. This is something that we've been working on for some time. Actually the state of Nebraska did a statewide consumer housing needs study as prepared for...and it was prepared for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The study was completed in September of 2003, prepared by the Hanna:Keelan and Associates here in Lincoln. I do have a copy of that if anyone would want to see that. But what it did say is that there was a tremendous need for individuals with mental illness for housing. And also we took a look at the shelters that we have throughout this state and the tremendous need that they are providing. But housing is one of the most important components of people with mental illness. First of all, they are at a very low income. And so, as part of LB 1083, we tried to put some dollars into supporting the housing for people with serious mental illness, prolonged mental illness, and we did that as part of LB 1083. And I thank the body for that particular portion of providing a need. Along with that, yes, when we did that we actually did rob some money from the Nebraska affordable housing organization. And so through this bill now we are able to replace those funds and then also take some of those dollars and put those into supporting low-cost housing for people with mental illness. Now in one way I'm sad that this has taken so long to get to this point. But because we thought that Department of Health or Department of Economic Development could do this, they studied it for some period of time and then really felt that they're not in the position to look at those needs maybe perhaps as well as the Health and Human Services. And in January of this year they kind of put their...it was agreed that Health and Human Services should actually be the lead agency on this. And then now with this additional funding, we will be