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Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 26, 2005 LB 117

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Flood. On with discussion of FA188. Senator Johnson, followed by Senator Don Pederson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. President and members of the body, I think that we need to do something and I think we need to do something very significant. Meth is of epidemic proportions. I think that's a pretty good word. It's in epidemic proportions. We need to look at it that way. Now, let's just talk a little bit about the mechanics of this. Why do we have pharmacists? You ever stop to think of that? We used to have pharmacists so that they made medicines or mixed medicines together. If you look at their symbol in front of the pharmacist, that's exactly what they were talking about. Do they do that now? No. What does the pharmacist do today? Well, he protects the public. If a person comes to him and presents the note from the doctor saying that he needs these medicines, he will look up on his computer and say, oh, your doctor had you on this other medicine as well and one of them will make the other one bad, or there will be some reaction if you take both of these medicines; let me call your doctor and get this straightened out. Or they will look at prescriptions coming from two different physicians; see the same kind of problem. The fact of the matter is this; pharmacists are there to protect the public. Now, what's the difference if they protect the public in this way? Logbook? Why not get modern? We have computers these days. Why not use them? Now, Senator Chambers raised some very, very good points. What we do is we don't treat people very well that have these problems. Back in the nineties, we had where the philosophy was, lock them up, throw away the key; didn't work. We still haven't learned our lesson in this state. We don't treat people. Our treatment is totally inadequate. We absolutely need to go this route. People that take meth aren't inherently bad. Many of them are good people who became terribly addicted to this problem. What must we do? Well, let's start thinking about treatment and not just go back to our thinking of ten years ago. One of the suggestions that was made last summer, and Senator Flood is looking into it, is the possibility of creating so-called drug prisons where the aim is treatment, not punishment. Maybe we ought to investigate this more, and I suspect that we'll have better success than what we're having now.