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LB 746

amendments, now you're recognized to open officially on the amendment to the committee amendments.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Can we accept what I have just said as the committee amendment to committee amendment?

SENATOR CUDABACK: If you wish to do that, yes.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Open for discussion on the amendment to the committee amendments to LB 746. Open for discussion on that. Senator Synowiecki.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature. Thank you, Senator Pederson. I don't think there's any question that as a state we're probably deficient in the amount of attention we give to indigent individuals and their access to the court system. But I do think, logistically, members do need to understand that this is not really a grant program; that this is, for all practical purposes, a direct appropriation to Legal Aid of Nebraska. The criteria set forth within the...the criteria for the grant application, which would include criteria (c) on line 24 of page 2, have offices located throughout the state, and criteria (e), which is on line 28, which would distribute its resources equitably throughout the state, really provides for an exclusion of all other nonprofit organizations that provide some critical legal services to indigent persons throughout the state and in our local communities. For instance, the...probably the primary civil legal assistance that's needed in my district, for example--I'll just use me as an example--is assistance to move individuals from an undocumented status to legal residency or to legal citizenship. And unfortunately, I think it's my understanding--I'd ask, perhaps, Senator Pederson if he can clarify this--Legal Aid of Nebraska is prohibited from providing services to undocumented persons within our state. So one of the primary deficiencies in my district relative to civil legal service, this will provide no value, if you will, relative to the undocumented and their striving to become legal residents of our state. Also, there's any number of local nonprofit