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March 15, 2006      LB 1086A, 1086

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Synowiecki, to open.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members. This is the A bill which enables resources for the evaluation and treatment for those that are involved in prostitution activity. It appropriates \$750,000 from the General Fund for 2006 and '07 to the Department of Health and Human Services, Finance and Support, to aid in carrying out the provisions of LB 1086. In many ways, this initiative replicates what was done in Minnesota in 1999, where their Legislature appropriated \$650,000 in 1999 to develop what they called the Women's Recovery Center. And the Women's Recovery Center offers participants chemical dependency treatment and sexual trauma therapy, assistance in restoring family ties, and developing living and working skills and competencies to support them in leaving a life of prostitution. It has now been operating for the past six years, and the Women's Recovery Center has been met with an 85 percent rate of success in achieving sobriety and leaving the lifestyle of prostitution. So in many ways, this initiative that we have taken on really tries to replicate the success of Minnesota. I will just read you one more passage from this information I have from the Minnesota program. In 2005, a follow-up study was conducted on 165 women who had been discharged from the program and back in the community for at least one year. Criminal justice data was obtained from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, to determine whether the individuals had any further criminal justice involvement. Using this public information, it was determined that 85 percent of the women had no further criminal justice involvement. I can assure you, members, this is quite contrary to our current status quo relative to prostitution in our state. During the testimony on one of these bills, I don't know if it was the justice or treatment bill, the city prosecutor from Omaha, Marty Conboy, indicated to the committee, one individual that was going through the county court in Douglas County just so happened to be going through that day on her 15th prostitution offense. And it's...and that is not entirely uncommon within our state, to have some of these individuals repeatedly and repeatedly and repeatedly recycle through our