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FLOOR DEBATE

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better to be more effective at the federal level. That's why they don't want to fund local law enforcement anymore. So from an Appropriations Committee perspective, as we look at all the needs of the state and we sit there every day listening to people come in, talking about the problems that they have because we're skimping out, the worry is, you pick it up this year, doesn't look very promising for me, to me, at the federal level; what happens next? And you know, I know, and I've said this many times here, county commissioners are the cheapest people on the face of the earth. There's absolutely no doubt about that. I was one of those people. And if I were a sheriff, I'd sure as heck rather come down here and ask my state senator than I would the county board, because, quite frankly, they're pretty tightfisted about this kind of stuff and expansion of the number of employees that they have. So it is a serious question of whether we pick this up this year, because I don't have a whole lot of hope for the federal government saying, we're going to continue to fund local law enforcement. They want to put the money into, just as we have here, meth treatment. They're putting it into meth hot spots. They've doubled the DEA budget...

SENATOR SCHIMEK: One minute.

SENATOR THOMPSON: ...for meth hot spots. They're shifting it to things that they think are more effective. Now, that doesn't mean that we don't think that our drug task forces have done a good job in arresting people in our communities. It means that the federal government is focusing their efforts on the big picture. Now, the next level down is us, and we are focusing, through the bill that Senator Brashear brought, a whole different way of looking at treatment for people, trying to get to the key issues of methamphetamine in our state. And that's where the focus is going to be--the drug courts and other ideas. I love the sheriffs. They're great people, they work very hard, they've done a good job with these task forces. But I'm not sure this is a good state policy. Regardless of whether, you know, members of Congress come in and tell us to pick it up, I don't know that that's a good step for us. And that's why I believe the Appropriations Committee didn't go this direction. Thank you.