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FLOOR DEBATE

March 23, 2006 LB 994

record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 33 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the adoption of Senator Beutler's amendment.

SENATOR CUDABACK: The Beutler amendment has been adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further pending to Senator Byars' amendment, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Back to discussion of the Byars amendment. Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. President, members of the body, I just wanted to touch on a few things. Yes, this is another request for more money than was originally planned, but here are two important things for you to consider. Last year one of the major tasks of the Legislature was mental health or behavioral health reform. Now if we are going to go from an institutional form of care, that we have had for the last 125 years, to local or regional and, in many cases, outpatient care, we're going to have to have the people there to provide the care, and this is the most important thing about this bill, as far as I'm concerned. One thing is that there's the actual taking care of the patients with this program. Senator Jensen mentioned that it was 3,500 people per year that were seen in these clinics. My information is that it's actually 5,500 people per year. So there is a very significant number of people that are being seen in this training program. But perhaps the single most important thing is this, is that Senator Jensen mentioned that 54 percent of the students in these various professions stayed in the area after they had completed the program. This is very consistent with what is found throughout the United States, that wherever people finish taking their medical training, they are most apt to stay in that region. So if we're looking to get professionals out in our rural areas, and there are three clinics west of Kearney in this program. So this is the best way I can see that we can attract not only care for these people, but also care in the future by having the practitioners in outstate Nebraska.