

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Vard.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Senator Johnson, I listened carefully while you were talking. If I understand you correctly, if we fund LB 280A which was originally strictly for alcohol treatment...

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: And mental health.

SENATOR HIGGINS: And...oh, mental health was originally included in it also?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, and it still is, yes.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Then your point is, what? That we get the money first from the federal government?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: Yes, my point is that to put \$1.6 million of general funds into two programs that today we appropriate approximately \$10 million for, when we still have unexpended federal dollars, is simply throwing money at a problem and I would rather put the federal money in first and then a modest amount of general funds than to put in this huge general fund amount, \$1.6 million.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Do we get a choice? Let me understand it, does the federal government say, first we have to put up the money and then they will give us their half a million?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: No, to the best of my knowledge, this is coming out of the alcoholism and mental health treatment block grant money from the federal government and we have it in hand and it has not been spent and we could use the money...and we could spend the money.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Does mental health include mental retardation?

SENATOR V. JOHNSON: I don't think so. I think this is only the mental health, the mental treatment programs that doesn't deal with retarded individuals.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Would you have any objection if we amended your amendment to include something for Region 6 for mental retardation where I understand they have cut that budget