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LB 512

problems or problems with placing juveniles. The reason behind the introduction of LB 512 is the increasing costs that have been incurred by counties in recent years due to the fact of juvenile placement, and by that I mean these are juveniles who have been adjudicated and need to be placed in a setting other than prison or home and the county, under current law, is obligated to pick up the costs. And the individuals we are talking about here are juveniles that have committed crimes, sometimes serious, sometimes not so serious, but for one reason or another they are determined by the court not to be sent to Kearney or Geneva and for one reason or another that it's not appropriate to return them to home either. Their home environment is not appropriate to treat these people and...but at the same time, it's not appropriate to give them a short stay in a foster home or something like that. They need more treatment than that, so these are the youths that basically fall through the cracks as far as our justice system goes. Additional factors are the fact that Geneva and Kearney are full. They are literally at a point where the judiciary is reluctant to send individuals to them because of the fact that they are overcrowded. There has been an increase in, obviously, the emphasis in law enforcement, as well all know in recent years, that has put more juveniles in the system and, as you can see by the handouts, there simply has been a stupendous increase. In Douglas County alone, in the last ten years there's been an increase from \$85,000 to \$2 million of the costs of placing these juveniles. Oftentimes they are placed in institutions that are specialized in treating these folks and they're expensive. They're expensive institutions. Some of them are out of state, and the counties have been forced to absorb these costs beyond their wildest expectations over the last ten years. You can see by the graphs that I handed out, just...I took a sampling of counties, Douglas County, Dakota County, Lancaster County and Saunders County, you've seen dramatic increases in all these counties in boarding costs for these juveniles. And the fact is that the counties are taking these costs on, they're doing it with property tax dollars and it is, to use a term that is often used on this floor, it's an unfunded mandate and it's one that, in my estimation at least, the state ought to be picking up. We have a similar bill on the adult side that Senator Hudkins introduced that I've been supporting. I think that in the spirit of that LB 512 ought to