

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 27, 1998 LB 1112

to find out if indeed they do have a problem in the area of mental health. To allow it to continue on without that option being open to people I think is a disservice.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Time.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I stand, first of all, to thank Senator Robak for her interest and for her persistence and for her passion on this issue, because to me I think it is an exceedingly important issue. As one who has dealt with a serious mental illness up close and personal in my own family, I know how devastating it can be to the family to deal with the illness itself. To have to deal with the financial aspects of it on top of that is overwhelming and sometimes impossible because the treatment of mental illness can be a very expensive thing. If it is...if it is treated early and people take their medications and those kinds of things, that doesn't necessarily have to be true, depending upon the particular type of mental illness that we're talking about. But I...but I really rise to say it really boils down to what your thoughts are on what insurance is for. To me insurance is supposed to insure you against catastrophe, against those huge financial offsets when you have a serious illness in your family, and that should include mental illness as well as physical illness. I fully sympathize with the insurance companies' positions on these kinds of issues. As one who's taken a number of mandates to the Banking and Insurance Committee, I know that you're not always successful in getting those bills out of committee. And somebody, Senator Landis, has to be the brakes on this kind of thing, I understand perfectly well where you're coming from. I don't think that we always have to be totally consistent in looking at these issues. We really have to take them on a case-by-case basis. I thank Senator Robak for coming forward on this issue and for having the courage to bring it to the floor this morning. As one who has never voted in favor...well, I won't say that, I don't know, I don't remember for sure, but I don't think I've ever voted in favor of bringing a bill to the floor. I most certainly have