

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

February 27, 1998 LB 1112, 1354

never tried to bring a bill to the floor out of committee. I do strongly believe in the committee system, and it is going to pose a real problem for me on this one, because I think Senator Robak is right, and I just thank her for doing this.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Tyson.

SENATOR TYSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I am going to vote against the motion to place on General File of LB 1112, and at the same time I am going to hope that people will support LB 1354 and support the amendment that will be filed on 1354. The problem that I see with Senator Robak's bill is it's one nibble by a goldfish when you should have an attack by piranha. What the state needs is a totally comprehensive review of its mental health policy. As we speak, the state of Nebraska is tearing down 25 beds in the Norfolk Regional Center, they are lessening their programs on alcohol and drug abuse, I believe, in Hastings, Senator Bohlke. I have been told, and this is anecdotal, I don't know if it's true, I'm just saying I have been told that there are plans to begin layoffs in Lincoln, Nebraska, Senator Schimek, by June. So if we're interested in mental health, let's start at the spring, let's not be dipping out of the river, as it were, let's get to the source of this thing. We need a comprehensive review of mental health. And Senator Robak's bill impedes it, it does not help it. Everybody has to come to the table, everybody has to come into the tent, everybody has to put their input into the agenda, and by everyone, I'm talking about providers, PPOs, HMOs, psychiatrists, psychologists, regional health, regional centers, patients, everybody has to have an input into it, review it, and come up with something that incidentally will cost the state additional funds. Senator Wesely, a few minutes ago, 20 minutes ago, spoke of Nebraska's rank in funding mental health. We do a very, very poor job. And in the last session, when we asked for additional money and caused additional money to be appropriated, it seems to have disappeared. I don't think it's had any effect. We're talking about doing better and better for mental health and the state office, HHS, is tearing down the regional centers. Now that does not make sense to me. Senator Robak's bill, while well-intentioned, will give us a camel, and I refer to that camel that is defined as a horse designed by a committee. What we're getting here is another camel, and I