

April 8, 1974

PRESIDENT: Senator Stahmer did you want to be heard.

SENATOR STAHMER: Mr. President and members of the body. I am going to repeat a little bit of what Senator Whitney said, and then after that add something on to it. He is correct when he said there is a three member sub-committee that studied mental health. We drafted a bill. It came up here last year and some people asked that that bill be held over so they could study it. I wasn't aware that any Senator's had undertaken any study across the state, as Senator Nore, Whitney and I undertook to my knowledge there was none. But they had that opportunity if they so chose. This bill has had suggestions offered by a number of people, and a sub-committee of the Budget committee, namely Senators Nore, Whitney and Stahmer now have taken what we think to be the most workable and the some suggestions of that will strengthen the bill and we are offering this as the sub-committee amendment. And the three of us were this original committee. And I'm not surprised..you know I'm not criticizing Senator Marvel for offering his amendment. If I had a regional center in my back yard I'd probably offer some amendments too, but I'd like to point out. We did in Budget Committee offer \$600,000 addition for the regional center, so they don't have to have a lot of their staff fired. The staff are

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(Start Belt 5A)

protected. We're going to go forward and utilize the regional centers. There is nothing that is done in Budget Committee that is going to knock out any regional center, knock out any jobs. They are all well protected. The only question now before us Are we going to start moving forward and getting some community mental health out into small towns and the small regions that would help the little people. Especially in outstate Nebraska. This bill is not that much different from LB311 for Mental Retardation. It is not that much different from LB403. And the chief features of both of those bills were to help the people in outstate Nebraska. And this is what this Legislature is designed to do. I give you my word that it will be a step forward. It brings in the County Commissioners, not into safe guard and to check, but it also brings the county commissioners with the safe guard and the check, but it also brings them in to do the organizing. I think to organize without this local input would be a mistake, and I think we need this, and that's why I think this is a step forward, and I think that the people mental health committee now will accept this bill with the amendments on it, and I went over all of these amendments with the staff and the man in charge of mental health. And I said in a word, would these amendments strengthen the bill, and he said, yes they would. And I said that's all I want to know. So I would suggest that in place of the Marvel amendment you would accept the sub-committee amendment which in effect takes three-fourths of what Senator Marvel is offering. Offers a few other amendments, minor amendments that make the bill more constructive, that strengthen it, and that has the backing of the