

May 2, 1979

LB 594

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. Speaker, my amendment proposes that this body seriously consider amending the present bill to include \$60,000 for the purpose of a plan to look at a facility where we house the visually impaired. The background history of this I think is important for us, that is the legislative mandate required the Department of Public Institutions to prepare a five year plan covering the period from July '76 to June 30, 1981, and I quote directly in 1977 Senator Fowler asked Jack Cleavinger, the Director of DPI where the plan stood for the possible renovation of this facility. For those of you who may not know the Legislature took over the orthopedic hospital at 10th and South in Lincoln. This is a huge building, excessively large, in some cases probably should be condemned. It is very inefficient in terms of its energy use, also in terms of offices and a number of other problems. I believe that if we are going to save this building from complete disrepair that we would wisely appropriate \$60,000 for a plan to bring to the Appropriations Committee next year for the purpose of renovation and particularly how we can more properly use a building once we have remodeled it not only for the visually impaired but possibly for other services that the state needs as well. I submit to you, for us to ignore this building any further would be for us to say that the blind are one more time, second class citizens and not only that but we are not interested in maintaining the property that we, as a body, have the direct responsibility to maintain particularly to bring it up to some kinds of efficiencies and standards that are fair particularly for that commission. So I am asking you to adopt this amendment, \$60,000 for the purpose of a plan for renovation of the orthopedic hospital that presently houses the visually impaired. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Warner.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, this particular facility was discussed at length by the Appropriations Committee as all capital construction generally is. Obviously there are numerous projects that are appropriate to do. Obviously one cannot do them all. This particular project was the thirteenth priority of the Department of Institutions of the variety of the requests that they had and I think...well \$60,000 wasn't so much the range of estimate that would be the final cost was between a minimum of \$730,000 for remodeling, for up to \$1,600,000 if the structure was replaced and there was two other options in between that and I think that this particular project was probably not

4476