

May 18, 1981

LB 561

members of the Appropriations Committee have joined me in urging you to override the veto is critical to the mental retardation regions in the State of Nebraska. The point of the matter is that in this state we have accepted a philosophy of a regional or community approach to serving mental retarded clients as opposed to institutionalization. I think it is much more humane. I think it is much better service and I think it has been a step in the right direction. Now we are not making that decision today. That decision has been made. That decision has been made. But on top of all the fine reasons that you can give, the bottom line is that it is more economical to serve these people in our communities rather than distant cold institutions. Now the Touche Ross study, and I suppose you can get any kind of study and come to any kind of conclusion that you may want to, but I think Touche Ross has an excellent reputation, and if you have looked at this study, you will know that it was done in great detail and very adequately covered the whole area of mental retardation services in the State of Nebraska. That study says that the cost to serve a client is on the average less than to serve the same client in an institution. Now we had taken these clients, these people, from institutions across this state and we have given the regions incentives to take them out but those are one time incentives. The thing we have failed to adequately take care of is that these clients after the first year still need to be served by the regions and that is what we have fallen down doing. Now another factor that I think we have to take into consideration is the fact that as we increase the workload, the service load on the regions federal dollars do not increase proportionately. They remain fixed. Title XX funds remain fixed. There is no automatic escalation as we serve more people. As a consequence, that means a greater burden of financial support must come from the state and from local subdivisions of government. Now the request that the Appropriations Committee initially submitted was for about a 15.3% increase and this was right in line with the recommended request given to us by the Department of Public Institutions. The result of the Governor's veto reduced this increase to 9%. Now several of these regions have traditionally been behind and one of the efforts and endeavors of the Appropriations Committee this year was to equalize the disparity between the various regions and I think we did a good job in doing that and we were very sensitive of this problem that has been with us for the past two, three, four years and this is not an easy thing to do. So we put the regions between themselves at a more equal basis and the Governor's veto resulted again in some greater disparities between the regions. I would urge the members of this body to very carefully consider our responsibility to these