

money is presently being spent by the public schools for residential care. What we are doing is we are saying we want to appropriate that money that is being spent from taxes and property taxes that money should come to the General Fund and should be appropriated in the Mental Retardation Regions budget and all six of them have that budget and it was increased according to what we felt the numbers might be. One other thing, the Governor's veto discussed the fracturing of responsibility, I submit to you that with the coordinating commission in place, the Department of Institution and the Department of Education and others that that memorandum agreement will be forth coming to us as you all know in December, and they are working on it, and this can be resolved by a memorandum of understanding among those agencies. It is time we bring in these regions into this business of the total population, not just 21 up, but we are talking about zero up. I think this is appropriate. I know and you know that education is the responsibility of the public schools in the private sector. But, I don't believe that we can consciously say that the public schools from tax payers dollars should provide for residential care when there may be an appropriate setting that is available. Now there is one more position in LB 317 and that is if the region feels that this is not appropriate and they can justify that, there is a hearing process where they can object and there is a hearing and possibly they would be exempt and some other agency would have to provide it. So, I want to clarify, what I think to be misunderstandings, even on the part of the Governor, in terms of what we are doing. I would submit to you that some school districts are being heavily burdened because they have a larger population of handicapped than others. I also submit to you that in small school districts if this were to happen to them it would put them so far above 7% that they would be forced to go outside to try to retrieve that. So, I want to lay it straight up to you, as candidly as I can, you have the explanation before you, you have a letter from the superintendent of schools at Millard written to the Governor and you also have a letter from the school boards explaining their position. I ask that you would reconsider our action, or the Governor's action on 317 and then act favorably on 317A which provides the money and shifts that cost originally from property tax and schools to the mental retardation regions and give them a responsibility in taking care of all of the handicapped, not just those they select to care for. I think this is not unreasonable. Therefore I request your consideration and favorable vote on LB 317.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Vickers.