

that you were urging the body to accept the 1 percent decrease?

SENATOR SIECK: No, (interruption).

SENATOR HIGGINS: You urged the body not to accept the 1 percent decrease?

SENATOR SIECK: Right, right. Maybe I said it wrong.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Thank you. I would join Senator Sieck in that. I guess my argument never changes from year to year but the more of the mentally retarded that we do educate the more come off of the tax costs that we have, and if we cut this 1 percent, and I see the whole list here of other items that we are cutting 1 percent, but in this case again, this is economic development. This money is being used to train the retarded so that they will become taxpaying citizens, not tax costing citizens. I have visited in Omaha with the mental retardation people, at least in my district, Eastern Nebraska Office on Mental Retardation, and I spent considerable time with their Director last summer, pointed out what I considered some flaws in the way they were operating, and I want to say that they were very receptive to my ideas. They made a great deal of changes. They have increased the number of people that they are placing in training centers whereas before there had been a long waiting list. I understand that the waiting list is moving rather rapidly which means these people are being trained faster. They have one person that does nothing but develop through the community jobs for the mentally retarded once they have completed this training, and, Senators, remember, once we have trained them, then they go out and they become taxpayers. Now this 1 percent could maybe keep I don't know how many from having that training. So we may be saving \$210,000 with the 1 percent reduction but we will ultimately be keeping those people on mental retardation programs that will cost us 2 million. So this is one case where I would urge the body not to accept the Appropriations Committee's recommendation for a 1 percent cut because it isn't going to be a cut. It is going to be an increase in cost. We are going to end up paying more by not educating the educable mentally retarded. So I would urge the body to reject this particular cut in the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker or Chairman.