

time to Senator Sieck?

SENATOR SIECK: I have a little more to add here. Now one last thing. I've heard some say that we should put this whole effort off until next year. I have heard some say that we should take more time to study the model. I want to point out that the Appropriations Committee did hold a briefing on the afternoon of January 6 of this year to look at the model. The bottom line is that we need to provide this additional money as a major step towards providing fair and adequate funding for mentally retarded people all across the state. My proposal does do it all. We don't have that much money, but my proposal is the first major step which will allow us, the Appropriations Committee, or whomever to look at the equity issues again this interim, if they want to, and make recommendations for modification next year. There may be some minor adjustment necessary. And through this, this is my last session. I would be willing to work during the interim to make sure this happens. I think all of you realize that I've worked hard for these programs through the past years. I sure would appreciate it if we'd keep this moving forward.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Senator Sieck. Senator Marsh, on the Sieck amendment, please.

SENATOR MARSH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had passed out, on your desk, a two-sided description of what we currently have. This shows you the inequity per client which currently is before us. And, as Senator Warner so clearly stated, Regions II, III, and IV are the ones which are very underfunded. If you are looking at the figures of the individual you can see that II, III, and IV are deeply underfunded. Senator Sieck's amendment would not bring us to full parody, but would move in the direction where we need to be moving. I will support his amendment.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Senator Marsh. Senator Smith, please.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, rise to support the Sieck amendment. There has been, indeed, inequity among the different regions across the State of Nebraska as far as the MR regions are concerned, with Regions II, III, and IV being the least funded in proportion. Region III happens to be the region that myself, and Senator Nelson, and a few others represent here. And I just would like to see that this would be