

we have done.

SENATOR SMITH: I can only reiterate the things that Senator Wesely has already stated to you and of course you can look at it if you want to, that I'm protecting my own district, which I am, and I don't make any bones about that. We were cut last year in some programs and which I tried to argue were very, probably more valuable than most of you in here thought to the State of Nebraska as a whole, not just to Hastings or Adams County, and we're looking at further cuts now at the Regional Center. Hastings is located very centrally in the State of Nebraska. I have a lot of arguments I could make about why we should be looking at providing and continuing to provide services in outstate Nebraska, not just having them located only in certain parts of the state. I'm not sure all of this is totally relevant because I was sort of taken by surprise, quite honestly, with this one, but...and I shouldn't have been, but I just want to say that we do have a need to continue to provide services and so I will go on record opposed to this. Thank you.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Nelson, please. Then Senator Morehead.

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I know we've been over this road time and time again and through all of our efforts during the regular session and so on, I think this particular group of people that are not able to speak for themselves, both the retarded and the mental health people, the alcohol, the drug, maybe they can, the alcohol and drug a little more, but the mental health especially, and I think they have taken their cuts along the way. Also in this time or these times, please realize the need for mental health help and the clinics is very much on the rise. I know we all get tired of hearing over and over again the crisis and the problems and so on and so forth, but to cut this budget again to that percentage, I just simply cannot see it. And I probably hate to stand up here and maybe say this, this time, but when it comes down to the bottom line, I would rather see one less mile of interstate maybe repaired or a new overpass put in that could wait five more years if we have to cut the mental health budget. Please think of these people that can't speak for themselves. Also, I have worked very hard on special ed education. I'm trying to find ways to contain that budget.