

If we cut down on the services and the workshops for the mental retarded, we simply are adding to the special ed budget, or there is a time in life that those people need to move out much earlier than what they are right now. And if those workshops are not available and the staff to train those people, again, they are simply on the tax rolls that much longer.

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

SENATOR MOREHEAD: Mr. Speaker and members of the body, this is an issue which tugs at the heartstrings of all of us and it has happened over and over again in the Appropriations Committee as I have been seated there, how we deliver services to the mentally retarded, to the people who have been in special education, are now out of school and we still are in a need of offering them services. This is not an issue which any of us take lightly because as 49 members in this body, I am sure you could probably not find any more compassionate people than exist here. But I rise in opposition to the Appropriations Committee's cut. I would like to also rise in opposition to the Governor's cut, but I think that even the mental retardation people as through our institutions, Beatrice Developmental Center and our private providers, understand that they, too, are going to have to make some decisions. Now let me tell you how this impacts. The cities and the counties and the school districts are constantly saying to us, well, you mandate something to us and then you don't fund it. Now they have that problem but I am telling you the purveyors of services to the mental retarded have that problem even greater because it is not just our mandates to them, but it is the federal government's mandates to them. And I will give you one example. Just this last year the federal government has now said that active treatment hours are going to have to be from 12 to 14 hours a day with these patients. This is an extreme change from their program which previously said only 5 to 6 hours. Now you start to think about 12 to 14 hours a day of active treatment and that translates into employees. This is a highly intensive labor employ type of service. Like Senator Wesely just pointed out, these are people who may need somebody with them practically 24 hours a day, either because of their inability to care for themselves or because they are, in fact, dangerous to themselves or others. If the federal government is mandating this kind of