

a change, this means they are probably going to have to increase their employees. If we cut their budgets, they can't decrease their clients. They can't just chop off a wing of their building or eliminate the cafeteria, or do away with the laundry service, but they will, in fact, have to decrease employees. There in a Catch-22 situation. They have mandated from the federal government or from the state one situation and they have decreasing funds which we are mandating, I guess, to them. How are they going to meet these? We have just come through a federal inspection at Beatrice Developmental Center, a very rigid one. And I say to you, if we do not meet their requirements and we have our citizens out on the streets, so to speak, in this state, what do you propose we do then? What do you propose we do then? I say we should maintain the funding as closely as possible. I would like to maintain it at full level. But at this position I say at least no more than the Governor's. Thank you.

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

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Senator Nelson and Senator Morehead and Senator Smith for their supportive comments on this budget request. Again, I emphasize that even with the amendment being rejected there would still be a 1.5 percent reduction in the DPI budget. Again, I emphasize that DPI has been recognized as being a special sort of situation where you just cannot turn your back on those people and so usually when across-the-board cuts are made, this agency is singled out as being an exception and I think we all recognize why. We are dealing again with the mentally retarded, the mentally ill and the alcoholism programs, a very vulnerable population in our state, people, as Senator Nelson said can't speak for themselves. They also serve the veterans of this state. They provide veterans' homes and if you remember in the budget hearing there was some talk, if the cut was much deeper that the veterans' homes were jeopardized and I think we have to recognize those people are also served by DPI. And as Senator Morehead said, not too long ago we barely got through an accreditation over at Beatrice and it was a close call and I think clearly we can't be cutting too severely at this point without jeopardizing the whole situation. If we'd have lost that certification, that accreditation, we would have lost millions of dollars in terms of federal aid,