

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Peterson. Senator Wesely, you're next.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I do rise in support of the amendment and want to give you a little bit of background on both of the issues. First, the 100,000 to Region IV, Senator Peterson, the Region IV is the only region that hasn't fully put into place some sort of plan to deal with the emergency protective custody requirements that were passed by this Legislature, like 5 years ago. And as of January 1 of last year, we are no longer jailing mentally ill people that haven't committed a crime. And in lieu of that, we have set up across the state, with the exception of the Norfolk area, Region IV, comprehensive community-based programs to deal with this problem. They do have...they have, I guess, dealt with the restriction on jailing these people, and have been able to accommodate the problem, temporarily, with existing programs. But the problems they have in Region IV is the same as the problem they have in Region III, is the same as the problem we had in Region V, which is they're aware of where the regional centers are located. And that's...I know that's where we started with this whole issue, back in Lincoln, 14 years ago, when I first came into the Legislature, when we kept having to jail people at the Regional Center, but didn't have enough beds. And this led, eventually, to the passage of the bill that said we didn't do that anymore, we found another way to do it. And Region III, with the Hastings facility, and Region IV with the Norfolk facility, have extraordinary problems above and beyond the other regions, as does Region V with our Lincoln Regional Center, dealing with this emergency care for the mentally ill. Now, Region III in Hastings has been able to get additional funds redirected, and put in place a program, and will get the additional funds, and will be able to get by this fiscal year, as I understand it, it's not easy. But I want to commend Region III. They haven't sat around, they moved forward and came up with something, and I think they're finding a much greater demand than they thought, and that's why the costs are there. Again, because they're a regional site, they'll get higher demand than other regions. Region IV, rather than moving forward in some fashion, decided they wanted a bigger, more grandiose plan, and have been the only region not to put in place a plan. And they are waiting, waiting now over a year past the deadline that they were supposed to have something in place. In the meantime, the money that was allocated then has