

So what this would do, would provide grandparents if they are denied this right to see their grandchildren through no fault of their own, through the fault perhaps of one of their children and/or their spouse, the intent being that these grandparents should not be denied the right to visit with these children if it is approved through petition of the court and the judge agrees that visitation rights are indeed, acceptable. I would move for the advancement of the bill.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I must rise in opposition to this measure. I understand...the measure itself is one that would seem eminently sensible, that is to allow grandparents to visit their grandchildren. The problem with the legislation is that it represents an untoward intrusion on the parenting function. We have a mother or a father with children. The family may be separated by a death, by a prolonged separation or by a divorce and so one parent remains with those children. Now the grandparent wants to visit those children. It would seem humane to allow the grandparent to visit those children and most parents would allow for those visitations. Most parents would not want the relationship to be severed. On the other hand there are times when parents want the relationship to be severed because the grandparents needlessly interfere with the rearing and the education of the children, because the grandparents are opening old wounds concerning the divorce, because the grandparents are contributing no support for those children and yet are in telling the mother or the father how the children should be reared. One of the more scholarly works to be done in the whole area of parenting and divorce is a book by Anna Freud entitled "Beyond the Best Interests of the Child" and in this book this eminent psychiatrist recommends in the end that when family relationships have been severed by the divorce practice that in fact all ties be cut to the noncustodial parent and that would include grandparent ties as well to give the new parent and the child the chance to get a fresh start and to grow up together and to grow up well. Now I think, you know, that I can appreciate Senator Stoney's bringing this bill in and Senator Nichol doing the same thing because it looks like a good bill but I can guarantee you that it is an encroachment upon the family functioning that can have very serious repercussions. Let me ask you this. What is to happen to some poor mother who is working eight hours a day to support the children. She gets a little bit of child support from the father and now the parents of the father want to visit their grandchildren and they want to bring the grandchildren say on a trip to Colorado and the mother doesn't want that to