

guardian and not for a purpose of adoption and no home study, no home study is required as it applies to the adoption by any stepparent for his or her stepchild. I think that is important to mention. So we don't want to interfere with natural birth rights and stepparents as it applies. The bill states, the Department of Social Services or a licensed child placement agency, and there are a number of good ones in the state, shall conduct the home studies which will be paid for by the person seeking the adoption, the petitioner at the fee rates set by the department or the independent agency doing the study. Also the bill requires the criminal check we've already discussed. By the way, the effective date of this legislation would be next year, January 1, 1994 so it would give the agencies and the individuals involved, the parents and the rest of the folks interested in this particular program to get geared up for it so that we do not cause any delays in any adoption process that may be out there. For example, by implementing this on this particular date, couples who have had preplacement adoption studies, home studies, already are still in line. If they've had them and they are over a year old, for fifty bucks they can get them updated so they are in line and ready to go. The last person to testify at the committee hearing was a young lady and it took her, a courageous thing on her part to do this, had to admit to because of the absence of a home placement study she was abused for too many years. One example, there are so many, we don't want to get into horror stories but there is no reason why that should have to happen at all. By the way, in 1989 and 1991 this same bill got to the floor of the Legislature and we ran out of time both years and I always felt badly about that and I want to thank the committee, the entire Health and Human Services Committee who voted this bill out of committee unanimously for allowing it to get to the floor early. So hopefully, even without a priority designation, it can be considered. For your information I also want to point out that there are attorneys who privately get involved with private adoptions. It is not the intention of this legislation to complicate their process either. I'm not sure if you know it even, maybe even the lawyers in this group know it, but there is an association of lawyers who specialize in private adoptions. In fact, there are 182 of them. Two of them are here in Nebraska. I know one in Lincoln, one in Omaha and there may be others. These people are specialists in the business of private adoptions. Other lawyers who get involved with private adoptions refer their clients, both adoptive parents and young ladies who would like to see an appropriate adoption have