

SENATOR DAY: Yes, Mr. Speaker and members, this is a fairly easily understood amendment that we are proposing here. It basically is the Department of Social Service will establish a toll-free number to be used by anyone who suspects of fraud or abuse in the medical...in the medical assistant (sic) program. When I've been back in my district, I'd been very vocal that I did not think these cuts were what we needed to do to save us money. Every time I brought that up, someone came to me with some horror story of someone abusing the system. I've gotten many letters, like I'm sure most of you have, especially from the elderly who tell me how bad they need this, and there's always a lie (sic) in there, 'and I do not abuse the system.' So real or perceived there is abuses out there and I think the people need somewhere to report this. Not only does this amendment establish this 800 number forum, but it also allows that a report will come back to the Legislature so we can see if there is abuses in the system and where they are. It will allow for them to call on abuses both for recipients and providers. There will be no fiscal impact on this. The Department of Social Services feels like it will save enough money to pay for the 800 number. The only possible costs that could become involved is if there are a lot of complaints and they would have to hire another investigator. I think it is something that will help us in making our decisions. I think it's something that will help our citizens where...their frustration with the system where they can call and, again, I don't know if these abuses are perceived or they're real abuses, but I think this is one way that we can find out. Again, it's a very simple amendment. That basically is all that it will do. I'll waive the rest of my time to Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Senator Day. Senator Vrtiska, you have approximately a minute.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Hall. I support this concept. The concept here is one that I think, without...without exception, probably everybody in this body has heard after the discussion on Medicaid and the costs of Medicaid, they continually hear and I certainly have that people back home are saying, I don't mind paying for people that need these services and I think it's a...the idea's fine; I'm just sick and tired of people who go in and get...make applications, get benefits and don't deserve them. Senator Day and several members of the committee discussed this. Senator Day came up with the idea I thought was excellent. John Breslow thinks it's