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LB 1167

interests. Now, if there are persons who do now wish to pay, if they do not wish to provide that kind of quality representation for the children that appear in their courts, I cannot make excuses for them. And I would hope that they would not try to make excuses for themselves, because I do not believe we can treat our children as second-class citizens in judicial proceedings that are...have to be critical and important to them. When children are in that setting, they are no less entitled than you and I would be to representation by an attorney if we could not afford our own. I think it's completely inappropriate that the statutes allow otherwise. And I would hope that you would agree with me and adopt this amendment.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you. You've heard the opening on the Wickersham amendment. To speak to the Wickersham amendment, Senator Suttle, please.

SENATOR SUTTLE: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. When I first saw this, I knew that Senator Wickersham and Senator Kristensen both felt that this was a glitch in the statutes that they did not like. And they've made that very clear to me throughout the years of my trying to get CASA into statute. And I will not object to this. They feel very strongly about this. And I tend to agree with Senator Wickersham when he says that a child deserves no less representation than an adult does. And I urge the acceptance of this amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Senator Suttle. Senator Dierks, please.

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I guess that I have a little bit of a problem with the fact that we're taking something out of statute that had a hearing once and was agreed on and went through this floor. And I guess...I understand where Senator Wickersham is coming from as far as legal representation for our children. But is it proper for us to, on an amendment in a bill that hadn't had a hearing, to redo that statute? Is it appropriate for us to make that change at this late day of the session? Thank you.