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April 18, 2001 LB 598

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Madam President, and members of the Legislature. First of all, to answer Senator Thompson's questions on the money, I've got some answers on that. I got mixed up between case plans and case reviews. With your amendment, we're saying that that's going to add 720 more reviews. Case plans are already done by rules and regs, as you have mentioned yourself. It's not in statute, and it's not figured into the fiscal note. The fiscal note reflects 720 new court reviews a year. That includes in-home placements and the kids at the YRTCs. This would be to finance or pay for CPS workers, for preparing court plans, which are more detailed than case plans. I want to go on and add a little bit more to what we were talking about, about the gatekeeper in itself. Senator Tyson said it real well when he was talking; we've been on the road for some years to move and get some things done, and we've done that. In the Governor's plan we've got \$10 million that has been put into the plan for this year. And the Governor said last year, that if we put in \$10 million, we needed to have a gatekeeper. And that's only prudent fiscal practice, that you don't just give people money and say spend it any way you want. We've got to have somewhere and some way to have some control over that. One of the things that excites me most about the gatekeeper, and the LB 598 without Senator Thompson's bill, is we're going to... I see it as a way that we're going to get more kids out of our youth centers faster. In Douglas County last weekend, we had going on 180 kids locked up. A lot of them don't even need to be locked up. A lot of them are waiting placement, placement through the courts. I believe by putting the gatekeeper bill in place, that these kids will get to placement faster than what they are now. And if we put Senator Thompson's amendment on there, I think it may even keep them a little bit longer. Again, I want to say I like what she's talking about, but we don't have enough people to the table, and that's moving towards getting more done on this as we go, but not now. A step at a time. We've already been told that they're willing to sit at the table, and come back and look at this for another year. But this is, again, a substantial change with Senator Thompson's amendment to LB 598. And LB 598 is good legislation and needs to be passed. Thank you.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN PRESIDING