

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 3, 2003

LB 54

determination is done ahead of time. Senator Raikes' amendment, I'm open to it. I think if this is something that we need to do in our statutes to define what a relative is, seeing how the statute is silent on that issue, you know, I'm fine with that. But I think the underlying goal here is, is that I think we're going to set up a process, and I believe that we're going to set up a process, through the Department of Health and Human Services where we look at the obvious, and the obvious is, is that we have these young people who are looking to be placed in a facility that can provide them some stability. And we have seen over and over and over again the number of kids or the number of times that a foster kid is placed. It's outrageous at times how many times these young people are placed in different homes by the time they even reach a teenager. And one of the goals that I see is to, one, encourage more families to become foster families to make sure that those young people that are their blood, their relative, can have an opportunity to have that stability in their life. And one of the reason...or one of the values of the training is, is that you bring a family up to speed on a lot of the issues that they encounter when they bring in foster children into their home. And I think when you have a situation like we do in the state, to say, is it the best interest of the child to place them with the family, yes; is there an obstacle for making that a successful transition, and the answer to that is yes; then I think we need to look at the obstacles, again making sure that our goal is to protect and to promote the best interest of that child. And I think LB 54 allows us to do that. Obvious benefit of doing LB 54 is allowing us to have the extra federal funds to go into our program. I think that is an obvious necessity and I'm willing to work with Senator Raikes. I think we also have an amendment that Senator Jensen is going to offer that provides some additional clarification on what it means to waive the requirements, because I think it is...we need to outline, in statute, what needs to be done, what process needs to be followed, and what are the guidelines for accomplishing that. So with that, I would ask Senator Cudaback to cut me off.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Senator Raikes, on your motion.