

SENATOR CLARK: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I am not a friend of those either who do not pay their child support. As a matter of fact, I am one of those paying child support myself and when my divorce unfortunately occurred, I was in favor of an amount being put into the decree. Now I think I am an honest, upstanding person. I know that my children are my responsibility and obligation and no judge could impose a greater obligation on me to take care of them than my personal principles place upon me. Nevertheless, the best of persons can go astray and turn into something else, so once the amount is in the decree, if I don't come up with it then to jail I go. So, I have supported every attempt by the Legislature to toughen child support collection procedures. It is obviously the obligation of all of us who bring children into the world to take care of those children regardless of anything that may happen between us and our spouse. So, I am looking at the amendment that Senator Johnson offers and I have deeply mixed emotions. I have intervened to help women obtain support for their children from their spouses who did not want to pay and were able to pay. I assisted a lady who was from Australia, not a citizen of this country, doesn't speak the language too...she is from Austria, pardon me, in tracing her husband all the way to Texas, a retired Air Force person who had the means to pay and was not paying. He is now paying according to what the decree said he should pay. So, I can look at it from both perspectives. I also have, in spite of how bad the law is, how it crimps along and often cranks out injustice, I do have a respect for what the law is supposed to be. The test of how much I believe in the principle of due process comes for me when it has to be applied to a person for whom I basically have contempt. Now if the only ones I think ought to have due process are those with whom I sympathize, there is no need for due process because we will always look out for the interests of our friends. Due process is established to ensure that those who are unpopular when they are brought into the court through the power of the state will be accorded every protection that the law accords to our friends and those that we have respect for. So when the prospect of jail is facing an individual, I am convinced that that individual is entitled to legal representation. Now, the wording of the language is not that much different from what would occur if somebody was accused of a very heinous crime. There is a criminal justice system in this country which is used for all types of things, and