

some of us are beginning to ask is, what the body has not done, and I suspect it still has not done, is ask some key questions, and that is, is the system we have now efficiently operating? Is the system we have now capable and able of adding people to meet the need? Is the system we have now abusing some of the areas that they currently have? Are the backlog today because the efficiency is at peak and we just have too many, or is the backlog, could the backlog be reduced by efficiency of the system? By passing of this bill, are we rewarding negative behavior or poor behavior and efficiency, or are we saying, yes, you are doing a totally efficient job and here is more to aid you? Last year, these questions were raised and the bill was not advanced. The Judiciary Committee said that they were going to do a study on this particular aspect of our juvenile court system; look at the number of days that judges sat, look at the number of cases, look at the number of vacation, look at the number of hours they were not sitting, and so on, look at his communications. I got communications last year from deputy county attorneys, from county attorneys, and lawyers stating we have a serious problem with our juvenile court system and it may not be just the backlog, it may be within the system itself. Maybe Senator Ashford can answer this question for me. The Judiciary Committee stated on the floor last year that they were going to look into these areas. Did they look in this area in the interim? Did they come up with any conclusions?

SENATOR ASHFORD: You know, I don't know whether they did or didn't because I wasn't a part of the study, Senator Bernard Stevens. I guess...I thought you and I have talked about it several times and I think, you know, I thought we had sort of resolved it between ourselves but maybe there are some things that in our discussions that we didn't...I didn't adequately answer and I would be happy to do that if you have specific questions. I don't...I'm not sure there was a study over the summer or not, I wasn't part of it.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Yeah, thank you, Senator Ashford. I guess that's one of the problems I have and it's kind of notwithstanding the merits of the bill, Senator Ashford. One of the problems that I had is that I had a motion and actually an amendment to postpone or bracket the bill until a study could be done and I withdrew those motions last year with the understanding that a study would be done and, specifically, we had the wording that and the guidance that, yes, we will once again study this area and come up with some information.