

Obviously, to me, that study was not done. Obviously, nothing has been done to give us any more insight as to how the system is actually working with this backlog. You know, are we, in fact, having a system that's inefficient that we are simply saying, yes, we have a backlog, you need more, or, you know, what actually are we doing? It's unfortunate that the Legislature is being put in this position on Select File and I repeat, on Select File, that we have to make a decision of this magnitude without the information that we needed to make...that we need to make the decision. So I have some concerns on the bill and I mentioned to Senator Ashford previously that I had some concerns. I also understand what the senator is trying to do and I also understand there is a backlog. I just wish we had the information that we need in order to make a real positive and important decision like this at this time. Thank you, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yeah, thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate Senator Bernard-Stevens' concerns. I thought you were going to vote for the bill because we talked about it on a couple of occasions and I...and you indicated your support at that time, though with questions. And I think one of the concerns I have always had is efficiency and one of the reasons why I brought the family law bill before the Legislature was a concern that I had that maybe we ought to restructure the District Court system to allow for family type cases being handled separately from District Court cases generally. And, unfortunately, that bill was killed by the Judiciary Committee, though I understand that there is some indication that there will be a study on that. You know, I think one only need look at the number of cases filed in Douglas County, and I have handed those out, and the history of the process to substantiate the need for a third judge, especially there is already an acknowledgement that, at least in Lancaster County, there will be two judges at the end of this year. I think if we look at the metropolitan area of Omaha and Douglas County, just sheer numbers alone would indicate that Douglas County ought to have a third judge but there is more evidence to support it. One, as I have said before, Judge Caniglia has been running almost a full docket. Judge Caniglia was a District Court judge for several years as one of the most...was one of the most respected Douglas County District Court judges and continues to be very well respected as a juvenile court judge but he's certainly past the retirement