

now. So I know that there will be examples given of the department making mistakes. I don't deny the fact that they've made mistakes and I can cite a number of other examples in terms of the judicial branch making mistakes, we have made mistakes. It's a question of, who can do a better job and are there other solutions to the problem? To do a better job, it seems to me you will find that the department is doing a better job than was the case before, they've set up a team, mental health review team, that is there to provide some oversight to the department and their staff. There is a handout, I had given a position paper to the department on this bill. If you have a chance, you might look through it. It does indicate the improvements made under the current system versus the old system and their attempts to provide for the discontinuation of the warehousing of children in hospitals. As I mentioned before, the attempt to bring children together with their families or other circumstances that are more appropriate, less restrictive, there is, in some cases, less cost involved. But, again, that isn't particularly my concern, although at the same time, as I mentioned, the cost factor, you do, if you have a chance, note on the fiscal note this is a \$20 million bill. I understand there may be amendments that would reduce that perhaps in half by discontinuing the part of the bill that would add to the coverage, by the State Department of Social Services, juvenile offenders who aren't now under their authority. This bill would add them to the department's responsibility in addition to the dependent, neglected and status offenders we've always had responsibility for. So, clearly, a \$20 million price tag should concern us, and especially if it is inappropriately used in situations where it's not needed. But, in any event, again, what I'm saying is in terms of who can do the better job the Department of Social Services has improved in this situation and I hope can be continually pressed to improve further so we don't have any child ever misplaced or harmed by the system that we have. I am certainly willing to work with Senator Coordsen and Senator Smith and other individuals concerned about this issue who have expressed their concern to me. I very much would like to see a way in which we can provide for these children and care for their needs and, at the same time, not take this unconstitutional step and expensive step, I think, that would be very inappropriate. In addition, how can we help the department to do a better job? Well, one of the reasons we have the problems that we have is lack of staff right now under their responsibilities. I have a bill, LB 720, dealing with child protective custody workers, foster care workers. We did not