

heavy caseloads. The administration works very hard, I know that, and they all work in good faith. I don't think they are malicious people, but they are not elected. The Legislature and the executive branch was elected, and judges are reviewed on the ballot periodically. So our system works, the checks and balances from executive, legislative and judicial back and forth. And I do think this should be given a chance, even if it's a small group of people, I think it should be given a chance to see if we can't help that small group of people and not leave them out in the cold. The other question I have about it, and maybe somebody will answer this later when we speak on the bill itself, is about the fiscal note. It seems high, but if that is because it's taken for granted that all these people would be put into psychiatric care, and that is where the expense comes from, I could understand that. So I do hope that you'll vote not to kill this bill, and let's move the bill and see what we can do to help the people that need the help, the children that need the help. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Nelson, please.

SENATOR NELSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, as quite a few of you know, I've been working on some juvenile issues all last summer and fall and spring and so on, so I've had a great interest in this bill. I, too, have the same horror stories to tell that I'm sure that Senator Johnson, Senator Smith and many of you and I had another meeting for a little bit, so I missed out on the first part of the debate. But I serve in Judiciary and I had the opportunity to hear the testimony for the bill. I guess it's somewhat like this, under the current interpretation of the Nebraska law, the Department of Social Services has taken the position that they don't need the court's approval and, furthermore, want to do everything themselves in their own way, and that is probably the problem. This destroys the intent and the purpose of our juvenile system. And I'm not questioning the professionalism of some of the social service workers, particularly local, I think most all of them are probably overworked and underpaid. But I, too, get constant calls because of problems, the same as Senator Smith related to. I have tried to stay out of as many of them as I can, and I will have to say that 80 percent of the time I usually do have to agree with the social service worker. They are doing their best. But there are too many children, entirely too many children that are being misplaced or mishandled, or not the best of service. Just because they control the pocketbook does not mean that they have