

rather place that responsibility with the court than with an individual. I had just this morning a personal contact with an individual who expressed to me their deep concern and their support for the bill, their strong support for the bill. So I would hope that we would not indefinitely postpone the bill, that we would advance the bill and discuss it further this year. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Scofield, followed by Senators Wesely, Bernard-Stevens, Coordsen and Elmer.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I'm rising to urge you to not indefinitely postpone this bill and, in fact, to continue the discussion of this issue until we finally get to the bottom of what has been a very frustrating and difficult issue for us all. It's frustrating and difficult for social services and the judges as well. I think when I listen to people speak we all have essentially the same goals in here, and those goals are to serve the best interests of children in this state. We would all like very much to resolve what has been a conflict between social services and the judges for some time and, obviously, Senator Coordsen is bringing us a proposal for an avenue of appeal when there is a dispute about what the best interests of the child are here. I got interested in this issue last spring about this time when a group of judges came to me and some other individuals outside the court system and raised some concerns saying we're not convinced that the present system really, in all cases, serves the best interest of children. And, as I listened to their stories, I became concerned that they might, in fact, be right. And I would hasten to add that I think there is plenty of room for professionals to disagree about what is the best placement for a child. I think that is one of the reasons why we're going to have a very difficult time of ever coming up with absolutely the perfect answer or the perfect solution. I can put a group of counselors, social workers, psychiatrists and so on in a room together and all of them analyze one case, and there is, certainly, in many cases, going to be a lot of disagreement. Nevertheless, I think Senator Coordsen has very patiently tried to work through this system and tried to figure out some way of resolving this problem and, at this point, I think he's brought us a proposal that is worth considering and trying to move forward on. I want to address, at this point, just a point that Senator Schmit in particular raised, and that is the fiscal note is one that is bound to make your eyebrows shoot right straight