

that worker, after a complaint is filed or whatever, would first investigate that and then that would have to go through the supervisor before that decision to remove the child would actually be made.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, I'm not really familiar with this amendment and a lot of times when we read things like this they look good and they sound good, but when time comes to apply them, there can be difficulties, and when I look at the word cumulatively and we're talking about an agency making this judgment, a department, agency, institution, committee or commission of state government making this judgment, then I do have some concerns and, again, I'm very protective of children. But sometimes in the attempt to accomplish a very worthwhile goal, certain other things that have to be weighed in the balance are kind of pushed aside, and I'm not certain that the people who work for these agencies always have the interests either of the particular child at heart or of the family that is being approached. There have been cases that I'm sure we can all describe here and I won't go into any specifics although I know of some where an alert worker could have prevented serious damage from occurring to a child or from continuing to occur over a period of time, but that action was not taken. So currently if these people are properly trained, the thing that we're talking about here can be done and all of these actions are supposed to be done with the best interest of the child or the children at heart. But to put into the law, the last sentence in this amendment on page 2, while children may develop best in nurturing families, families shall not be kept together at the expense of a child's best interests and safety. On its face that is one of those beguiling sentences that seemed like it could have nothing wrong with it and nobody could object to it, but I'm not comfortable with putting that into the statute where we're talking about social workers and others working with agencies which are not even defined here or identified, commissions and so forth. There is a lot of talk about the family and holding it together. When we begin to seriously consider specific pieces of legislation, sloganeering won't work anymore and we have to try to postulate...

SPEAKER BARRETT: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...if we can how it's going to act in reality. We get some notion of that from analyzing the conduct,