

SENATOR WESELY: I think these individuals handle many different child abuse cases and have the training both before and in the process of doing their jobs.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you. Members of the Legislature, I don't share Senator Wesely's blanket endorsement of law enforcement and how well they handle these cases, but I think we need to look very, very carefully at what it is that is being attempted here this afternoon, and probably will be for the rest of the session. We are allowing more and more intrusions into the family by law enforcement people, by agencies of the state, and in this case, the parents don't even have to be notified. I am not in favor of child abuse and I am not in favor of abusive parents, but this language allows them to interview any child where somebody suspects that there has been child abuse. We don't know the kind of questions that will be asked, but one thing we have found out as a result of the investigation, parts of it on the Franklin case, is that there was a county attorney and people in the State Patrol who had more than adequate reason to know that there was abuse and did nothing. So if they are not going to do anything in those cases where they have actually been officially and formally involved, I am not in favor of giving them this additional long arm reach to accost people's children in the schools without the parents knowing, and it is not just in the schools. Any person or entity standing in loco parentis to a child who is a suspected victim of abuse or neglect can have access to that child, the law enforcement agency, to interview. This was a bad bill when it was brought to the Judiciary Committee on its own lack of merit, and after hearing the testimony and discussing the bill at length, the committee killed the bill, which I think is appropriate. If we could just get the Department of Social Services and some of these other agencies, law enforcement, child protective services, to do what they are required to do under the law now, there are a lot of cases that would come properly before them and be handled in a way that would protect the interests and rights of the child. But those cases are not being properly handled, and here comes somebody, Senator Wesely said the Department of Social Services, saying open the way for cops to accost people's children without telling the parents. So the child gets talked to at school. The cops may feel that a reasonable time is next week to notify the parents.

PRESIDENT: One minute.