

May 3, 1989

LB 813

CLERK: Mr. President, the next amendment I have is by Senator Wesely. (The Wesely amendment appears on page 2045 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President...Mr. Speaker and members, this amendment deals with the problem of caseworkers. We have talked before about the problem with inadequate staffing in the Department of Social Services to deal with the issue of child protective custody, to deal with foster care, to try to provide for the oversight from our state of these vulnerable children that are either abused or taken out of families and placed in foster care situations. We have found under a national study that our standards that we are now developing in terms of staffing are far below the level that the national recommendations would call for. There is some additional funding for additional staff in the budget that's far short of what we had hoped to accomplish. The problem is that right now we would still like to have further discussions with the Appropriations Committee about the potential of further funding and further staffing for this matter and so, rather than bring up the issue at this time on General File, I'm going to ask that this amendment be withdrawn and we'll discuss the matter further with the Appropriations Committee so we have a chance to see if we can't work something out on this. But the caseworker issue has come up time and again as we have talked about 182, as we have talked about child abuse situations and we have talked about different problems. This is found in LB 720, a committee priority bill, that doesn't look like it will come up on General File and I'm very concerned about the matter and other senators have co-sponsored this amendment with me and they're very concerned as well. But we would like the opportunity because it's come up rather quickly to discuss this further with Appropriations Committee and so rather than push the issue at this time we will withdraw that amendment and see if we can't work something out for Select File. So I would move to have the amendment withdrawn, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. It's withdrawn.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next amendment I have is by Senator Moore. Senator Moore's amendment is on page 1977 of the Journal, Mr. President.