

this one and 663 are perhaps the two most significant pieces of the entire package and are most closely aligned with getting us to the point where we'd like to be in this state with children and families. This is not an entirely new concept, it simply builds on initiatives that have been started over the years and gradually expanding it and trying to coordinate services. And in case Senator Lamb is in the room, I want to assure him this is not the evil twin 662 that we killed a few years ago. This is the good 662, so I don't want to hear any debate about school consolidation around this bill. When we first started this whole project one of the first things we did was went out across the state and talked to communities about the status of children in families and what their needs were and we found that there were, in most communities, a lot of resources fairly fragmented, not very well coordinated, lots of gaps, lots of needs that weren't being filled. At the same time on the state side, we had many, many, many requests for additional CPS workers which we have continued to try to address, lots of requests for additional juvenile probation officers and so on. It became obvious to me at that point that we could fulfill all of those budget requests and spend an awful lot of money and still not make things any better. Now, thankfully, we have addressed that a bit on the front of additional CPS workers. We haven't begun to address the juvenile justice side, but the thing that the people in the communities told us is, you know what we really need is some help in coordinating local services. We need to make sure that what state government does enhances what we're trying to do and work together in a cooperative fashion. And the other thing that we discovered that the first time that a number of us, state agencies, senators, judges, child advocates and so on, met at Fort Robinson is that we found out that there were all kinds of agencies all out there with different jurisdictions having something to do with kids and all spending money coming from different sources and that wasn't particularly well coordinated either. And so our first step was to pass the Family Policy Act. Now this really puts us into the serious implementation phase of getting there and with putting whatever state support we can finally afford to do out into the communities. We have done some of that and this simply takes the most, I think, one of the most important steps into really making some kind of significant step out into reaching out from the state to help communities hold together their resources, leverage those resources and get us to the point where we're really improving the ability to serve kids and families all over the state. Major provisions of the bill, and you have a handout