

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I am not going to talk about the rules, I'm going to talk about the issue, and it's the only way that some of us who want to talk about the issue are ever going to get a chance to do that, so I'm going to take this opportunity to do it. If the rest of you have some frustration along this line, I'd suggest that we just make this a discussion of the substantive matters in the case so we can make sure that we do have an adequate chance to talk about this. Parental notification is, on its face, an attempt to respond to a very legitimate human need for a parent to understand and participate in the well-being and the decisions of their minor children. But as pristine as that goal is, it's not what actually happens. The bill doesn't do that. It has a different set of consequences. Its goal, no matter how noble, is undermined in how the bill is carried out because for those who don't need the bill, the bill is superfluous and between 60 and 75 percent of the cases, depending on the age of the child, parents are notified without the use of the law. The law is unnecessary for three-fourths of the cases. What about the one-fourth of the cases that aren't going to have the parental notification that the members of this body are so insistent upon them having? What about the ones that are left that aren't going to do it themselves? We know about them. We know about them in the testimony of the Judiciary Committee. One of our testifiers was Virginia Johnson who is a profession (sic) by an attorney, but also a part of the family association that work with families, in this context with Planned Parenthood, and her point was in citing the Alan Guttmacher Institute studies, that the kids who don't tell their parents do so for very good reasons and Ms. Johnson goes on to say, here are three reasons that I think are good. First, one reason is that they often come from very unstable or violent homes where parents are physically or emotionally abusive, alcoholic, ill, jobless or absent altogether. There are also situations where the victim comes into a clinic due to an incest incident. Additionally, there are also problems with runaways and the fear of teenagers in that they might be thrown out of the home if their parents are notified. Finally, the social service professionals testified that judicial bypass procedures discriminated against the poor, the rural and the minority teens. The burden falls most heavily on teens that are already in the disaffected or disadvantaged classes. In other words, of the 25 percent who are not inclined to tell their parents, the ones who can't use the judicial bypass are most likely the ones in that category. Out of the 3,500 minors who went through the court bypass system