

PRESIDENT: Okay, Senator Schmit, and then Senator Beck.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Well, Mr. President, and members, I am going to ask Senator Wesely to explain a little more of the basic concept about this bill. You know, we always seem to have a period of doldrums in this place when almost anything will move, and Senator Beck has raised some questions, and others have commented very briefly, and I think we need to have a little more discussion about the bill. I have had a number of letters, both pro and con, and I apologize, Senator Wesely, for sitting here asleep. I guess I wasn't paying very much close attention. But I am concerned about the bill from the standpoint that we've talked about social services, we have talked about how we are going to support this program, and I am not overly enamored with the way social services has handled foster care. Are we going to place them now in charge of this program also? A question of Senator Wesely.

PRESIDENT: Senator Wesely, would you respond, please.

SENATOR WESELY: Maybe I should start back and go over the bill, but I won't take your time to do that. Essentially, they are already in charge of inspecting child care homes. The only thing that would be added to their responsibility would be the four-hour a year training requirement, and that is the only other item that is included, but that would be actually provided for on a contract basis around the state. The department, I doubt, would be actually providing for that training. So their responsibilities are not heightened I think under this bill tremendously. There are a couple of advisory committees to deal with rules and regs, to assist the department in that aspect of their work, but they are already doing that. This brings in providers and citizens to help them do that job, nothing different in terms of their authority, and then there is an early childhood panel that is established under the Department of Education that is over there and established under the bill, but they are only advisory as well.

SENATOR SCHMIT: What about the cost of the program, Senator? Have you reviewed this or what is your opinion of it relative to being adequately funded? Will that happen?

SENATOR WESELY: The main thrust of the bill, Senator Schmit, is on the Title XX, and that would bring for day care providers reimbursement to the market rate. Currently, they are about