

with timely response investigations and some other language that was an attempt to recognize, geographic responsibilities, office location, travel required, those sort of factors are included in the caseload so that they would better know how to establish where these workers should go to. So I hope that the amendment will deal with the concerns that some of you expressed on General File, help give some guidance to the department as they develop these caseload standards and would appreciate the adoption of the amendment. I would add one other note, Senator Warner had a question regarding the director, one line says, "The director shall consult with the appropriate bargaining unit employee representative in establishing such standards." The intent there is merely to have the director of the department just consult the employees in this work so that they have some input as well into the caseload standards. It is nothing more than advisory and it is not intended to be any part of the bargaining process. So with that, I would move the amendment and be glad to answer any questions, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Any discussion on the amendment offered by Senator Wesely? Senator Warner, please.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I had an amendment... I have no problem with I think as what Senator Wesely explains on line 21 of the amendment, "The director shall consult with the appropriate bargaining unit employee representative in establishing such standards." My concern is, I don't know if it is a viable concern, but I would not want to see this become part of a bargaining issue, and I don't know if that has the implication or not. If those words "bargaining unit employee representative" was stricken and something inserted so that it was... reflected employee rather than imply a bargaining factor, I would be much more comfortable. Yeah, that is all right. I am sending up an amendment Senator Wesely doesn't object to which would strike the words "bargaining unit" and there won't be any implication that it becomes something that is part of negotiations which I don't think it should be. Essentially what this amendment does, as I would interpret it, is a report which would become, in effect, a budget issue for the Legislature whether or not funding for this type of services in the department should be at a higher level, and more employees, or different distribution of employees, and so forth. And if the word "bargaining unit" is stricken, then there isn't any implication that that is to be a negotiable item even indirectly.