

February 23, 1990

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Wesely, please, followed by Senator Landis and Senator Abboud.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Again, Mr. President, and members, I appreciate all the comments many people have made. I do want to, again, emphasize for Senator Crosby that I am not voting against this appointment or the last one because they are women. Absolutely not, and that my record on that is pretty clear. That is not the issue, that is not the situation, whatsoever. What we are talking about here is a very delicate situation, a very important problem, one that many people in the state are following very carefully. The real question here is, again, I know we don't want to particularly dwell on the fact that it is the Dennis Carlson slot on the board. I mean nobody holds that forever, but at this time in this situation, to remove him has raised great suspicion and I think we need to ask some very serious questions. Those questions have been asked. Now here is the circumstance; Senator Crosby talked about having a lawyer for the Foster Care Review Board. We, essentially, had a lawyer for the Foster Care Review Board when Dennis Carlson served on there. Dennis Carlson is a very well-known, well-respected lawyer and he could provide that service free of charge and he could do it because he was on the board and his liability was protected as a board member. He can't do it outside of that position because, number one, his position on the bar, he wouldn't be able to be hired. Number two, just providing advice can provide some liability questions not being a board member, and so he is being shut out in some ways, although in some private conversations he, of course, can provide some input. But the very person who has the best background perhaps of very many people in this area is being shut out at a very critical time and a very important investigation. And so, it is nothing particularly against Alice Bartels, obviously. In another slot with another person involved, a foster parent like herself would be very valuable, but we are exchanging a lawyer with experience, with particular knowledge and background, for a person who at the hearing, though nice, hadn't really had any experience with the Foster Care Review Board, hadn't really had any experience in foster care other than being a foster parent, and did not really have that much background, again, on-the-job training, but a person who could do a good job, who could eventually develop those insights that we need, but the timing is important. The question is important, and I know many of you are reluctant to vote against Alice Bartels, that you don't feel