

need to have would range somewhere between 12 to 24 hours, and that would be based upon the requirement by the Department of Social Services. It would also require the Department of Social Services to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations regarding the provision of training for foster care. And the kind of training that we're talking about here would include, but it would not be limited to training in abused, neglected, dependent and delinquent children. And it also would then authorize the Department of Social Services to use department funds for the recruitment and the training and the recognition of foster care providers and volunteers. A little bit of the background about why we feel this is so necessary, it comes from the fact that there currently, as I've already mentioned, is no training requirement for a person to become a foster parent. We all know, because particularly in the last few years with the issues that have been brought to us about the extent of neglect, abuse and so on in the State of Nebraska, the concerns that we have for the kinds of children that are being placed in foster care situations. And those parents increasingly have a need for understanding how to deal with those children and their problems. There are other states that already require this, a number of other states. So we feel that this would be helpful for Nebraska to adopt the same type of thing. In fact, numbers of people that are foster providers in other states have provided training in Nebraska. I guess finally what I would just say is that we, in the last few years in Nebraska, have been losing more foster parents than we have picked up, and that is becoming an increasing problem as we have increasing numbers of children that are falling into these situations. We also wanted to address the fact that we want as least number of placements as we can for these children. If we have foster parents who are trained as to how to deal with the kinds of problems that these kids are experiencing, we feel that that turnover and that replacement rate will be much lowered. So, in the final analysis it really is the children who are going to benefit by this. I ask your support for the adoption of what was originally LB 290 as an amendment to this bill. If there are questions, I'll try to answer them. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Schellpeper, did you wish to speak about the Smith amendment?

SENATOR SCHELLPEPER: Thank you, Mr. President and members. Yes, I'd like to ask Senator Smith a question, if I might.