

believe was the number, that was heard by the Government Committee, which I think, as I recall, was to also authorize a study in this area, in this area of the state and for this purpose with an appropriation I think of 35,000. I was wondering if there was somebody here from the Government Committee, I see it is still in committee, at least on the white sheet, could explain what action, if any, the Government Committee took, or why, or maybe Senator Haberman knows, but I thought that might be helpful to know what the thinking was of the Government Committee on this issue.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Elmer.

SENATOR ELMER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members. I agree that we need to look into the way things are going with our social services and the way things have been delivered out there, and especially in the area of foster children. One incident last summer, foster parents who are very responsible people, have two young children, the Social Services had demanded that the children be given to their natural mother, who had a history of substance abuse and depression, at least once a week for an outing. She picked them up one Saturday afternoon, drove directly through my hometown to a railroad crossing and killed herself and her two children by driving the car in front of a train. These kind of incidences, I think, need to be looked into. I would support Senator Haberman's motion.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Wesely, followed by Senators Korshoj and Scofield.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, I can appreciate the concern of Senator Haberman. It has been a concern I have had as well about making sure that all citizens in this state have access to decent human services, that a social service system is able to help all individuals, whether they be in urban or rural areas, and I think, obviously, over the years, we have tried to do what we can in this Legislature to achieve that goal. One of the ways in which we can achieve that goal is a bill pending on Final Reading, LB 720, which would increase the caseworkers. One of the real problems we have had along the lines Senator Haberman is talking about is inadequate staff to meet the workload that they have, and as a result, we have had high turnover, we have had problems as have been identified, and, hopefully, that would be one step to take forward. I have no problem with the idea of further examining