

It would be my hope that someday that we could begin to focus on those areas that we can agree. While we may differ dramatically on what the definition of life is, or what the role of government is in the reproductive activities of women, few of us would disagree that unwanted pregnancies and abortion are serious and significant issues, and that we would all like to do something about them. Furthermore, we may disagree on the best way to help our young people, but most would agree that even if they are deemed competent to make decisions about abortion, as adults, we have a compelling urge to reach out and help the young people as they are faced with difficult and frightening situations. And, furthermore, whether we think parent involvement should be mandated or whether or not it should be voluntary, there is no doubt in my mind that all of us would hope that every young person could go to their parents and find support and help in any kind of crisis that they might face. We need to develop systems that work, and not just develop systems that make us feel good, that make it look like we are addressing a serious issue, when, in fact, we really aren't. We must come up with systems that help and not hurt our young people. We must not be so eager to come up and do something about abortion that we create systems that are punitive, even though we say we meant for them to be supportive. And we must be careful not to assume that just because we came from healthy families, because we have great communication systems, because we have never known abuse, that there are not those families out there that are dysfunctional, that are not well put together, and that there are children that are hurting. We must not be glib about the devastating effect of abuse on the psychics of young people, and come up with systems, therefore, that are insensitive to their needs, and simply victimize those who already have been brutally victimized by our society. Senator Hillman and I offer this amendment, not to sabotage LB 425, not to filibuster, and not because we are carrying water for any other agency. It is because we both believe fervently and sincerely that this is the policy that is in the best interest of our young people. It is not the intent of LB 425 that we object to. It is the strategies for accomplishing it. We feel that several of the assumptions upon which 425 is based are erroneous. It is assumed in here that law can regulate the behavior of young people. Yes, we have laws about whether or not they can drink before they are 21, but I don't think it is having a tremendous impact on whether or not they actually drink before they are 21. It also assumes that because we pass this law, we will suddenly have dysfunctional families functioning in a healthy way, and