

child visitation to grandparents on the assumption that their interests are significant and their extended family abilities to council and assist children are so significant that courts can recognize them by special visitation orders. I have to go back to what I think is the rhetorical excess of Senator Horgan a second time. He says that government is taking away our rights. That is not true. It is simply a factual exaggeration. If he says that opponents to LB 425 are arguing as his quote says that a parent should not be involved, that is simply not true. As a matter of fact, we all recognize that in 55 to 75 percent of the cases parents are involved by their children as they should and is appropriate. The question is not where there are good and functional families where children now bring this question to their parents for discussion. The question is what happens in the 25 percent of cases where children have darn good reasons not to go to their parents, or as in the case of some of the testimony before judges in Minnesota, Sharon L. in the district court in Minnesota said, my mother has a documented past of severe mental illness. She has been hospitalized several times during my lifetime and many times before I was born. She is heavily medicated to prevent severe depression and hallucinates a lot. My father has a violent temper. His initial reaction would have been violent and angry and he probably would have hit me. Now, there isn't a right choice between those two. If there is a loving grandparent, better the grandparent than the district judge, do we not think? Better the stepparent if there is one rather than those two. Mary J. in Minnesota said I was afraid that if I told her, my mother, the only parent available, the only single custodial parent, the other parent having disappeared...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR LANDIS: ...that she should start drinking, getting back to her habits before when my father died and got back into the pattern of drinking every night heavily, that she would hurt herself in that respect. In other words, there are dysfunctional families and the only opportunity is this judicial bypass system which we all recognize is very difficult for kids. Of the opportunities that are there for sensible counseling, I would think a grandparent, a stepparent, an aunt or an uncle would be preferable to a district judge sitting in a courtroom in this state. If you want loving, caring adults, better that person than a district judge. To expand this, simply is, I think, what I hear to be the alleged purposes of this act which