

Wesely to make sure...see if we can tighten up that community service section so that we can guarantee...not guarantee, but we can tighten, as much as possible, the potential for abuse at that particular point, and to make sure that this bill continues to do what the body has continually voted to do, and that we don't start setting up enough flexibility, or enough leeway, that we can begin circumventing what we've worked so hard to do in the last couple years. So I'll be voting, at this point, to advance the bill to Select File, with the understanding that I'll be working with Senator Wesely and others to try to tighten that section up, and then we'll kind of take another look at it at that time. But at this point, Senator Abboud, I think you've presented us with a reasonable alternative to what we've had in the past, and I appreciate that.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Wesely, on the advancement of the bill.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. I'd like to follow up on Senator Bernard-Stevens' comments. I think they are valid and appropriate. I would like to take a moment, though, again to commend the body. We did make a change in the way we handle, for instance, ADC recipients, several years ago, and moved toward a job training program that took individuals that were on, well let's use the old terminology, welfare and found a way in which to give them the self-confidence and the skills and ability to move into the workforce. It's been very successful, we've had outstanding success with it. And it's taken a while for, frankly, the counties to recognize this shift in thinking and this shift in focus and prioritization, but they've come along now. This bill represents that shift. And it's thanks, in large part, to this Legislature for hanging tough on that concept, that we were able to finally get the message through that these individuals, for the most part, want to have the ability to work, and want to be in the workforce, they don't like the idea of being, I think, on the dole, or whatever terminology you want to use in a negative fashion, they don't like that. But in some cases they simply have no other place to turn to, and general assistance is a last level, safety net there in our counties to help these individuals who have nobody else to turn to. So it's important that we recognize the circumstances these individuals are in. But I want to commend Senator Abboud. I want to commend the co-sponsors of the bill, for Douglas County, others who have worked on it. It is a far better bill, much improved over previous legislation, and we're