

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Morrissey.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Thank you, Madam President and members. Briefly, I, too, will support the Senator Bernard-Stevens amendment. Sitting in Business and Labor Committee my first year, we had foster parents bringing cases of damage to their homes, theft in their homes by foster children, and they had no options. The foster claims...or the State Claims Review Board turned down all of their requests and they were ultimately turned down by the Legislature, not changed. And that bothered me and I didn't think it was right. I think if, indeed, we want to maintain quality foster care parents, foster parents across the state in the numbers that are needed, which is a very hard thing to do, we should address something like this. It is a minimum step we can take. Some of these folks are going the extra yard to help these kids out, and some of these kids have problems, and some of them do damage, as I have seen in the Business and Labor Committee, and in attending other meetings on foster care. So I think we, as a state, should encourage good foster parents, and this is a step to help them out, to tell them, we thank you for going the extra yard for the state for these kids, and we are willing to help you should you incur any damages. I would support Senator Bernard-Stevens' amendment.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Morrissey. Senator Bernard-Stevens, no one else is wishing to speak on the issue, would you like to close?

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Yeah, I will use this for closing, if that is all right, Madam President, if there are no other lights. Senator Moore made some interesting comments, but I would kind of like to summarize a little bit. This is one time I think my chairman and I are going to disagree, on more than one occasion, this is one where openly we will disagree. Foster care is something that in this state is in dire trouble. One of the things that we can do is such a small thing that it doesn't even cover some of the other areas that we need to do that are desperately in need, but one of the things we can do is help parents who are afraid or have had things happen or have heard some stories of things happening to their homes and other things, give them something to say, listen, we will support you. If there is a problem or a claim that you can say was a problem developed because you were a foster care parent, we are providing insurance for you. It can't be frivolous. You are