

cases, and they said we weren't doing it fast enough, and they gave us some time to do it faster. They said if we couldn't do it faster, then we had to appoint these referees, and back when this first happened, you did pass a bill that originally gave the courts power to appoint referees, and I think one has been appointed in Douglas County and one in Lincoln. And what has happened around the state is that several of our districts have been exempted from further requirements but several have not measured up to the new standards. To measure up to the federal standards, you have to complete these certain types of child support cases in specific time frames. Ninety percent of your cases have to be dealt with in three months, and 98 percent in six months, and by the end of 12 months, you have to have dealt with all of them. Under our current judicial structure, we have not succeeded in dealing with all of them, and I plan to explore further this summer why we have not succeeded in certain of the districts but, be that as it may, the end result is a bill here which would give the courts additional flexibility that they need to deal with expediting these cases in a manner that doesn't require excessive expenditure of funds. So what this bill would do would be to give the Supreme Court the authority to spot higher in specific cases, for specific cases, or in specific areas of the state, to hire a referee on a temporary basis, so that they could go in for a temporary period of time on specific cases and help out a particular judge, so that, in the end, the federal guidelines can be met. It also allows the Supreme Court to appoint county judges from time to time to deal with these matters, and, of course, that would be applicable probably in situations where the county courts were underworked and the district courts were overworked, a needed piece of flexibility. Finally, another matter that it addresses, under the existing law, these child support referees have to be attorneys. Under the new law, this amendment, they have to be...they would still have to be attorneys but it would give the Supreme Court the power to set other qualifications, should it see fit to do so; such as, for example, maybe an experience qualification, that kind of thing. Otherwise, it doesn't change existing law except perhaps in two respects. It does put some oversight on the district courts in the sense that under the current law the district courts appoint these referees, and their power was more unrestricted to do that. Under the new bill, the Supreme Court, the district judges would still do the appointing, they would pick who they wanted, but the Supreme Court would have the oversight ability to say, yes, you do need one or, no you do not need one, so that we are not getting the