

independent adoption and it is important that there be some requirement that this activity occur prior to the placement of a child in a home. Senator Lynch has introduced this previously, I believe, and it has been several years and we're please to have the chance to have the bill come up. The amendments deal with that general overall concept and provide that currently that the adoption decree cannot be issued until these six months after the home study has been completed. Currently that means the situation is such that you have a child for six months in your home, placed in your home before you are able to get a court to approve an adoption decree and so the idea is that the home study again would occur before that placement of the child in the home and that makes it clear by that language. We also tried to clarify any problems that came up at the hearing about stepparents being involved in foster children so that you wouldn't have to go through the preplacement home study. In certain cases, as outlined in the committee statement that you have had a relationship for some time, particularly for instance, the stepparent concept where you've had the child and now you're wanting to adopt it formally, adopt them formally. And we also indicate the home study will be conducted by the Department of Social Services or licensed child placement agency and the cost of the home study would be paid for by the petitioner in the court action requesting adoption. So this would be cash funded then, not through tax dollar General Fund activity. With that I'd ask for adoption of the committee amendment and be happy to answer questions.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Hall, do you wish to address the committee amendments?

SENATOR HALL: Thank you, Madam President. I just rise in support of the committee amendments. I cosponsored the bill along with Senator Lynch and would argue that the committee amendments retain the integrity of the bill and would ask the body's support.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Hall. Does anyone else wish to speak to the committee amendments? Seeing none, do you have closing, Senator Wesely? Closing is waived. We'll now vote on the motion to adopt the committee amendments. All those in favor please vote aye, opposed nay. Have you all voted? Please record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays, Madam President, on adoption of