

They may not want to sit down with the other side. They may not want to be in the same room. They may have difficulty in dealing with that situation and you have to be careful to say, to ask yourself, is mediation appropriate in that kind of a context. So this amendment says that the center staff, who's going to be doing this organizing and this intaking, they shall be trained in domestic violence and they shall determine the appropriateness of the case for mediation. Screening guidelines and safety procedures for cases involving child abuse, spouse abuse or both shall be devised for the office. Why? Because it's very hard to draw a clear statutory rule that's going to apply in all cases to deal with this insidious problem in domestic settings. There may be times when mediation is inappropriate. They revolve around safety issues. You're going to want to have a trained staff doing the intake, developing guidelines, making plans, having fall backs, taking care of security issues if mediation is going to go forward and this amendment also requires that that work be done and, frankly, there's an admission here that says certain cases are not right for mediation. Certain cases are not right in which both parties may be present when one feels at risk or in danger or insecure and disadvantaged in an abusive situation and this is also an element of the amendment. I would urge its adoption and I would be happy to yield the remainder of my time so that I could get Senator Ashford's reaction to it on record and then we can continue the discussion as to whether or not these provisions make sense.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Madam President. How much time is left on Senator Landis's?

PRESIDENT MOUL: About three and a half minutes.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Okay. Thank you. Senator Landis, as I indicated to you, I accept these amendments on General File. I'm not...there are going to be some questions I may have between General and Select and we can work those out, but I...I commend Senator Landis for all the work that he has done in the area of mediation and I think that he has some...there's some good public policy reasons for...to adopt the language that, in general, that he has submitted to us here in this amendment. There may be some particular questions I have that I would like to address with him before Select, but I'm sure they're