

before lunch and I think you said that before it would reach Select File, and I wanted to make sure you were committing to that, that there would be language in the bill that would state if there were any statement of abuse that that mandatory first meeting would not take place.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Exactly, and that was my intent anyway and I agree with that, to that.

SENATOR BOHLKE: Okay. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bohlke. Senator Ashford.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate the accolades from Senator Kristensen and he's a great defender of the process and he certainly feels that we should not change, his view is we should not change the way, to a great extent, the way domestic relations cases are tried, and if that's what you feel in looking back, back in your experiences and looking back into maybe your personal experiences or those of friends or relatives that have gone through this process, then I would agree with Senator Kristensen that it shouldn't be changed. I suggest that it should be changed, as does Judge Icenogle in Kearney, the judge that is in Senator Kristensen's district, and I've got a letter from Senator...or from Judge Icenogle which is in front of you which supports LB 728. He...his system is mandatory mediation, requires mediation. He supports this bill. Judge Reagan in Sarpy County requires mediation, that's mandatory mediation, and he supports this bill. So judges that deal with this on an everyday basis believe that it is a good system. Another point, and Senator Kristensen talks about leverage and I can give you the best example, one of the pluses of this bill is the situations that occur after a divorce is entered when the parties don't agree on the custody that has been established in the decree. A party, so often in my practice I know where a party will come to me and say, I'm not getting my visitation or my former husband is not bringing the children back in time...on time. The only avenue, the only place they can go now is into court and they pay, again, a 500 dollar attorney fee, go to court and get a very small visitation issue resolved in the courts. This is a perfect example of where the mediation process would work, where one of the parties who has a visitation problem could go back to the mediator as the bill suggests and have that mediator try to resolve that very small visitation problem. The third point I want to make