

amendment and I'll be happy...

PRESIDENT MOUL: Time.

SENATOR ASHFORD: ..to answer any more questions that come up. Thank you.

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

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President and members of the Legislature, Senator Ashford, I intend to speak in favor of the Landis amendment, but not without some mixed emotions. I guess, to start with, it's very difficult for me to think that anything positive will happen if the parties, or either of the parties, are not in favor of working it out. That's kind of an assumption, I suppose, one person starts with and maybe another person doesn't. But beyond that with regard to the terms of the bill, if I'm reading it right, this would also apply to paternity actions, situations where the parents may not know each other very well at all, in fact, may not know each other at all, and would you like some of my time, Senator Bradford (sic)...Ashford? Or even they may dislike each other and it seems to me that with regard to that category of cases, which seem to be a larger percentage of the cases these days, although still a minority looking at the overall problem, that that would be a category of cases where there wouldn't be...it wouldn't seem to be a point to mandatory mediation. Beyond that, and perhaps another problem you may want to address, Senator Ashford, as I understand the bill, this would apply not only to the original divorce decree but to any modifications on down the line and I know that you're hoping that there will be less of a need for modifications down the line if these detailed plans can be originated, but for someone who wants to file modifications and has the financial wherewithal to do so and the desire to do so, every time they file a modification, if I understand the bill correctly, there would be then another forced mediation situation and I'm not sure that I feel comfortable with that either, especially since under the cost provisions of the bill that mediation, which could be forced upon one party, the party upon whom it's forced would still have to bear their half of the cost, if I'm understanding the terms of the bill correctly. So I would be interested also in knowing overall whether this particular bill in other areas has resulted in any lowering of attorneys' fees. You would think that it might but, on the other hand, I kind of doubt it. And I would