

everybody's pointing the finger the other direction, perhaps not intentionally but it does happen. So this is to make very clear that it is law enforcement responsibility to investigate any concern about child abuse and neglect and primarily this is being done because it is a crime. They are the ones that do have statutory authority to investigate crimes and child abuse and neglect are potential crimes and, for that reason, it should be the clear role. If you read on, though, we've tried to make clear that relationship between law enforcement and the Department of Social Services. The role of the Department of Social Services is to advocate for the protection of the child. They do not have the authority to file charges. They do not have the authority to remove the child from the home. That's always been strictly law enforcement responsibility to do those things. This is to clarify that the Department of Social Services may be called upon by law enforcement to assist in investigations, if they want it. It also makes it very clear in the very next sentence that every report, whether or not law enforcement investigates it or not, shall be reported to the Department of Social Services so they may assess whether or not the child is at risk and they can make that assessment and proceed to advocate for the protection of the child if they so deem necessary and then any reports that they do must then be filed back with law enforcement. So the idea is to make sure they both know what's going on. It is important to recognize that this amendment is to a bill and the bill is a multidisciplinary team approach to both investigation and treatment plans, and so in the investigation what we're going to say in the bill is that those people who have authority in some way, shape or form to be investigating child abuse and neglect, law enforcement, county attorney, Department of Social Services, will work as a team. This simply clarifies who has responsibility for what, but if the bill passes with this amendment then we are going to be saying that they have to function as a team anyway and that they'll be sharing these responsibilities in terms of working...not sharing the responsibilities, but working together and communicating together about what's going on. You look puzzled. I must not have clarified (inaudible).

SENATOR SCHIMEK: No, I'm not puzzled.

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: I'm thinking to myself maybe I should be