

asking these questions of Senator Wesely, but since it's your bill I decided to go ahead and proceed by asking you. My follow-up questions, I guess I'm not comfortable with the word "may" request assistance or I'm not sure if that really tells us what the committee amendments are supposed to mean, and the fact that it says take immediate steps, to investigate the report, to take immediate steps to protect the child, seems to me to say that the initial investigation anyway is being done by the law enforcement agency and I don't know. I understand what you're trying to accomplish and the committee is trying to accomplish and I...I'm just suggesting that maybe the wording could be a little bit clearer, that.... Law enforcement agencies aren't trained to deal with these kinds of cases, are they?

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Not necessarily, but...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Whoa. (Laugh)

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Rasmussen, your light's on now. Go ahead.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Thank you. Let me answer Senator Schimek's question here. Probably not, and that's one of the things we wanted to discuss in this meeting, is appropriate training, but the bottom line is it always has been the legal responsibility of law enforcement to respond to a report of abuse and neglect and, furthermore, they are the only ones, they are the only ones that can remove a child or perpe...or alleged perpetrator from that environment to protect the child, and so it simply makes it clear that they are the ones with responsibility. In regards to the training, I think that's a very legitimate point to raise and that's one of the things we need to talk about. That's one of the purposes of the meeting next week and what I would intend between now and Select is to make clear what kind or at least attempt to try and address what kinds of training are necessary for the proper investigation to be done. The point here is to really try and clarify whose responsibility it is to do this investigation because we've had so much confusion and, therefore, it's not been done. And I would argue too very strongly that to say DSS is responsible for the investigation somehow suggests that child abuse and neglect is not criminal and I think the power of this is to say that it is a crime and, therefore, law enforcement should be responsible for it and so