

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Rasmussen.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Thank you, Madam President. Let me respond to a couple more questions that you were asking here. This is the way the responsibility is supposed to work right now. Law enforcement does...are the only people who can remove a child. DSS can do investigations right now, although there's some question from their legal counsel whether or not they are supposed to be doing actual investigations. The way we are trying to make it clear here is that law enforcement is responsible for the investigation. They may ask for help from other agency...from the Department of Social Services, but they are responsible. It is them responsible for, the Department of Social Services, to advocate for the protection of the child and to work with family issues so that that safe environment can happen. It is the teams responsibility to work together to come up with a system for doing that investigation together. Ultimately, I think for the statute we have to clarify these responsibility. Ultimately, what we're trying to move towards is that the team will work together to make these things happen. But to answer your question to the best I can right now, the responsibility for the investigation is with the law enforcement as amended with the committee amendments. I think it's also important to remind you that one of the reasons we're doing this is that the Department of Social Services has not been responding to investigations where the perpetrator lived outside of the residence of the child where the alleged abuse occurred and, by saying that the law enforcement is clearly responsible for the investigation and can request assistance from the Department of Social Services, they can clearly investigate those situations and the Department of Social Services can become involved with the family on the basis of not investigating the perpetration but on the basis of working with the family to address the issues within the context of the family. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Rasmussen. Does anyone else wish to speak to this amendment? Seeing none, do you have closing, Senator?

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Thank you. I would just close by saying that the amendment that we are talking about now came in response to several recommendations by one of the subcommittees