

going to look at taking on any effort at providing some coordinated intelligent defense system in the state, perhaps focusing on the more serious cases first where we can and see whether we can begin going down that road which I think is inevitable. I think it's absolutely inevitable that we get into this area in the very near future. I also want to respond just a bit to Senator Beutler's comments about the small counties and the inefficiency. And I guess...I guess I would point out that whether this bill passes or it doesn't pass isn't going to determine whether we have 93 counties or 70 counties or 80 counties. This bill and the concept in this bill is not going to have any appreciable impact on that decision. We have the Interlocal Cooperation Act which can be used now for counties who are too small to justify a sheriff all by themselves, a county attorney all by themselves, or a public defender by themselves, they can work together, and if...and they should...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR BROMM: ...more than they do. One of the things that I have stressed in my district and encourage the counties to do is to talk about getting together on a public defender system. Let's put three counties together, and when we have that big hit, we've got a public defender in place. Of course, the other problem is, and I recognize this, we have a public defender in our county, if you have a serious crime, you may have more than one defendant. You have the potential for conflict of interest and you not only have a public defender representing one but you probably have a need for a court appointed counsel for one of the other defendants, one or more of the other defendants. So you don't completely solve the problem but the public defender system and the Interlocal Cooperation Act will go a ways towards that. I think the concept of Senator Kristensen's bill is well worth us pursuing. I don't think...I don't think that maybe all of the structure in there is...

SPEAKER WITHEM: Time.

SENATOR BROMM: ...quite the way it ought to be but it's a step in the right direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Wickersham.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Question.