

SENATOR CROSBY: Debate ceases. Senator Bernard-Stevens, would you like to close on your amendment?

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Senator Matzke, you should be impressed. You probably don't realize the power that you have over the body when you voted no saying that you wished to allow people to say a few more comments if they wanted to. You had a lot of people who are supporting yours, saying, well, Senator Matzke doesn't want to call the question yet, so I will go ahead and vote no, too. But as soon as you switched, people then automatically switched because you did. So, obviously, we don't have a lot of free thinkers on that, but you do have a lot of power, and I want you to be aware of that. The amendment is relatively...it is a minor amendment. It, basically, says and I am kind of flabbergasted in a way of Senator Matzke's opposition. To me, if he...the attitude should be if the amendment, if the Chambers' amendment is bad, I will defeat the amendment but 14 days is better than 90. So I would think that Senator Matzke, out of common political sense, would probably say, look, I'd rather have the 14 days and defeat the amendment, rather than 90 days and defeat the amendment. But I will say that this particular amendment by Senator Chambers, whether it is 14 days, 5 days, 90 days, or it's the Bromm amendment, probably is the crux of this bill, whether it moves much further or not. I feel very strongly that there has to be a balance. This Legislature has to go on record by saying, look, there are deadbeat fathers out there. We want them to take a responsibility or get out, but we don't want the types of cases where...that we read about in the papers every day. But maybe it takes somebody like me that's not afraid to say it, but there is some deadbeat mothers out there too. And one of the things that we have to do as well is to say to the mother, you have a child that you have brought forth with consent of another person, if you wish, or some time without even knowledge of the other person, but, nonetheless, you have a child, and you have to decide, mother, are you going to be a mother to that child and keep the child, or are you going to, for the best interest of the child, give the child up for adoption? But you can't have it both ways. You can't send the message to the father, you only have...whether, and Senator Matzke talks about nine months. He is assuming that all fathers know that they are the father of the child, and he knows darn good and well that that is not the case in many of these cases we are talking about. So if you are not aware, you don't have