

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, I think we got off track a little bit from the amendment that we're discussing because the amendments we're discussing at the moment have to do with visitation and the role of visitation in the bill and the philosophic understanding that we all have of how visitation relates to child support. Let me say at the beginning I support the Day amendment because I think it modifies and softens the visitation provisions in this particular bill. I do not agree with Senator Day to the extent that she would say that visitation and child support are completely separate issues. I've become convinced over the years that in a great number of cases in fact a person's ability to...to have visitation and to have it in accordance with a decree has a very direct relationship with the noncustodial parent's willingness to pay on time. I think there is a very real psychological connection between those two things and it's a connection that we need to recognize in law. And to date, through the 1980s and up until now, I have watched in this Legislature as we have slowly cracked down on the noncustodial parents who are not paying child support, even obviously garnishing their pay, on up to trapping their tax refunds, and now on up to what is probably the last significant measure that we can take to have some sort of meaningful affect on child support collection, that is giving the court system the ability to deal with licensing. However, with regard to visitation the original committee amendment put visitation on exactly the same plateau with regard to licensing as it did child support. Well, I see this as a progression that is too advanced for its time. I mean I think we need to step back with visitation and do some of the simpler things, some of the things suggested in Senator Day's amendment and start along that path, as we started along the child support enforcement path about 20 years ago, rather than all at once elevating visitation to the same level as the collection of child support. I think it involves resources, it involves time and money commitments that we may want to think about in a more cautious and deliberate manner as we go along. So I support the Day amendment to the extent that it is making less pervasive, more tentative movements in terms of societal assistance in seeing that visitation is supported. It does work through referees, that may in the end require some expenditures of funds, we may want to think about that more before we get into that further. But I think there's nothing that should prohibit us from starting to conceptualize and devise a mechanism for assisting these people in asserting their