

and how do we proceed to do away with that conflict and bring some cooperation to the issue? And I suggest, and what I tried to negotiate in the committee but didn't have the opportunity to finish the job on, is that the approach that's being offered with this bill is the wrong approach because it jumps to a conclusion and basically runs forward with that conclusion when we're not, I think, looking at the options that are out there to better solve the problem. And let me run through a little of the background on the issue and where we're at today, and where I think we might want to go. First off, rightly, the Appropriations Committee has been concerned about duplication in review of children in our custody. Foster Care has their responsibilities, DSS has their responsibilities, the courts have their responsibilities, can't we get them working together? Very appropriate question. LR 424 was introduced, the study was put together, Senator Day chaired the study, different senators participated. And we found that we weren't making a whole lot of progress, but there was at least some ideas about what we could try to see whether or not they'd work, and a pilot concept came forward and it was introduced in the form of LB 578. Unfortunately 578 also had some things that scared the Foster Care Review, particularly the fact that it restricted what kind of reviews they could do. Currently they have the flexibility to pick and choose what they want to do. They didn't like the idea of having some restrictions. So they had Senator Avery and others, seventeen cosponsors, introduce LB 642, that their solution to this duplication problem was to transfer authority, funding, responsibility from the Department of Social Services to the Foster Care Review Board. That's essentially what you have before you. We held the hearing, Senator Crosby is right, a lot of people came in that liked 642, other people came in liked 578, it wasn't clear what we could do. It seemed to me that the best course of action, after Senator Avery picked the bill as a priority, was to sit down with both sides and see if we couldn't negotiate something out. In the end what I thought ought to happen and what I thought in our discussions was agreed to, or at least could be agreed to, was that we ought to take and find three or four different concepts, try them in three or four different areas of the state, give them a year, maybe two years, see which worked, see which didn't work, and then we could decide which was the best model to go forward with and adopt that model. Currently we're all speculating as to what will work and what won't work. But concepts that we had where you could have joint reviews, somehow we could work through this conflict and find cooperation at the local level, it's possible