

SENATOR WESELY: ...that we ought to.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I also was on the Health and Human Services and voted this bill out of committee. And, you know, we have been trying for literally years to eliminate duplication, it particularly came to a head this year as the Governor gave it some emphasis in various bills that he introduced. And, of course, some of us have been trying to do this for a long time. You know a study can gather facts and suggest two solutions, and that's what was before the Health and Human Services Committee, two solutions. And quite frankly it became clear to me, as a member of the Health and Human Services, that something must be settled for the good of the children, so the review of these children would be done and would be done objectively and, yes, independently. There was meeting after meeting with representatives and supporters of these two agencies, they would never come to agreement. The committee, five members of the committee, saw that we needed to act. And so the five members of the Health and Human Services Committee were convinced that Senator Avery had the right approach to the solution. Now the whole concept of Foster Care Review Board, and I also was here, Senator Landis, and I quote from the statement of intent when it was originally...when it was originally introduced in 1982, LB 714 provides for the review, every six months, of cases of children who have resided in public or private foster care for a period of more than six months to determine what efforts have been made by the supervising agency or child caring institution to carry out the plan for rehabilitation or permanent placement. This was not happening. And it seemed simple in my view, Social Services caseworkers devised this plan. They indeed are the supervising agency that devise the plan and carry out the details. The Foster Care Review Board was created to review all children in foster care, independently, and accumulate data to determine the effectiveness of that program as it would pertain to the permanency planning of that child. And that is what our concern was, to finally reach the end and find a permanent planning for this child. Now, LB 642 still provides that the courts review, in the manner as is presently required, but the whole goal of this is to eliminate duplication. And the Department of Social Services is too large, too unwieldily, has too many functions perhaps. Transferring the PPR's, as