

internal review. DSS has these functions now. They make a plan for the child. They carry the plan out and contract for the services, and then they also do the function that we're talking about in 642 which is to review their own plan. So what you've got is you've got DSS making the plan and carrying out and reviewing their own plan as to whether or not it's a sensible plan, appropriate or not. And in 70 percent of the cases when the Foster Care Review Board looks at those plans, Foster Care Review Board doesn't have any problems and in 30 percent of the cases they do have suggestions about how to do the plans differently. All of these plans have an internal review from DSS and then there is this external review by the Foster Care Review Board. What we are doing is not just flip-flopping but we're moving what is an internal process to an external process, a check, which is, I think, itself appropriate. DSS makes the plan, DSS carries the plan out. If you're to review the plan for its adequacy, the external review is the better plan to have. Why? Let me tell you the quality of expertise that reviews the plan in the foster care setting. It is not uncommon that in the external review doctors are present for bringing up medical issues. It's not uncommon to have psychologists present. It is not uncommon to have the guardian ad litem present. It is not uncommon to have the parents present. Those do not occur when you have the internal review by DSS. That's one of the reasons why the essential function is not the same. It's one of the reasons why I am a supporter of 642 as opposed to the present system. I think the external review, which is to look over the plan made by DSS, is better done by an external volunteer-based agency with that breadth of experience, that breadth of expertise and that set of connections to providers, family and people concerned for the well-being of the child. Let me tell you that when DSS does its internal reviews they are strictly confidential inside the body. Those reviews are not the reviews that are given to judges. Judges get a summary of the review, they don't get the actual DSS summary, the actual DSS review. The DSS review is entirely in house. I don't think that if you're looking out for children's welfare you want to consolidate all those functions in DSS. It's better to have that review on an external basis. Judges do, if they wish to, get to see the Foster Care Review Board plans. What they see from DSS generally is a summary of their plan, what they don't see is the internal confidential review. It's because DSS will always, under all circumstances, be doing the first writing of the plan and then lastly the carrying out of the plan that DSS has a continuing oversight and a continuing responsibility to