

level of expertise there in your own county and, of course, consequently, you're going to be required to call...to call upon these state resources more often than are others who have developed the expertise. I mean clearly, to me, that's what's going to happen and clearly, to me, that's unfair and the only way you make this fair is to require all counties to either have or to cooperate in having a full-time public defender. This gives them four years to do that. I think there's a strong logic and a strong equity argument in asking them to do that as part of this bill, as part of getting state funds and state assistance. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Beutler. On the Beutler amendment we have Senator Kristensen, followed by Senator Hartnett. Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature, and, Senator Beutler, I understand the policy choice that you give us. Understand what the opposite side of that policy choice is, that you're going to be telling counties that they are not going to be able to receive the same assistance because of their size. And the other thing that you're going to be telling them is that you're going to need to enter into interlocal agreements and that's basically for many of those counties. They're going...the practical choice is they're not going to do either because they can't afford to do either and so, for the people that really do need some assistance, they're not going to be able to access this and Senator Beutler's...if I was in Senator Beutler's shoes, I would say that's exactly the point, that these counties will not do anything to help themselves and that if they were serious about wanting our state assistance that they would join together in several services but they'd do several things. And my comment to you is, as a practical matter, what will occur is, if you pass this type of amendment, you'll have most of the counties say, great idea but we can't afford it, we're not going to do this. And, quite frankly, I look at some, Senator Beutler, like Kearney County who has a part-time public defender who would be forced to get rid of their part-time public defender to go to a full-time public defender with another county, which they have looked at, chosen not to do, or go alone and not enjoy this and, quite frankly, Kearney County is far from being a small county, particularly when they have their own public defender, but it's a part-time because they can't afford any more. And I think that...I understand the concept and the concept is we want