

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members of the body, I rise in opposition to the bracket motion. Many of the things that I had to say would be an echo of Senator Dierks and Senator Avery. I feel like if we can take the time and it was put on the agenda to work through some of these things that have been discussed today, it is on the agenda, that we can try to work through some of the issues that seem to be in contention, get those resolved and move the bill. It's kind of interesting that there was a motion to return the mainline budget bill back to the committee to have them rectified and everybody said, no, that's not a good idea, and now we're saying let's send this back down to the committee and let them rectify it and it's a good idea. I know there's not a lot of correlation between the two but in some sense...in some instances there is. So when the bottom line of the whole issue is brought up it's going to be this body that's going to make the final decision on what we eventually end up with and the time is now and we have the time, at least amount of time, to quit debating the bracket motion and get on with the bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Crosby.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and members, I stand in opposition to the bracket motion too because I think all we're doing is leaving the children out in the cold again. You can't just keep talking about this issue and having another summer and fall of discussion. I cannot see what you're going to solve. And I heard someone say we need another cooling off period. It always seems like the Foster Care Review Boards are the ones that are supposed to cool off. DSS, Social Services, can just keep doing what they want to and they...or not want to, and I don't say this in an antagonistic way, Connie, I know you worked very hard with this group, and I understand what you're trying to do here. I understand that perfectly. Foster Care Review has a case, too, to present, and they say that, with 642, 1,600 additional children will receive the protection of external citizen review. That's very important that an external review is made. They're quality reviews. They share them with...they get all input from parents, foster parents, guardians ad litem, all the people who are involved, and one of the best things, I think, we did over the last several years for Foster Care Review is give them a presence in court. I think it's very important for that child to have someone in court who is a friend and who knows the child and knows and understands what the child is up