

that LB 712 is attempting to address, again, we...to know the sincerity of our desire to look at the issue Senator Chambers is raising, you only need to look at the fact that we, and when I talk about we, Senator Matzke and myself and the committee did spend a great deal of time on the adoption issue. After the Baby Jessica case, though we were told by Attorney General Stenberg, don't worry, no problem, it's not an issue, we knew better and moved forward. And since that time I don't think any attorney who is familiar with adoption law would argue that we can't and we shouldn't take a look at the issue of relinquishment of a birth father's rights and clarifying that in the law so we don't have the Baby Richard, Baby Jessica onward cases coming back to haunt families that have adopted children. That is clearly a problem. The Uniform Law Commissioners, Harvey Perlman, from Nebraska, came and briefed us, have suggested that this has to be addressed, needs to be addressed. There are still those who argue we shouldn't, but we have forged forward and overcome opposition to that and I think are on the verge of passing a very important bill to deal with a very important problem and that is the question of how we deal with birth fathers and giving them notice, giving them a chance to intervene and try to gain custody of a child if that is their desire, and if it is not their desire so that we end for the future for the adopting parents...

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR WESELY: ...the possibility that out of the blue, without knowledge of the situation, a birth father can intervene after gaining knowledge and take custody of a child away from a family that's had the child and cared for the child for any number of years. So, again, the tenacity with which we have pursued that issue would indicate that when we say we were going to look at it and we're going to try to find a solution to the problem that Senator Chambers has raised I hope he will acknowledge that our performance in the past would indicate that this won't simply be a hollow pledge. It is, in fact, a sincere one and, working with Senator Chambers on this, I think we can find some way to proceed and deal with the problem. So that's the point I want to make. There's a much broader set of issues that we can address but I acknowledge the problem brought up by Senator Chambers and desire to work with him on it. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Bromm, followed by Senator Chambers and Matzke.