SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Avery.

SENATOR AVERY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. This is the final amendment. What had happened, a little background in terms of the bill, the amendment that I had withdrawn was the one that was divided, there were several amendments that were proposed to that. At our last meeting we had about four hours of discussion about the bill. We agreed to pass over the bill at the time, get together with the opponents, try to work out some kind of agreement. AM2293, which is before you now, is what we proposed as a compromise looking at the concerns of the opponents and each element that each individual had. What this does is provides a process to allow implementing the program where foster care takes over the reviews, but we will have pilot projects. There will be a pilot project in Omaha and a pilot project in North Platte. In order to do that though it will take six full-time employees, which we decided, because of the concerns of the opponents and some of the concerns of transferring individuals, what we would do is create six positions to fulfill the work of the proposed amendment in terms of the two areas and take the six people, create six FTEs or position in foster care, then delete six positions in DSS. In concern...I always had some concern for the individuals that people wouldn't lose their jobs. I had...went to DSS, their personnel and asked how many vacancies were available in DSS on a given day, which was about a week or two weeks ago. They had approximately 35 in the same salary range or grade that...if FTEs were eliminated, so basically it kind of minimized some of my concern that there would be places for the individuals if there happened to be an individual that would be bumped because of eliminating FTEs in DSS. Of course, with this proposal it wouldn't happen until October 1 of '95. What...in addition, the bill spells out that foster care will take over the reviews in these areas completely. They will train the individuals in terms of creating boards, train the people to take over and do a complete...provide the review of what takes place in DSS in terms of the case plan and provide that review to the courts like they do normally with their process. One of the main concerns was that the review that's done in DSS is never provided to all of the entities that should have that review. That's an internal check to make sure that DSS, the case plans are there, the services are provided for children. So this would be done. The whole scenario then in terms of the language, we will try it in this area for six...for a year. We will ask our review committee to assess the process, look for