

sand and have people on one side or the other, and which ever side you're on, you're friend or foe. But that seems to be the way this bill was handled. Here we are on the 89th day and the pressures have been built so the Speaker, in his graciousness, in my view, consented to allow the bill to come up on the floor of the Legislature. I don't know that we've been back on General File at this point in any session that I've ever been in. But because of this bill and because of the pressures being applied, that's where we're at. Now in my view advancing the bill is going to happen because there is this pressure and you respond to it and you're going to react to it and the bill is going to be advanced. But I hope you'll look at it a little bit deeper in the future, because in my view there's a number of deep-seated concerns about the Foster Care Review Board, the role that it plays now, the role that it should play in the future. And clearly the situation that we have currently with the Department of Social Services is in need of attention and reform, but I'm not sure that this is the way to go. Let me tell you that there are bigger changes that are needed. First off, the federal government will be changing, I think, requirements with reviews, they'll be changing funding for different activity. I think at this time next year there will be a radically different world that we're living in, in terms of federal programs and mandates and so that changes the dynamic a great deal. Secondly, I think within state government and within this Legislature we need to look at a restructuring of relationships as well. I see the Department of Social Services evolving into a children and families department, focused on that, the Medicaid health care aspects of the agency moved to the Health Department, or in some other fashion changing some of the way in which we see state services provided and state agencies sharing responsibility, because part of the serious problem that we have right now is we can't get along. We have people situated that should be working together, and I'm not just talking about foster care and DSS, we're talking about a number of agencies not able to work together. And again, I come back to how we work with one another is a key to that. But that can be overcome if we tend to change the attitude we have. I think the Department of Social Services has to change its attitude towards the Foster Care Review Board. It's there, it's an entity that will be there, and it's a situation that has to be worked through. At the same time the Foster Care Review Board has to change its attitude. Department of Social Services is not the enemy, they make mistakes. They're understaffed, they're overworked, they're not out to cause evil results, not