

children. I certainly can understand sometimes there are problems with visitation rights on the part of the noncustodial parent, and I do think we need to address that also. I can see somewhat both sides of the issue. But for me the bottom line comes down to what's best for the children. And I think the focus really needs to be on what we can do to improve the situation for those children. In the handout that Senator Beutler sent around, I see that from the most recent Department of Health and Human Service statistics that only approximately 20 percent of the payments, child support payments in the state of Nebraska are actually being made. That means that 80 percent, it would appear from this handout anyway, are going uncollected, and 80 percent of, it states, 134,049 cases, that equates to a whole lot of children who perhaps are not receiving the kind of support that they justifiably should be receiving. And although this is an emotional issue and I think we need to deal with fairness on both sides, and we certainly need to do something about visitation, I think we do need to take a position where we do what's best for the children. One of the problems that, as I look at it, that's concerning me with Senator Witek's amendment is that she removes the creation of visitation referees. I think if we're going to help to resolve some of the emotional issues with this bill and with the people involved that bring it to us, then we certainly shouldn't take away the referees and allow the courts to deal with the issue, where we're ending up spending more money on litigation and ending up costing the parties more money that really should be going to the kids. So I certainly have a problem with the removal of that in the amendment. And although it's not an easy vote for me, and I certainly am concerned about both sides in this issue, for me the bottom line has to be the children and what's best for the children. And because of my concern for the children I'm not going to be supporting Senator Witek's amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Preister. Senator Schimek would like to announce that the following guests are visiting the Legislature, there are 38 fourth graders here from St. Mary's School in Lincoln, with their teacher. Will you all stand and be recognized, please. Welcome to the Unicameral. Senator Pirsch, your light is next.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Madam President. I have a question for Senator Beutler, if he would yield.