

SENATOR LANDIS: I'll waive off.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Senator Crosby.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. I just, a very quick little dissertation here to point out a few things. In the first place, we're right back to last spring. The Foster Care Review Board is a wonderful institution that should be freestanding. I will never vote not to allow it to be freestanding. The second thing it's always been the orphan child, if you want to put it in its own category, of the system. From the very beginning Social Services didn't want it and they fought not to have it instituted. They tried to get rid of it in '83, '84, along in there, Social Services, as a group. And now we have Social Services again with an entirely different group of people at the top trying to get rid of Foster Care Review, that's what they want. They want to get rid of the whole thing. Keep that in mind. But I'm just going to quote a couple of things. The original law stated, and I don't have it in front of me, but the original said that the Foster Care Review Board should review all the cases. Currently they only do 60 percent because of the need for more people and so on, because of time and lack of people. Each of three separate valuations have proven, and this is from Dr. Ann Coyne, that reviewed children are 3.5 times more likely to be in adoptive placements. That saves the state money when the child goes in to a permanency, to a permanent home, then we save the foster care money. And since the average age of those children is 12 years old, I would guess that's probably a little interest, an interesting factor. We think of them all as babies. And a lot of them are put in foster care almost out of the womb. The other thing, the system has changed, the need for foster care has changed from, in the last 20 years. We've got to get with the year 2000 and meet the needs of those children in the year, in these years, and it isn't working and the need isn't there for the reasons that the need was there in 1960. So let's get with it. Quit this argument between Social Services and quit bringing in these amendments to harass foster care. I think this is a good amendment. If it needs to be corrected as to the future, after the pilots, fine, but let's go with it and try to do this right and try to help those children. Remember, it's the children that are at stake here. Whatever time I have left I'll give to Senator Bohlke.