

on again.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you. Before we proceed, I would like to announce that Senator Robak has a guest under the south balcony; Ron Stock of St. Edwards. Would you please rise and let us welcome you to the Chamber. Thank you. Glad to have you here. Next speaker, Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I, first off, acknowledge that there are going to be problems with the new system. There are problems in the current system, and that's really what's at issue here. Will we make progress and try to move forward to address some of the concerns that have been expressed in the past in the current structure of these agencies, and enhance, and improve the services that are provided to families in need across the state of Nebraska by this change? And my answer is, yes, I think we will see an improvement. The example cited by Senator Chambers are examples under the current system, so, in fact, they are examples of why we, perhaps, need to change in this system, why we are looking at trying to make some improvements in what are obvious problems that have existed in the past. And so, in fact, the arguments that Senator Chambers is making I think are arguments why we need to look at support LB 1044. But besides that, let me backtrack a bit and I'll let Senator Chambers know that I know of his deep and sincere concern about this particular case, and his concern with Mr. Leuenberger. We heard his testimony at the confirmation hearing of Mr. Leuenberger, and this issue can be discussed when the confirmation of Mr. Leuenberger is considered by the Legislature. What I would like to say is that I, too, have had problems with the current structure. I have seen them and I have talked about them. I have seen the consequences of a structure that has different agencies pitted against each other. I've seen the result of that be that children are shoved around from one agency to another and no one taking ultimate responsibility. I've seen a need to serve the elderly. I have seen a need to serve the developmentally disabled squashed because we have a Medicaid agency that did not want to try to work with these other agencies to accomplish what should have been in the common good, but instead by one agency not helping the other agency, the one agency looked good, and the other one looked bad. That's the sort of structure we have in place, the sort of conflict and tension we have in place right now. What we're talking about is