

and that...that situation, which your anger is directed toward Don Leuenberger, in fact the whole situation started prior to Don Leuenberger. Now it is true that he did not step in and reverse course, but I think it should be acknowledged that the whole issue started prior to his taking over the Department of Social Services, and that there were some of us concerned about it. And as Senator Chambers knows, I have long been concerned about impacts on children, on families, on the poor, on the disabled and others who are served by these agencies. I care a great deal about the people involved. I have shown that over the years and have not changed my attitude one bit on it. My feeling is that this will change...the change we are talking about will, in fact, serve better the needs of the people that I care about, and I think Senator Chambers cares about, the disadvantaged in our state. Currently, we have everybody fitting certain categories. If you fit the category, then the agency that that category falls under will perhaps serve you. There's a whole change in attitude that is evolving as a result of the initiation of this effort under this bill that has brought together agencies that were once at each other's throats; a lion and a lamb in the sense of laying down together and are now working together on common goals, common needs. We had situations where the Department of Aging wanted to serve the elderly but the Department of Social Services didn't want to work out the funding for it, and, as a result, nothing happened. The Department of Public Institutions wanted to serve the developmental disabled but the Department of Social Services didn't want to fund it, so nothing happened. Time and again we would have situations where one direction would serve the people while another agency would not want to take that direction. As a result impasse resulted and nothing happened. That's the whole point of this proposal. It is time to put an end to that. It is time to say we are all on the same team, we are all part of the same system, let's start working together. And even if the bill ended up not passing, and my hope is that it will pass, the whole effort of bringing together the directors in these departments to talk about their common interest and the common problems, the common concerns, has brought a level of communication and cooperation I have not seen in my 18 years. I have seen agencies, again, fight. I have seen them work together, but I have never seen the cooperation that exists between these five agencies to the degree it does across the board that we see at this point. So the whole discussion of trying to change the system and bring it together has evolved