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PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Chair recognizes Senator Avery to open on his amendment.

SENATOR AVERY: Thank you, Madam President. Members, this amendment was passed out to you. It was a concern that I brought up on General File. It primarily deals with the partnership council. My concerns are that we have individuals that...where their lives are drastically affected by these different agencies, and I feel that there needs to be representatives on this partnership council and they be representatives in terms of participation, being able to give ideas, being able to potentially help direct the policy in that process. Also it has been agreed upon that a member, front-line employee participate in that. I look at that as possibly a caseworker, caseworker, a front-line caseworker. These individuals deal with the people day in and day out. Many times I think we spread the front line from the administrators, they are spread so far apart that up on top they don't know anything that's happening. They don't know what it's like in the trenches, and I feel that it's very important that we have individuals, and it is difficult, the language I tried to put together is broad and identifies experience, and work experience in the areas that deal with each of the separate entities as they now exist, that being long-term care, veterans medical, poverty, those individuals that are there. Someone from developmental disabilities needs to be represented. Children need to be represented. It's vital. I am very adamant about that, that sector. Possibly there should be two representatives of those. If we can get children turned around and families turned around, initially, then we won't have the problem and the future expense down the road. The bill, as before you, basically states that on this partnership council it be...contain members, the 15 members, at least one of the members of the council shall have experience, and work experience in the areas of mental health, developmental disabilities, child advocacy, juvenile justice, geriatrics, long-term care, veterans' affairs, medical, poverty, foster care, and also a front-line worker. It also would eliminate the cabinet person as the head of this council, being then they can appoint or elect their own chairperson to sit. I am hoping that these individuals will go out and get the public input that we need, get public participation in this process of redeveloping.