

but also those programs run by the private agencies as well. So, on the one hand, we say to private side, you know, help us, you know, government shouldn't do it all; help us to develop programs, run programs that will provide for services and help us with the waiting list. And then we say, on the other hand, but we're not going to be able to develop the funds through a pay equity proposal that will help you to, and encourage you to, even hire people that would help get these kinds of programs off the ground. As you may or may not know, everybody working in state institutions doing the same kind of thing got a 3.5 percent pay increase this year. We talked about 75 percent. We talked about 80 percent. Whatever we talked about, if we didn't try to keep up at least we fall, I think you would all understand that, farther and farther or further and further, for those of you that know the correct language, behind. So in my opinion I would like to suggest that the pay equity issue on its own is long overdue and, in fact, necessary. It's unfair for us to suggest that those people who work, in a lot of cases and in most cases with degrees, university degrees, have to in fact almost have vocations rather than jobs because they are paid so little. We expect so much of them. These are hard, tough people, and in some cases, cases they work with. Some are very gentle souls, but I've known caseworkers, women in particular, who have had to deal with folks who have problems with their attitude and temperament, who have the living stuffings knocked out of them sometimes in the process of those good souls trying to help them. At the same time, they do it and they keep coming back for more because they love what they do and what they do is so important to all of us. This is not the place. This is not the place to talk about saving, in this case, this kind of money. It's all for the wrong reasons. I think we should never spend more than we need and, to be completely frank, we've never spent as much as we should have, for staff salaries for these kinds of line staff that serve these kinds of purposes. As far as the waiting list is concerned, we're dealing with that as well and I want to thank the members of the Appropriations Committee, all of them, to a person, who supported the effort not only for pay equity but for in fact I guess the serving and in fact the waiting list, which was called the blueprint issue. The blueprint was a program that would try to identify all of those who were still left not receiving services and who could be served and to try to get it on line. The state Department of Social Services and DPI have also helped in this regard and, in my opinion, it was an effort put together at the legislative