

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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April 20, 1999 LB 637

introduced.) For further discussion on the motion to bracket LB 637, Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I'd like to obviously oppose the bracket motion. Certainly the date makes it almost the same as...as deciding that we're not going to adopt this legislation. But I'd like to remind us a little bit of some of the issues that we're talking about here. This is a small part of the money that we receive from the federal government. It is a small part of the \$1.4 billion. But to the families, to the children, it's a big part because it's helped us to get where we are. Our partnership with the federal government has been successful. It has been successful since 1991 in increasing child support payments from 30 million to 120 million dollars. That is a fourfold increase in eight years. So we have done well by the bargain that we have made with the federal government that we will accept 66 percent of the cost of our child support collection and enforcement, and, in return, that we will do some things to improve the system. Now we have had...we've almost...some of us have almost broken their arms patting ourselves on the back that we are at 60 percent, and 60 percent is a lot better than where we were 9 years ago, but it's not good enough for me. That means that there are 40 percent of the...that are still not being collected, there are 40 percent of the children that are still not getting the support that they deserve. We have to decide whether collecting the money, helping these children, helping these families not be on welfare is worth it to us, and we should have made that decision before we entered into an agreement, as we have with the federal government, to do it, because we've known what...what the issues were. I am passing out some information about how the counties will be impacted under 637. The amount that county attorneys receive for the enforcement of child support will remain unchanged. The amount that the clerks of the district court receive will be cut by about two-thirds. But we will maintain a system that continues to focus on increasing child support collections for the children in this state and helping to make sure that those children are not a part of the welfare system, and that is the thing that we should be the most concerned about. The most concern should be about maintaining the system and making sure that kids receive their support and are not a part of the