

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

January 21, 2000 LB 482

Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the adoption of Senator Matzke's amendment to the committee amendments.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: The question is agreed to. Further discussion on the committee amendments? Senator Wickersham, you're recognized to close on the committee amendments. Senator Wickersham waives closing. Question is the adoption of the committee amendments to LB 482. Those in favor vote aye, those opposed nay. Please record.

CLERK: 37 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of committee amendments.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: The committee amendments are adopted. Debate on the advancement of LB 482 to E & R Initial? Senator Matzke.

SENATOR MATZKE: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. Just let me clarify what a state ward is. State ward is a child who has been the victim of parental neglect or abandonment or abuse or who is a juvenile delinquent, and this is determined generally by the county court or the juvenile court, and then custody is lodged with the Department of Health and Human Services. Now, these children are not immediately available for adoption unless a further step is taken in terminating parental rights. I've given you the statistic on this handout. We generally have between five, almost six thousand children who are state wards. Many of them have medical problems, emotional problems. If you take a minute and look through the dozen or so pages that I have attached to the handout, you'll see that these are children that are not, you might say, not the most sought-after children for adoption because they often come from abusive homes, parents who have had fetal alcohol syndrome or have serious medical problems. They become the responsibility of the Department of Health and Human Services under programs that we already have. Most of them are cared for in foster homes or group homes. What this bill seeks to do is to build in some incentive or at least make available funds to families so that they would have the extra resources to open their homes to these children, and I want to make it clear