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February 14, 2000 LB 950

SENATOR CUDABACK: AM2343 is adopted. Right now we're discussing the advancement of LB 950 to E & R Initial. Senator Redfield.

SENATOR REDFIELD: Thank you, Senator Cudaback, members of the body. Senator Byars and I have had a number of discussions on this bill because I may be the only parent in here who's stood who's had their child tested. My child had the first, if you looked at the handout that we were given, the auditory brainstem response test, where they use electrodes placed on the scalp, and they measure brain activity. I had a daughter who also had spinal meningitis, they expected to find a great deal of hearing loss as a result of that, and she had this test. You take a tiny baby, you take them out of their home, you take them out of the comfort of their mother's arms, and you put them in a hospital situation, and certainly a newborn who's been taken out of a dark womb and all of a sudden we poke them and prod them and do everything else we can to them, we throw them in a room full of bright lights, and this is a little bit frightening for children. So I, of course, came to this looking very much from the perspective of the child, wondering whether this was a necessary test, whether this was something I wanted to put newborns through. And I needed to establish in my own mind that there was enough benefit in the test to require every newborn to go through the test. When they took my daughter into the room they had to set up the electrodes on wires, they had to put the glue onto her scalp, the little, tiny baby hair, put them all over her head, they had to then sedate her because they had to make sure that none of the brain waves were being stimulated by things she saw or things around her. And when she would not go to sleep on her own, they had to actually put her under anesthesia and sedate her. Now I know that they've improved it, and I'm relieved to hear that the other test exists, and I would be more comfortable with this bill if I knew that every baby was going to be tested with the second method. But having been through the first method, I seriously had concerns about it. I know that when they came out with the results, the results were inconclusive, and the doctors wanted me to bring her back and repeat the test again. And I asked them at the time, is there some kind of surgical intervention, if we find hearing loss? They said, for this kind of hearing loss, no. Is there some