## TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE Transcriber's Office FLOOR DEBATE

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would say, at least I should speak for myself, a lot of times some of this stuff may slip by without a whole lot of, I guess, analysis. Well, this summer, during the interim, a lot of...a lot ... we'll all get this, a lot of folks will say, what do you do during the interim; we know you're busy now; what's going on? Once a week, once a week... I can say to those people that ask that question, at least once a week I get a call from someone either complaining about Health and Human Services and the way they do their job, or the way our state in general deals with issues relating to that. They'll say, what are you going to do to reform the system? Well, first of all, I said, look, I'm not going to run into a phone booth, tear my clothes off and have a big S stamped on my chest. I can't save the system. We can't But I'll tell you this. save the world. It's problem identification. I've spoken about it before in the past--problem identification. What I was able to identify, at least in my view, was that we have a lot of foster caregivers out there, a lot of foster caregivers in general, a lot of them that do a really good job, some of them that don't, but here's what they all have in common. None of them have much of a None of them have much of a voice either from the standpoint of our statutory authority and the way we hand that out to them, or just from a judge's understanding of what that particular judge can give to that particular foster caregiver. Now in its original form, there's a bill, LB 770. It's attached to this amendment right now. It's not in its original form and I guess, oddly enough, that's okay with me. What I was looking to do was to actually let judges understand, let judges know that they can go out in a courtroom, grab a foster caregiver who's had 20 months with a child sometimes, maybe 15 months, maybe 10 months, maybe 6 months, maybe 3 months, to ask them about that child; what's been going on in that child's life. Right now, there aren't a whole lot of judges that really even realize that they have that authority, I would venture to guess. I tried to not necessarily give foster care parents, foster caregivers standing, but what I tried to do is say, hey, you got And here's why. What purpose does a foster caregiver...what do...what's their purpose? What are they supposed to do when they're contracting for the state of Nebraska, for lack of a better term? The state hires them. They contract with us. We put our children, the ones that we're