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FLOOR DEBATE

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done here with LB 1115, in its final form, hopefully, is taken permissive language and identified to judges who sometimes may not be privy to this certain type of information that they do know that there's a foster...that they do know that they have a foster caregiver in the back of the room that they can acknowledge in the back of that courtroom. We're going to identify that. We're going to try to identify whether something like this is successful. And then I would say we'll go into that interim, the one interim that everybody keeps asking us about--what did you do during that interim--and we're going to figure out if this stuff works. Because if it doesn't, we can do a lot of different things. State of Alaska, they're creating framework to do a heck of a lot more than we're doing. Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Wisconsin, they're all giving foster caregivers standing. I'm not proposing that. Some states have authorized, and I'm not proposing this, some states have authorized that foster caregivers can initiate termination of parental rights actions--Michigan, New Hampshire, and New Mexico. That's hard core. That's about as hard core as it gets. That's giving a foster caregiver the type of power that a birth parent has. Well, let me tell you, we all...most of us out here know this. I've got four children. My wife is not a mother because she gave birth to those four children. I'm not a father...that's what's frustrating. I'm not a father, a good one or a mediocre one or whatever, for that particular reason. And there's a lot of foster caregivers out there that understand that,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR FRIEND: ...good ones that understand that, and what they'd like to have and what we may be encroaching on here is the ability to sit in the back of the room and then suddenly have the judge say, hey, look, come on up here, we want to hear about the last 15 months of this child's life. That's all we're asking for. I know it was probably going to fly through anyway, but maybe it's my chance to pour out some of this frustration and leave it here for awhile. Then we can go into the interim, find out if something like this does melt that tip of the iceberg that Senator Howard talked about. If it doesn't, we can come back and we can take a bigger bite of the apple. Thank