

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

March 15, 2006 LB 1060

mothers who have a child, who don't have a support system. Most of these mothers would be victims of poverty, they'd be single parents, they'd be out there on their own, leave the hospital with this baby, little or no information, and very few resources. This is a prime example of a situation that's ripe for frustration, that's ripe for child abuse. Visiting nurses provide a support system. And I'd like to stress again for Senator Stuthman, there is an educational component in this. It's not merely dropping by. This is a structured program. This is a program that supports the young parent in learning how to parent that child safely, and wanting to parent that child, having the desire to be a good parent. This is a program to keep children out of the system. And believe me, once the child enters the foster care system, it's a very hard row to get them out. I'm sure you're heard over the years reports from the Foster Care Review Board on the number of moves that children have in foster care, on abuses that happen to children in foster care. Don't kid yourself. Foster care is not just a safe haven. It's not a place where children can go and we don't have any worries about them, they're going to be taken care of, they're going to grow up. It's not that simple. We need to support the biological parent, the mother, parent this child safely. I know there are many competing causes, there are limited resources. Money, like time, is never enough. But I will say to you--and this a...kind of, I'm borrowing a line from a recent movie--I'm getting tired of being like that little Dutch boy with his finger in the dike. We've got a problem here. We need to be honest about it. I hope that you will support me with this amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Howard. Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I would urge the body to look at the actual language of the amendment. It talks about home visitation and other secondary prevention services included in Section 68-1202. I would encourage you to look at the list of those and tell me how much \$500,000 will make a difference. So you might say, oh, Smith, why are you standing up and even talking about that small of a number in relation to the entire budget? But we have to practice some sort of restraint here. And I hate to extend debate at this