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

March 23, 2006 LB 1060

made. Once we've addressed the existing recommendations, then we may need to go back and evaluate their effectiveness. But I simply do not believe that it is fiscally responsible for us to continue to appropriate money to study the system without implementing the recommended changes. It is time to take the bold steps required to make real changes in our Health and Human Services System. I offer this amendment to eliminate further efforts to stall the inevitable. Our children and our families deserve action, not more studies. And I'm going to read to you just a little bit from the Governor's task force, subtitled "A Road Map for Safety for Nebraska's Children." There were at least 35 participants in this study, 2 of our senators who are still here in the Legislature. These people gave their time, their energy, their expertise and made their recommendations. The recommendations in this report include protective measures that can be put in place in communities, as well as specific recommendations to strengthen the formal child protection service system and to protect children from maltreatment-related harm or death. Changes for the sake of change is not The task force strove to identify changes that appropriate. could reasonably be expected to result in improved results for child safety, and child and family well-being. It will be absolutely necessary to monitor implementation to ensure the desired results are achieved. The Governor should identify a mechanism or a body for implementation at the earliest date. Now this next paragraph is very important. The task force would like to recognize the commitment and the efforts of those who worked on the front lines every day for the safety and protection of children. These professionals often come under criticism and rarely receive the recognition they deserve for the important and the difficult work they do. It is essential for them to be an integral part of implementation and evaluation of the task force recommendation. The task force would also like to recognize Governor Mike Johanns for taking a proactive approach to addressing the problem of violent child deaths under his commitment to the safety and well-being of Nebraska's Several state senators have also played key roles in the creation and the work of the task force, and their leadership in Nebraska Legislature will be essential to full implementation of the task force recommendation. If you look at what's been done, I will challenge you to list the improvements