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experience and the expertise of its members, previous reports that have been published in recent years, and a report from the state child death review team on 30 child maltreatment-related deaths that occurred between 1998 and 2003. The task force recommendations were divided into four areas: ensuring necessary preventive services across the state; child maltreatment reports that were screened appropriately so that the cases requiring intervention receive appropriate follow-up and attention; child maltreatment reports were investigated in a competent thorough manner utilizing a coordinated multidisciplinary report approach; and the last recommendation, judicial involvement was utilized appropriately for the protection and safety of children. Child protective service within the Department of Health and Human Services is just one part of a very complex system for the protection of children. Improvements are needed in all areas of the system, including improved communication and coordination among all professionals who have a responsibility in the identification, investigation, and treatment of children who are maltreated. Some of the recommendations that were included in the report could be implemented relatively quickly and would result in immediate improvements to the child protection services system. However, not all of the problems could be fixed so easily. Some recommendations, particularly those calling for increased funding, changes to existing law, those take more time to complete and those require a steadfast resolve and political courage of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The death of any child is tragic. Children are not supposed to die. When the cause of death is attributable to abuse or neglect, the loss is further magnified because it suggests that the community has failed to look after and provide for the safety and well-being of its most vulnerable members.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you. Child protection is a community responsibility. "Community" includes the child's family, friends, neighborhood, school, church, doctors, and lawyers. The community also includes mandated protective service agencies, including child protection, law enforcement, county attorneys, guardian ad litem, CASA volunteers, and the court