

read on January 17 of this year, Mr. President. It was referred to the Public Health and Welfare Committee for hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. There are Public Health and Welfare Committee amendments pending.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Wesely, would you like to talk about the amendments?

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker, members, the amendments to the bill try to deal with the concerns the Public Health and Welfare Committee had with this legislation. We did spend a great deal of time meeting with the proponents of the legislation including Senator Barrett, with Gina Dunning from the Department of Social Services and other interested individuals. What we did was we changed the thrust of the legislation in terms of its administration, but not in its focal point in terms of trying to help deal with the very acute problem in our state, that being child abuse. What we did was instead of having an independent board as envisioned by the original LB 333, we set up a board that is placed under the Department of Social Services. This would then allow the Department of Social Services, which already has staff dealing somewhat in this area, to staff the board and provide the technical support that is needed to administer this proposal. Then we also provided the board would not be totally independent in terms of their decisions. The Director of the Department of Social Services would have veto power over their spending decisions so that there is some oversight to the board, but nevertheless, the board itself would have the initial decision-making power in deciding where the money is spent and providing the input that is so vital to resolving this issue. Also that board with that independence would be encouraged to have more volunteer support and involvement. So we do change a bit of the thrust of the administration, but the actual thrust of the bill is not changed. We do change the name from the Child Trust Fund to the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund and the reason is under our statutes there is a provision that trust funds have to be dealt with very particularly and couldn't be allowed to allocate funds as envisioned by this bill so we had to change the name from a trust fund to the Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund under these committee amendments. The makeup of the board is seven members appointed by the Governor and then the Director of the Department of Health and then the Director of the Department of Social Services are both added to the seven member board