

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President, members of the body, LB 19 is a bill which is presently working its way through many of the Legislatures in the United States. It has been passed in 29 states including the surrounding states of Colorado, Iowa, North Dakota and Wyoming. I think there is legislation pending in Kansas and this legislation basically puts us in an intrastate cooperation in communications assistance in enforcing the custody decrees of the various states of the Union. Now basically the reason for this law is simply this that child snatching which is a problem in the United States to an everincreasing degree, and the reason why it is increasing simply is because the family structure is changing dramatically, marriages last less often, parental love is one of those imponderables that is difficult to deal with. In many cases in the past we have not had a problem with child snatching because simply when there was a separation of a marriage one parent willingly or with a certain amount of understanding gave up the rights to the child to the other parent who would then raise that child or children and the process was not a very complicated one. With the increasing dissolution of marriages, what is happening is that parental love is intense on both sides. There is some desire increasing court fights as to the jurisdiction or not jurisdiction but as to the custody of the children and who will have the right to raise these children. I don't know if many of you in the body had an opportunity to watch last Friday night but there was a movie on commercial television, I apologize to the ETV guys, that basically was lobbying for this bill. The movie showed a family where the husband had through a divorce decree given up all but visitation rights to his children and found that it was extremely unbearable, that he could not live with that situation. So he took the children to another state where they had some difficulty getting the children back. Presently what is happening is this, that in the State of Nebraska which is presently without this legislation a haven for those who would steal or snatch their children and bring them to this state and then try through our courts to get a different decree which would allow that parent who was not originally in the first decree awarded custody of the children would try then to open up the court records and change the decree so that they may have custody. This bill basically says that the jurisdiction is in the state where the decree was first allowed and that our courts will have to communicate with that other court and also the children then would be able to come back, would be able to be reunited with whoever the original decree was with, and that if you are going to have jurisdictional fights between, not jurisdictional, but