

March 15, 1982

LB 714

Board members, as proposed, would be reimbursed for their actual expenses in the performance of their duty plus \$20 a day. The state board will establish local boards consisting of five members each. These boards are to be selected from volunteers who place their applications with the state board. After selection there will be established compulsory, initial and periodic inservice training programs. The local boards would review each child's case at least once every six months to determine what efforts have been made to carry out the plan for family and child rehabilitation or for the child's permanent placement. Local boards would then submit in thirty days its findings and recommendations to the court having jurisdiction over the child. These findings and recommendations would include reports on the efforts and progress made to carry out the plan for the individual child together with any other recommendation it chooses to make. Now the state board would annually review the judicial administrative data collected in foster care cases and would evaluate it. It would then disseminate this data to the judiciary, public and private agencies, Department of Welfare and to the public. The state board would also report and make recommendations to the Department of Welfare and county welfare offices. Although 714 provides lay ~~input~~ to the judiciary, it doesn't determine who is right when those two entities have opposite opinions. When a proposed local board voices concern over the quality of administrative personnel, as I suspect they will, the solution will probably rest on the state board in some form of judicial review. Allegations have been made that some courts, having jurisdiction of foster care, are building case loads and overcrowded calendars simply by placing in their custody sons and daughters of good parents and good citizens whose only fault is a belief that parents still set household rules for their children. If this situation is prevalent and if a local review board calls attention to it, the entire state will benefit. Mr. President, I would urge the adoption of the committee amendments to LB 714.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, LB 714 and particularly its amended form is a valuable bill that should be passed this session. It is one of the best pieces of legislation that I've had a chance to vote on yet this far into the session because it addresses a very real need for oversight of children in the foster care system and, secondly, periodic evaluation of their continued status and their placement. I support the committee amendments and have had personal experience of children who have simply become lost in the foster care system and ultimately cannot be found with whom they reside, what their education is, what