

are an alcohol abuser and you don't take care of yourself and your life is threatened as a result, shouldn't we take care of these people? That is what we are trying to do with this legislation. I don't think that is a regressive step. I see that as a progressive step. That is just the opposite of what I think Senator Chambers is saying. If we didn't have this procedure, if we didn't have this act, these people would still be taken care of but in a far different fashion in terms of their care, instead they would be placed in jail. These people, if they are a threat, there are laws that protect the public. Instead of taking them and finding treatment, they would be placed in a jail situation because that is what happened before this act was adopted. So in my estimation, the mental health commitment law is an improvement over what we had before. This bill is an improvement over the Mental Health Commitment Act that we had before because, instead of placing these people through a process that is not advantageous to the individual, it goes through a process that is far better in terms of their individual rights, and more clearly defines why they are being committed. Rather than just because they are mentally ill and dangerous, which you can use, it says that they are mentally ill and dangerous because they are a drug abuser. It is a clearer definition of why these people need to be committed, and then these people aren't put away without a lock and key and they are taken care of in terms of services, and it is not just in a regional center, but in the local community alternatives.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Excuse me.

SENATOR WESELY: These people are here to be cared for, not to be punished. That is what the whole point of the bill is.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Excuse me, Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: I ask your support...

SPEAKER NICHOL: Excuse me a second, the call is raised. Thank you, Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. I'm just asking your support for the bill. I want you to understand that we have looked at this. There are concerns about some language in the present act that isn't affected by this bill. I understand