

County who are operating in good faith but who are opposed to the basic direction that LB 7 is taking. Now let me explain the difference. Let me explain how Senator Abboud's amendment significantly changes the direction of our child support collection procedure. What Senator Abboud's amendment says is that county judges can never serve as child support referees. It says county judges can never serve as child support referees, so all the child support refereeing has to be done by attorneys that are appointed by the judges whether in Omaha, Lincoln, Sarpy County or anywhere in the state. Now, there is...you can make arguments in favor of that, granted, but in the end, I don't think it is good from a public policy point of view to do that, for this simple reason. The way LB 600 is written right now, it requires that the Supreme Court make a finding that existing judicial resources are insufficient, including county judge resources are insufficient, before an attorney can be appointed to take the load. So the way LB 7 is written right now, the Supreme Court first looks to see if the county judge has enough time to serve this function and only if the county judges do not have enough time to serve the function is an attorney then appointed. Now there are some judges around the state that don't think the county judges should even have the authority to do this under any circumstances. And Senator Abboud's amendment is an outgrowth of that movement. But the problem is that if we are to efficiently use our judicial resources, if we are to address the issue that Senator Beutler has been so concerned about for several years and that is to be sure that all of our judges are working up to capacity, why then we need to reject this amendment because this amendment is going to allow judges out there who continue not to have enough work to do, instead of filling up their time with the child support collection cases to have an attorney appointed to come into their courthouse and serve that same function. Now, granted, I know there are some judges who would like it that way, particularly some district judges who are concerned about the implications of allowing county judges to do child support work because they view it as a movement towards a one-tier court system. But I think it is a mistake because if we adopt Senator Abboud's amendment, and I understand where Senator Abboud is coming from, if we adopt his amendment, we are going to lay open the situation, we are going to leave ourselves open to the situation where we will have several county judges out there who are busy only on a half-time or a two-thirds time basis, instead of giving them these responsibilities, we will appoint a private attorney to come in and do the job and it will cost the state more money. So what LB 600 stands for now is a more efficient