

ask Senator Beutler if he would yield to a question or two. Senator Beutler.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Beutler, please. Senator Beutler, Senator Higgins has a question for you.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Senator Beutler, last night in one of the amendments, we inserted the Attorney General's Office into the bill, correct? Prior to that everything had been going along under the Department of Social Services and they had been working with the masters and attorneys that have been handling child support for several years. Is that correct?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Yes and no. In the last year or so, the Department of Social Services has started to set up pilot programs working with, or not working with the county attorneys, but basically the county attorneys have transferred authority to the Department of Social Services to work through these pilot programs. So everything is in the infantile stage, everything is beginning really, and that is why the decision should be made now as to what is the best way to go about this.

SENATOR HIGGINS: My next question is this. I understand these pilot programs have been working fairly well. They need more time, of course, to see how well they are going to work but they have got them started and they are doing a good job. What if we simply took out what was put in last night, take the Attorney General out of the bill and put it back in to where we have it with the Department of Social Services working with the county attorneys? Then there would be no need for this amendment to give them till July 1st to make the transition from Social Services to the Attorney General's Office. There is nothing in the federal mandate that says we have to use the Attorney General's Office, correct?

SENATOR BEUTLER: No, what the federal mandate requires is that action be done on an expedited basis.

SENATOR HIGGINS: Right.

SENATOR BEUTLER: And probably the major problem in the system, there are a couple of problems, there are a number of problems in the system, but certainly one of the major problems in the system has been the county attorneys have