

information I passed out.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Were you through, Senator Wesely? Oh, okay. Senator Warner, please.

SENATOR WARNER: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I would rise to oppose the change. This was an interesting hearing when we held the hearing on Social Services because, as a result of it, it sort of came down to a question of whether or not you would reduce or eliminate some services, or do you restrict, somewhat, the servicing for those services. Obviously, one of the things that came up, which is an issue that we dealt with many times in the past, was to modify our state statute so that at least some of the programs that we now participate and are mandated by state law, but optional under federal law, could be considered, and, in fact, we had legislation drafted, at least, for that possibility. It was not introduced, although I assume it will be considered again in the next session. It was not introduced as a matter of time. It was pointed out to us that some of these offices, which you see listed, of course, in fact, do exist, but they also are not fully staffed, they are open one or two days a week. Others are staffed. It was indicated that if the complete change was made, that would have the impact of about 38 positions, I believe, that could be eliminated, and about 40 positions that might be moved or transferred. But it was also pointed out to us that in the case of social services there are 100 offices statewide. At the same point, the Department of Labor, for example, which also has a need for access, that is the public has a need for access statewide, has about 35 offices. So, you would naturally ask yourself that as desirable as it may be for a lot of access, perhaps the number of offices we now have is in excess of what, perhaps, can be efficiently managed, and there would be some benefit. Now, recognizing that there ought to be some flexibility on the part of the agency, because the other portion of the reduction did affect the NCCY, we put those two programs together, at least for the balance of this year, to provide to the Administrator of Social Services, Director of Social Services, the maximum efficiency within...that she could exercise in accommodating this reduction perhaps between two programs, maybe even less than the impact of either if they were not divided. It appeared I think to the committee that the solution here, as it now stands, was a reasonable one, and it probably even had some desirable aspects to it, although not totally, of course. But the option of addressing the issue with reduced services is one that can still be looked at next time.