

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Rasmussen.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman and members of the body. It was a strategy, wasn't it, to keep me preoccupied so I wouldn't have my thoughts together when I got up to the microphone. Actually Senator Lindsay and I have been having a good discussion, probably more intense and more honest than what we are having over the microphone, about how to address this issue. I've offered this amendment to try and get us focused in a different direction, to focus on the circumstances that contribute to unwanted pregnancies, to focus on the circumstances that cause women to think that abortion is their only option. I think where Senator...Senator Lindsay and I probably disagree on two or three basic premises, but one of them is the difference...my opinion is the solution is not regulation and control over women, the solution is in coming up with good responses to the many problems that women and children, in general, are facing. Let me give you some statistics. Every day in America 8,441 teens become sexually active. Every day in America 2,756 teens become pregnant. Every day 1,340 babies are born to teen mothers. Six hundred and thirty-eight babies, every day, are born to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care. Seven hundred and forty-two babies are born at low birth weight, less than 5.5 pounds, even though they're full term. Every day 2,685 children are born into poverty. Every day, every day 107 babies in this country die before their first birthday. Every day two children, younger than five, in the United States, are murdered. Two hundred and forty-eight children are arrested for violent crimes. One hundred and seventy-six children are arrested for drug abuse. Four hundred and twenty-seven children are arrested for alcohol abuse or drunk driving. Ten thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight children, a day, are suspended from public schools. And 2,250 youth, between 16 and 21, drop out of school every day. These are the kind of issues that I think we need to address in order to do something about the abortion rates in this country. Over 40,000 children, last year, died before their first birthday. Infant mortality rates in the United States, we rank like about 17 or 18th compared to all other major countries. It's even worse when we look at children of color. We rank behind 55 other countries in terms of infant mortality rates for those children. The number of women who get prenatal care, Senator Lindsay and I were talking, repeatedly the prenatal care bill has been passed and vetoed. We never