

done that is not being done today, but I sure hope something could be.

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Rasmussen.

SENATOR RASMUSSEN: Mr. Chairman, and members of the body, I want to rise in support of this amendment. I want to back up just a little bit and respond a little bit about the conversation earlier about this debate. Some people feel it is more conversation than a debate. Regardless of what you call it, I think there has been a good deal of important things said, and I think there has been some movement in a direction that may not show up in a law, but I think has been felt by those of us who have been discussing this. I think to try and place the blame on anybody for the length of this debate is somewhat adolescent in terms of trying to point the finger at somebody else. Just as Senator Lindsay said, he could not back down. There are those of us who also feel like we cannot back down on this position. And I think that many important things have been identified. I want to take a few minutes to talk about the whole issue of addressing, through the commission, adolescent issues. As I said in response to Senator Crosby, we have not done much in this state in terms of adolescent issues, and there are a variety of them. One of them we have been talking about a lot is teen pregnancy. One million American teenagers, roughly the entire population of Detroit, Michigan got pregnant in 1988. Of all the mothers in the United States having their first child in 1988, almost one in four were teenagers, and I believe I have seen the statistic that 70 percent of the births in Nebraska are to teenagers. Almost two-thirds of the births to teens are to unmarried girls compared with less than one-third in 1970. Somebody mentioned that things have changed. They certainly have. Fewer than six of ten adolescent mothers will have attained their high school diplomas by age 29, and each year at least 40,000 teenage girls drop out of school due to pregnancy. For almost half of the births to teenagers in 1988, the mother did not receive early prenatal care, and those last few factors create some major problems for our society in terms of the number of people who are living on welfare and the number of children who are born that have lifelong problems because they did not get the early prenatal care. But teen pregnancy is not the only issue out there for adolescents. They face a great deal of violence in crime, as well as victimization. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents and young people aged 15 to 24. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading