

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...is offering makes it possible even under a disclosure of suspected child abuse for mediation to continue if that is in the best interest of all concerned, including the child. Without that amendment, the mediator not only would have to terminate the mediation, and that's it, but he or she would have to go to the law enforcement people also. I am not sure that I've thoroughly digested what the amendment does but I think what I said is what it does. I've got to do a little more thinking to see if I'm convinced that that's really what it does.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Wesely, you are next on the Hohenstein amendment. Oh, excuse me, we have an announcement by the Clerk first.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Warner would like to have the Revenue Committee meet in Room 2022 now; Revenue Committee, Room 2022.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker, members, I've followed the debate, both earlier and then today on this very issue, and I am very concerned about Senator Chambers' effort to delete the requirement for reporting of child abuse. This is one area of the law, one violation of the law that we've taken this extraordinary step of saying everybody, and I believe the statute is fairly inclusive of any individual who is aware of child abuse is required, mandated to report that to authorities. I don't think you necessarily have that prevalent across the board in terms of violation of the law, but because of our concern about children unable to express for themselves the abuse that they are suffering from, their inability to speak for themselves to the proper authorities should they desire to do so, we have to allow for adults who are aware of the situation to have to take the step, to not hesitate to take the step, and to do what is right for that child and report the potential of abuse. Now this is a very important issue, and to take a step back, as Senator Chambers is talking about, I am sure he is not intending to harm the process to protect children. I know his intent is to not disrupt the mediation process, but I, for one, believe that if mediation discussions enter into abuse allegations, you are unlikely to have much hope for mediation, i.e., the Mia Farrow-Woody Allen discussion, when abuse was