

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you. It would read that...I don't know. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, I will cut to the chase here. Prior to the commencement of mediation, the parties to mediation shall be notified by the mediator that evidence of any abuse shall be reported to the district judge who shall hold a hearing in chambers to determine whether the reports are founded and if further investigation is merited.

SPEAKER BAACK: Are you done, Senator Ashford? Okay, discussion on the Ashford amendment. Senator Chambers, did you want to discuss it?

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I'd like to ask Senator Ashford a question or two. Senator Ashford, you didn't change...I meant what your amendment makes clear is that prior to the...

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right, that didn't change.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay, and what you added was the fact that this information would be turned over to the judge, who would have the hearing in chambers...

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...to determine...okay, I will support Senator Ashford's amendment. And after we've...but maybe I ought to discuss it now. Senator Ashford, what would be involved in this hearing, and I'm not against the hearing or opposed to it. Do you think it would be necessary to put anything in or is there existing law which would guide a judge if a matter came up during such proceedings?

SENATOR ASHFORD: When we say in...yes, there is. When we say in chambers, Senator Chambers, what we mean by that is that the court would hear...would have, to start with, an informal hearing where the information would be presented to the judge, and if the judge determined that there was a more formal hearing required or other action, he or she would take that action at that time. But the idea would be that there would be a gathering of information that would occur.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Ashford. And, again, I would like as much in the record as possible of what our intention is as we take these steps. When we say a hearing in