

result you will punish the child, you will have less help from the family, you will increase the tension. There may be more abuse because of that, between the parent who lost money and the child who may be then the blame for that loss of the money and nothing in that scenario improves education and that's from my experience of 13 years in there. This will not do what you want it to do. It is punitive and it's bad policy. Though other parts of the proposal in 1224, I think, are good policies, this one is not.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I rise again in opposition to the Chambers amendment. You...I understand the arguments and the concerns that have been expressed opposing the concept of "learnfare," so to speak. They're not illegitimate, they are...they're worth discussing and they are of concern to myself. The original proposal said if your child doesn't attend school, you will lose your cash assistance. I was concerned about that and we did change, through the committee amendments, the shall to may, because, in my view, the original language would have ended up with the child, not the parent, having the power, because the child then could hold the threat over the parent for privileges in exchange for attendance of school with the threat of a loss of assistance and the parent would be in a very vulnerable situation. With the language that we adopted, making it optional, with the clarification of that from Senator Beutler that the parents must not have made any reasonable effort to encourage the attendance in school, I feel comfortable with the language of the bill. It is not a problem, in my view, that some people have expressed. I think it will work fine. The other question that's come up that Senator Chambers has raised with this amendment is the question dealing with the last sentence on communication. This, again, came from the committee amendment, and our feeling was the best result from this effort to deal with cash assistance and nonattendance of school was to try and get better communication between the school and the parents to let them know if there was an attendance problem, to try and head off problems before they became serious and to try and have a communication cooperation link, that that probably would do as much or more good than anything. So the idea is to have the Department of Social Services work with the local schools, to work with recipient families to find a way to set up, and this