

Legislature - First Session - 2015

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB368

Chairperson: Senator John Murante

Committee: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Date of Hearing: 2/18/2015

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

In Nebraska's unique system of government, the Unicameral Legislature is one house, while the citizens of Nebraska are the second house. The Founding Fathers of Nebraska made this clear in Article III of the Nebraska Constitution; where in Section 1 legislative authority is vested in the Legislature and the power of initiative and referendum is vested in the people. In Section 2, "The first power reserved by the people is the initiative whereby laws may be enacted and constitutional amendments adopted by the people independently of the Legislature." It is our duty as State Senators to protect the right of the Nebraska's citizens to petition their government.

This bill protects a citizen's right to petition by protecting access to a petition to sign. As such, the petition carried by a circulator is given the same status and protection as a polling place. Further, intimidating or harassing a petition circulator or blocking access for a citizen to access a petition to sign will be prohibited. For the electorate to fully participate in their government, it is adherent on the Legislature to absolutely protect the citizens' access to a petition and thus their voting rights. Persons found to have violated the citizens' right to access a petition as stated in this bill shall be guilty of a class V misdemeanor.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Mike Groene

