

One Hundred Seventh Legislature - Second Session - 2022

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB1267

Chairperson: Senator John Stinner

Committee: Appropriations

Date of Hearing: February 23, 2022

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

One of the primary objectives of the American Rescue Plan Act is to “address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic.” According to the CDC, Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many people from racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. Furthermore, the National Council on Disability found that the coronavirus exacted a steep toll on populations of people with disabilities, and the events that unfolded during the pandemic, including measures to mitigate the spread, posed unique problems and barriers to people with disabilities.

Therefore, in furtherance of the goals of the American Rescue Plan, LB 1267 would appropriate \$2.5 million from the federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund pursuant to the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for the purpose of reducing health inequities in the state of Nebraska. \$500,000 shall be appropriated to each of the following Commissions: the Commission for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Commission on African American Affairs, the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Commission on Latino Americans, and the Commission for Indian Affairs.

Each commission shall hire a health equity liaison, whether an employee or contractor working on behalf of the commission, to serve as a liaison between patients, hospitals, DHHS and other stakeholders to help identify and address health disparities. Each commission shall collect data and submit a report back to the legislature outlining recommendations to address health inequities for their constituencies.

The populations served by these five commissions have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Using ARPA funds to help identify solutions to addressing the health disparities that impact these populations will help improve health outcomes in the future as intended by the Act.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Tony Vargas