

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 298

Introduced by Arch, 14; Aguilar, 35; Ballard, 21; Clements, 2; Jacobson, 42; Lowe, 37; Riepe, 12; Slama, 1; Vargas, 7.

WHEREAS, the Legislature has the inherent power to secure information in order to legislate, hold hearings, and conduct investigations related to the operation of state government; and

WHEREAS, legislative oversight functions related to the Legislature's inherent power are currently distributed among the various legislative divisions within the Legislative Council, including the office of Public Counsel, the office of Legislative Audit, the office of Legislative Research, and the office of Legislative Fiscal Analyst; and

WHEREAS, the office of the Attorney General issued an opinion on August 16, 2023, stating that the current statutory regime governing two offices related to legislative oversight, the office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare and the office of Inspector General of the Nebraska Correctional System, violated the separation of powers provisions in Article II, section 1, of the Constitution of Nebraska; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature believes that the legislative divisions and offices, including the office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare and the office of Inspector General of the Nebraska Correctional System, serve important legislative oversight functions and that these divisions and offices will benefit from a full review to strengthen the performance of their legislative oversight functions, to address any restructuring or reorganization necessary for continued legislative oversight, to examine how any such restructuring or reorganization may impact the interface between the Legislature and the Executive and Judicial branches, and to address any remaining issues related to the opinion of the Attorney General issued on August 16, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Legislature hereby calls for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council to appoint a committee of the Legislature to be known as the Legislative Oversight Review Special Committee of the Legislature. Members shall include the Speaker of the Legislature, the chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, the chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature, the chairperson of the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature, two at-large members of the executive board, and three at-large members of the Legislature. The Legislative Oversight Review Special Committee shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from the membership of the committee. The executive board may provide the committee with a legal counsel, committee clerk, and other staff as required by the committee from existing legislative staff. The executive board may authorize the committee to hire outside legal counsel as deemed necessary by the committee. The committee may hold hearings. After authorization by the executive board, the committee may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of any papers, books, accounts, documents, and testimony under oath.

2. The Legislative Oversight Review Special Committee may study the current structure and organization of legislative oversight functions among the various legislative divisions and offices and the structure and organization of legislative oversight functions in other state legislatures. The committee may also study whether current oversight conducted by any statutorily created board or commission would be more appropriately conducted within the legislative branch.

3. The Legislative Oversight Review Special Committee shall issue a report with its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than December 15, 2024. The report shall include recommendations for draft legislation, if necessary. The committee terminates on December 31, 2024.