

ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2011
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LR37

Hearing Date: Friday January 28, 2011
Committee On: Health and Human Services
Introducer: Health and Human Services
One Liner: Provide the Health and Human Services Committee be designated to review, investigate, and assess the effect of the child welfare reform initiative implemented by the Dept. of Health and Human Services

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Report to the Legislature for further consideration

Vote Results:
Aye: 6 Senators Bloomfield, Campbell, Cook, Gloor, Krist, Wallman
Nay:
Absent: 1 Senator Howard
Present Not Voting:

Proponents:

Senator Kathy Campbell
Julie Dake Abel
Candy Kennedy

Pamela Allen
Jacquelyn Meyer
Sarah Helvey

Sarah Forrest
Karen Authier
Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez
David Newell

Representing:

Health and Human Services Committee
NAPE/AFSCME Local 61
Nebraska Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
Building Blocks Foster Care
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest
Voices for Children in Nebraska
Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska (CAFCON)
KVC Behavioral Health of Nebraska
Nebraska Families Collaborative

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Vicky Weisz

Representing:

Self

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

In July 2009 the department selected six private agencies as lead agencies to implement child welfare reform, recently entitled Families Matter.

The child welfare reform increased the responsibilities of these private agencies to provide services to children and families.

The private agencies were subject to a risk-based rather than fee-for-service reimbursement.

On October 15, 2010, the department announced the remaining agencies would receive greater case management

responsibilities.

The result of the case management transfer is the reduction of department staff that provides critical case management services and a last safety net if private agencies stop providing services in the future.

By November 1, 2010, three agencies had ended the contracts with the state citing loss of significant funds and only two lead agencies remain.

The HHS Committee interim study hearings on LR 568 revealed additional serious concerns about the long term planning and sustainability of child welfare reform. These included lack of documentation in records; failure to pay foster care parents and service providers; confusion regarding work responsibilities; a lack of training and quality of care to ensure the safety and protection of Nebraska's children.

The Legislative Resolution resolves that the Health and Human Services Committee:

Review, investigate and assess the effect of the child welfare reform initiative.

Consult with a broad array of public and private stakeholders.

Utilize existing and past studies, reports, and information relating to the effort to improve the child welfare system.

Hold public hearings on the implementation of child welfare reform utilizing the authority provided by section 50-406 and the rules of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature.

Consider issues surrounding the implementation of the child welfare reform including, but not limited to the goals, outcome measures, coordination, and long-term planning; effectiveness of public-private partnership to provide services; number of children attaining permanency through adoption; accountability, funding, and financial sustainability; fulfillment of the federal Child and Family Service Review outcomes and indicators; and the option of requesting the Legislative Performance Audit Committee and the Auditor of Public Accounts to conduct a joint performance and fiscal audit or separate audits of child welfare reforms.

Kathy Campbell, Chairperson