

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 548

Introduced by Coash, 27.

PURPOSE: To review, investigate, and assess how the State of Nebraska can improve the coordination and provision of child welfare services for Native American children and families. This study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following:

(1) The intersection of tribal and state child welfare and court systems, including consistency in implementing the federal Indian Child Welfare Act;

(2) The resources available for tribal social services programs;

(3) The barriers that prevent tribal participation in state court;

(4) The number of culturally appropriate foster and adoptive homes for Nebraska children under the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Act; and

(5) Best practices from other states.

The study committee shall consult with stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Act Coalition, the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services, representatives from the Omaha, Santee Sioux, Winnebago, and Ponca tribes of Nebraska, state and tribal court judges, the Commission on Indian Affairs, and the Nebraska County Attorneys Association.

In holding public hearings by utilizing the authority provided by section 50-406 and the Rules of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature, at least one public hearing should be conducted on a Native American

reservation, if possible, to ensure the committee has full access to the tribes' collective experience and expertise in effectuating the federal and state Indian child welfare acts.

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

1. That the Health and Human Services Committee, Judiciary Committee, and State-Tribal Relations Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct a joint interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committees shall upon the conclusion of their study make a report of their findings, together with their recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.