

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 395

Introduced by Bostelman, 23; Brewer, 43; Briese, 41; Ebke, 32; Erdman, 47;
Kolterman, 24; Watermeier, 1.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to examine issues to identify the needs of and improve upon the emergency medical services system provided by volunteers in Nebraska.

Residents, workers, and visitors in rural, suburban, and nonurban areas rely almost exclusively on volunteer providers of emergency medical services. Volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical service personnel have provided emergency medical services to their local communities for over a century at only a fraction of the cost to the taxpayers which would have resulted from implementing a system of paid fire departments and paid emergency medical services. Many cities, villages, and rural areas cannot afford the cost of maintaining their current level of emergency medical services without the presence of a local pool of committed and dedicated volunteer firefighters and emergency service personnel.

Nebraska communities which rely on volunteers to provide emergency services are faced with numerous economic and demographic trends and conditions which make the recruitment and retention of qualified volunteers increasingly difficult. As a consequence, some volunteer departments are trying to cope with declining rosters of active volunteers. However, recruiting people to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer emergency medical service personnel is very difficult because there are extensive educational requirements including at least 160 hours of classroom time, plus independent study time. Upon completion of the classwork lasting at least six months, an emergency medical service candidate must pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam in order to obtain a credential to serve as an emergency medical service provider. Many candidates fail to pass the exam making recruitment and

retention efforts that much more difficult here in Nebraska.

Nebraska must ensure that volunteer providers of emergency medical services and volunteer firefighters are given the support they need in order to continue to provide emergency medical services in the communities they serve. This study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following issues:

(1) The expectation and requirements of education and testing to become certified as a volunteer emergency medical service provider;

(2) The reporting requirement expectations of volunteer emergency medical service personnel after responding to an incident;

(3) The demographics of Nebraska communities which rely exclusively on volunteer emergency medical services;

(4) The current number of volunteer emergency medical service personnel and the number of volunteer personnel vacancies within the State of Nebraska;

(5) The current delivery and possible improvement of emergency medical services instruction and training to volunteer emergency medical service candidates in Nebraska;

(6) The number of emergency medical service providers that have ceased their operations in the last ten years and the mechanisms used by communities to compensate for the loss of local volunteer emergency medical services; and

(7) The mechanisms to be used to address the emergency medical service needs of Nebraska citizens and tourists during the next ten years and into the future.

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

1. That the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

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