

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 154**

Introduced by McDonnell, 5.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to study the impact of COVID-19 on Nebraska's workforce and the ability to find sustainable employment after the pandemic subsides. Individuals will return to a very different workplace and experience a recovering economy that will require different workforce demands, including different skills, knowledge, and abilities. While Nebraska's unemployment rate has remained one of the lowest in the country, it is understood that a high number of individuals have stopped looking for gainful employment or dropped out of the labor force altogether. It can be challenging for unemployed or underemployed individuals to navigate and understand all available resources, both public and private, to successfully return to the workforce. Throughout the pandemic, Nebraska's 211 Information and Referral Network has been instrumental in aiding response to and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 by providing statewide resources for basic needs, housing supports, COVID-19 testing, vaccination referrals, and other referrals connecting individuals with supports with its vast data base of nonprofit agencies and programs. This same model can be used to help Nebraska's residents return to gainful employment.

The issues addressed by this study shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Identifying the needs and number of individuals no longer being counted in the labor force that could benefit from a career navigation network administered through Nebraska's 211 Information and Referral Network;

(2) Identifying the number of underemployed individuals that could improve their employment situation by gaining new skills and understanding the training necessary to fill high-demand jobs and careers;

(3) Determining the number of public, private, and nonprofit agencies that

provide employment programs, work to fill high-demand jobs, offer job-specific training, and recruit and coach individuals on gaining employment or improving their earning potential;

(4) Identifying the most effective programs and determine the scalability of such programs;

(5) Assessing how utilizing Nebraska's 211 Information and Referral Network can help individuals find the most useful career training programs to improve their employment, underemployment, or unemployment situation; and

(6) Assessing how building upon the existing infrastructure and the contact-center model of Nebraska's 211 Information and Referral Network could improve efficiency through partnerships with the entities identified in subdivision (3) of this resolution to return thousands of Nebraska's residents back to work by filling high-demand jobs leading to careers.

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

1. That the Appropriations 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.