



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 107

Chairperson: Brad Ashford
Committee: Judiciary
Date of Hearing: February 15, 2007

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 107 authorizes the position of Deputy Public Counsel for Institutions within the Office of Public Counsel (State Ombudsman's Office).

The authority of this person would extend to all mental health and veterans institutions and facilities operated by the Department of Health and Human Services and to all complaints pertaining to the administrative acts of the Department of Health and Human Services concerning the rights and interests of individuals placed within these institutions and facilities.

Currently, the Office of Public Counsel has two Deputy Public Counsels who specialize—one for Corrections and one for Welfare Services. This bill simply adds a third, who will specialize in complaints about mental health and veterans institutions under state control.

The intent of this bill is to provide improved legislative oversight of the Beatrice State Developmental Center, the state's veterans homes, and the regional centers, and to insure that the persons living in these institutions, or their families or guardians, have the ability to file a complaint with an unbiased state agency that will conduct an investigation into the complaint and that has the statutory authority to recommend changes which will improve the situation.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Dwite Pedersen