



Hundredth Legislature - First Session - 2007
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 241

Chairperson: Ron Raikes
Committee: Education
Date of Hearing: January 22, 2007

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

The purpose of this bill is to provide for a more stable funding of public education and to establish a more secure partnership between the State of Nebraska and local school districts.

The bill will repeal the current state aid formula and replace it with the establishment of the teachers of the K-12 system as state employees. With the Governor's recent announcement of increasing state aid to schools the financial impact of this bill should have very limited impact on state funds but will result in a direct and immediate reduction in property taxes of about 500 million dollars.

The bill retains local control by maintaining the autonomy of the school districts to hire, fire, discipline and make assignments for teachers. While the State will take over the responsibility for negotiating teacher compensation with an established teachers bargaining group.

Administrators for years have complained about the state aid formula being to unstable and unpredictable from year to year. LB 241 sets up a much a more stable and balanced funding mechanism that administrators and school boards will be able to rely on when budget time comes around. Under LB 241 the budget proposals of the schools will only need to fund the administrators, custodial and maintenance staff, support staff for the administration and teachers and maintenance and construction of the facilities and supplies and books for the school.

Further, the current state aid formula pits school against school in funding before the legislature. Every session there is at least one bill that is introduced to tinker with the funding mechanism and to shift money from one school to another. LB 241 ends that and places all schools on equal footing and leaves them with the time to focus on educating our children, not sending lobbyists to the Capital to lobby for formula changes.

Unfunded mandates, a common complaint from schools will be less unfunded. Any bill that requires increased services from the school, such as all day kindergarten, will have a direct fiscal impact on the state and the bill will have an A bill attach. Thus the discussions on the floor of the legislature will be no just focused on the theoretical good or bad of the proposal but on the cost as well.

Unequal pay has also been a complaint that has been heard in the halls of this building for years. LB 241 takes a giant step to putting that issue in a position to be resolved. The full power of the bargaining powers of the teachers and the state will be put to use to deal with equal pay for equal work regardless of location. Further, the individual needs of schools based upon teachers

not choosing to apply for jobs at certain schools can be more fairly dealt with under LB 241 because the focus will be on state wide needs and how best to provide incentives to attract quality teachers to schools that are unable to do so under the current system.

Principal Introducer:

_____ **Senator Carol Hudkins**