

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 262

Introduced by Coash, 27; Avery, 28; Bloomfield, 17; Brasch, 16; Davis, 43; Dubas, 34; Nordquist, 7.

PURPOSE: To study the issues surrounding the high rate of placement of Nebraska's Native American children involved in the foster care system. This study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following:

(1) The intersection of Native child welfare and the court system, including opportunities for decisionmakers to gain competency relative to the federal Indian Child Welfare Act and Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Act;

(2) The capacity of culturally competent foster and adoptive homes for Native children;

(3) How Nebraska can improve compliance with the purpose of the federal and state Indian child welfare acts; and

(4) The current methods used to gather data on Native American children.

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, Native Americans from the Omaha, Santee Sioux, Winnebago, and Ponca tribes, the Commission on Indian Affairs, the Nebraska Court Improvement Project, and the Foster Care Review Office.

In holding public hearings by utilizing the authority provided by section 50-406 and the rules of the Legislature, at least one public

hearing should be conducted on a Native American reservation, if possible, to ensure the study committee has full access to the tribes' collective experience and expertise in effectuating the Indian child welfare acts.

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

1. That the Health and Human Services, Judiciary, and State-Tribal Relations Committees 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 the study make a report of their findings, together with their recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.