

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 574

Introduced by Coash, 27.

PURPOSE: According to statistics provided by the Hearing Loss Association of America, about 20% of adults in the United States, or approximately 48 million people, report some degree of hearing loss. At age 65, one out of three people has a hearing loss. In Nebraska, approximately 18,560 people or 1% of the population are deaf, 167,040 people or 9% of the population are hard of hearing, and 371,200 people or 20% of the population have an associated hearing loss. The purpose of this resolution is to study the needs of Nebraska citizens who are deaf and hard of hearing.

People who experience deafness or hearing loss rarely receive natural communication which creates isolation. The necessity of living in any residential facility is a challenge in the best of circumstances, but for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, the isolation is overwhelming, often leaving them without the ability to carry on a conversation with anyone, including their own peers.

The study committee shall explore the need for fully integrated residential services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing including the need for group homes for persons with developmental disabilities, people with mental illness, and the aging.

The study committee shall consult with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, assisted living associations, developmentally disabled providers, the Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, the

Nebraska Health Care Association, and the deaf and hard of hearing community in carrying out the purposes of this study.

This study shall include a review of any Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) statewide survey of developmentally disabled residential providers, assisted living communities, and nursing home facilities to determine the number of deaf and hard of hearing people living in such facilities and where these facilities are located. The DHHS survey data will be used to frame future needs for people who are deaf and hard of hearing to include, but not be limited to, the need for creating a group home designed for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, and the need for establishing a special unit within a nursing home for deaf residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD 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.