

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 198

Introduced by Krist, 10.

PURPOSE: The unemployment rate among persons with disabilities in Nebraska is extraordinarily high relative to that of the general population. Nebraska should develop and adopt policies that encourage job opportunities for persons with disabilities. Jobs provided by public agencies offer another option to help persons with disabilities become more self-sufficient. Such jobs also provide a real advantage for these individuals because they are earning wages and paying taxes rather than being recipients of public assistance programs such as medicaid.

State Use programs are modeled after the federal AbilityOne program. Forty-six states currently have State Use programs but only twenty-four states have a strong program currently in operation. State Use programs create meaningful employment opportunities for one of the most vulnerable segments of our population while continuing to provide them with the support and services they need to succeed. Just last year, seventeen State Use programs across the country employed 39,500 individuals with disabilities who worked almost 20 million hours and earned \$176 million in wages. Almost \$700 million of their products and services were sold to state government departments and agencies, as well as to local county and city governments, school districts, and universities.

The purpose of this resolution is to study how the state can assist individuals who are blind or who have other disabilities to achieve maximum personal independence through useful, productive, and gainful employment and ensure an extended and constant market for their commodities and services, thereby enhancing their dignity and capacity for self-support through meaningful employment. The study shall bring together all parties in Nebraska

who are interested in encouraging employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and examine State Use programs in other states to develop recommendations for how Nebraska could move forward with a State Use program.

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

1. That the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs 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.