

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 298**

Introduced by Watermeier, 1; Davis, 43; Kolterman, 24.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to examine issues to improve the emergency medical services system in Nebraska.

Residents, workers, and visitors in rural, suburban, and nonurban areas rely, almost exclusively, on volunteer providers of emergency medical services. Volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical services personnel have provided emergency medical services to their local communities for over a century at only a fraction of the cost to the taxpayers which would have resulted from implementing a system of paid fire departments and paid emergency medical services. Many cities, villages, and rural areas cannot afford the cost of maintaining their current level of emergency medical services without the presence of a local pool of committed and dedicated volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical services personnel.

Nebraska communities which rely on volunteers to provide emergency medical services are faced with numerous economic and demographic trends and conditions which make the recruitment and retention of qualified volunteers increasingly difficult. As a consequence, some volunteer departments are trying to cope with declining rosters of active volunteers. However, recruiting people to volunteer their time to serve as volunteer emergency medical services personnel is very difficult because there are extensive educational requirements including at least 160 hours of classroom time plus independent study time. Upon completion of the classwork lasting at least six months, an emergency medical services candidate must pass the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam in order to obtain a credential to serve as an emergency medical services provider. Many candidates fail to pass the exam making recruitment and retention efforts that much more difficult in Nebraska.

Nebraska must ensure that volunteer providers of emergency medical services and volunteer firefighters are given the support they need in order to continue to provide emergency medical services in the communities they serve. The study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following issues:

(1) The number of volunteer providers of emergency medical services in Nebraska over the past 15 years;

(2) The current delivery and possible improvement of emergency medical services instruction and training to volunteer emergency medical service candidates in Nebraska;

(3) Barriers which limit the passage of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam by those being tested;

(4) The efforts which have been undertaken in other states to address the education, training, testing, and certification of volunteer providers of emergency medical services;

(5) The cost of emergency medical services apparatus and equipment used by providers of emergency medical services, as well as the costs of training and the sources of funds available to pay for such costs;

(6) The composition of the Board of Emergency Medical Services and the possible expansion of the board in an effort to make sure there is an adequate representation of volunteers; and

(7) Steps to improve the emergency medical services system in Nebraska in consultation with the Board of Emergency Medical Services.

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