

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 559**

Introduced by Krist, 10.

PURPOSE: Too few high school students and citizens across the country-Nebraska included-know and understand basic American civics. According to the Pew Research Center, only one-third of Americans can correctly name one of the three branches of government, much less say what each branch does. Nationally, dozens of states are discussing possible solutions to ending the quiet crisis of civics education. Over the years, school districts have emphasized STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs. While these programs and curricula are vastly important for the success of students, a new emphasis needs to be placed on civics education if students are to be active and engaged in the political process throughout their lives. To help increase students' education in civics, many states have passed the Civics Education Initiative into law.

The Civics Education Initiative is a first step to ensure that all students are taught basic civics about the United States and who we are as a nation. A strong civics education will serve as a foundation for informed, engaged, and successful citizens in the future. The State Board of Education has already created standards for social studies-which includes criteria for civics education-but these standards are not tested in ways similar to math or science. By implementing a civics test, either through legislation or regulation, Nebraska's school districts will have the tools needed to increase their students' understanding of civics.

The purpose of this interim study is to examine the feasibility and impact of implementing the Civics Education Initiative in Nebraska through legislation or in partnership with the State Board of Education through their regulation process. The study should also focus on the policies that other states are

adopting to increase civics education. The committee should further examine this issue to determine what legislation or policy development may be necessary to implement the Civics Education Initiative or a similar program, while allowing local school districts to determine the best way to implement the civics test in a cost-effective manner by encouraging the State Board of Education to include the initiative as a part of Rule 10.

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

1. That the Education 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.