

Legislature - First Session - 2015

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB232

Chairperson: Senator Kate Sullivan

Committee: Education

Date of Hearing: March 3, 2015

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 232 would create the College Choice Grant Program, which is intended to provide additional financial aid to students who attend Nebraska independent non-profit colleges and universities.

The students at Nebraska independent colleges and universities were not served well with the elimination of three financial aid programs and the passage of what is now the Nebraska Opportunity Grant Program in 2003. More than 33,600 students attend Nebraska independent colleges and those institutions award more than 41 percent of the baccalaureate and advanced degrees in Nebraska. However, those students receive about 0.3 of one percent of the funds allocated for colleges and universities in Nebraska. Funds for those students diminished from almost \$4 million in the 2001-02 fiscal year to around \$3.1 million in the current fiscal year. Other sectors, most notably the University of Nebraska and the for-profit colleges, have seen their allocations increase considerably.

LB 232 would create a program for the state to use to increase financial aid to students at independent colleges. It is critically important to the state's interest that independent colleges and universities continue to educate many of our state's best and brightest students and that those students who have financial need to be able to obtain the resources they need to attend the college of their choice. The bill would become operative on July 1, 2015.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Jeremy Nordquist