

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 247

FINAL READING

Introduced by Pansing Brooks, 28; Friesen, 34; Hunt, 8; Lathrop, 12;
Williams, 36; Arch, 14; McCollister, 20; Aguilar, 35;
Hansen, M., 26.

Read first time January 11, 2021

Committee: Executive Board

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to mental health; to create the Mental Health
- 2 Crisis Hotline Task Force; to provide powers and duties; and to
- 3 declare an emergency.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. (1) The Mental Health Crisis Hotline Task Force is
2 created. The task force shall develop an implementation plan for Nebraska
3 to integrate and utilize the 988 mental health crisis hotline established
4 pursuant to the federal National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020,
5 Public Law 116-172.

6 (2) The task force shall identify a method to integrate local mental
7 health crisis hotlines to ensure each individual who accesses a local
8 mental health crisis hotline is connected to a qualified mental or
9 behavioral health professional regardless of the time, date, or number of
10 individuals trying to simultaneously access a local mental health crisis
11 hotline. The task force shall develop a plan for staffing a statewide
12 mental health crisis hotline, shall coordinate with local mental health
13 authorities to carry out this section, and may conduct any other business
14 related to such duties.

15 (3) The federal National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020
16 authorizes states to impose fees on telecommunications services, wireless
17 device services, and Internet protocol-enabled voice services to provide
18 funding in a manner similar to the funding of 911 services. The task
19 force shall conduct a cost analysis to determine how such a fee structure
20 could be designed to cover the costs of the 988 mental health crisis
21 hotline.

22 (4) The task force shall consist of the following members:

23 (a) The chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee of
24 the Legislature or the chairperson's designee;

25 (b) The chairperson of the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature or
26 the chairperson's designee;

27 (c) The chairperson of the Transportation and Telecommunications
28 Committee of the Legislature or the chairperson's designee;

29 (d) Two at-large members of the Legislature appointed by the
30 Executive Board of the Legislative Council;

31 (e) The Director of Behavioral Health of the Division of Behavioral

1 Health of the Department of Health and Human Services or the director's
2 designee, as a nonvoting, ex officio member;

3 (f) The chairperson of the Public Service Commission or the
4 chairperson's designee, as a nonvoting, ex officio member; and

5 (g) The following members who shall be nonvoting members appointed
6 by the voting members of the task force listed in subdivisions (a)
7 through (d) of this subsection through an application and selection
8 process and selected from among (i) mental or behavioral health
9 clinicians licensed to practice in the state, (ii) behavioral and mental
10 health service providers, (iii) advocacy groups that focus on behavioral
11 and mental health, (iv) educational institutions, (v) county and
12 municipal law enforcement from each congressional district, (vi) other
13 representatives of county and municipal governments from each
14 congressional district, and (vii) telecommunications industry
15 representatives.

16 (5) The task force shall choose a chairperson and a vice-chairperson
17 from its voting membership. The task force shall meet at the call of the
18 chairperson but shall hold its first meeting no later than July 1, 2021.
19 The members of the task force shall serve without compensation but shall
20 be entitled to receive reimbursement for expenses incurred incident to
21 such service as provided in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177. The Executive
22 Board of the Legislative Council may provide the task force with a legal
23 counsel, committee clerk, and other staff as required by the task force
24 from existing legislative staff.

25 (6) The task force shall file a report electronically with the Clerk
26 of the Legislature, and with the Governor, regarding its implementation
27 plan and any recommendations, together with drafts of any legislation
28 necessary to carry out any recommendations, no later than December 17,
29 2021.

30 (7) The task force shall terminate on December 31, 2022.

31 Sec. 2. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when

1 passed and approved according to law.