

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 171

Introduced by McKinney, 11.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to complete a comprehensive study of the rights, roles, and responsibilities of Nebraska county election officials, state election officials, and relevant court and corrections personnel in carrying out state law regarding voting rights for former felony offenders.

As documented recently, data and system errors have impermissibly disenfranchised eligible voters from participation in the election process. While some important reforms have been implemented at the state and local levels, it remains to be seen how widespread these issues are and whether or not all relevant stakeholders are actively addressing errors and fully implementing the letter and spirit of the law.

Voting rights are critical to democracy and should not be suppressed or diminished. Current Nebraska law includes a two-year waiting period after completion of a felony sentence and is among the longest in the country. Such laws not only disenfranchise potential voters, but also have disparate impacts on low-income Nebraskans and Nebraskans of color.

The study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of:

(1) Potential administrative and statutory reforms to voting and election laws in Nebraska for former felony offenders, including the elimination of the two-year waiting period to vote;

(2) How relevant stakeholders are addressing the consequences of any errors regarding the restoration of voting rights;

(3) How widespread system and data errors are across the state, how many Nebraskans are impacted by these errors, and relevant demographic information about the impacted voters;

(4) Whether additional funding, training, or other solutions should be implemented by election officials to address these issues; and

(5) Any other related issues necessary to protect and defend the right to vote for eligible Nebraska voters.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH 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.