

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 276

Introduced by Chambers, 11.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to study the communications rate structure for persons receiving calls from incarcerated individuals in county and local correctional facilities. National studies have shown that frequent communication between inmates and family members reduces recidivism rates. Nebraska is one of only eight states which does not allow providers to add commissions or financial incentives to state incarceration facilities for communications services provided to inmates. However, this prohibition does not extend to county and municipal correctional facilities. This study shall include, but not be limited to, an examination of the following:

(1) Whether current telephone rates include the commissions charged as part of the rate charged to persons receiving calls from incarcerated individuals in city and county correctional facilities in Nebraska;

(2) How commissions are collected, disbursed, and spent if received;

(3) The real cost of providing telephone service absent commissions;

(4) The financial impact on county or local governments if commissions are eliminated;

(5) Telephone rates charged by local correctional facilities compared with rates charged by state correctional facilities;

(6) Whether county and local correctional facilities could buy inmate telephone services through state contracts for such services and whether this would reduce overall costs;

(7) The impact on family members and friends who are charged current rates on calls they accept from incarcerated individuals;

(8) Video conferencing or peer-to-peer Internet services in lieu of current telephone communications and a determination of whether these alternative services can reduce overall costs for inmates, their families, and correctional facilities; and

(9) Whether face-to-face meetings at incarceration facilities will continue if video conferencing or peer-to-peer Internet services are implemented and recommendations of conditions or circumstances that would warrant face-to-face visits.

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

1. That the Transportation and Telecommunications 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.