

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 295

Introduced by Bolz, 29.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to study how to improve behavioral health and mental health services in Nebraska in order to prevent crime and reduce costs associated with the incarceration of people who have heightened behavioral and mental health needs. Behavioral and mental health treatment is an important part of Nebraska's public safety and health care systems. The Department of Correctional Services Special Investigative Committee created by the Legislature with passage of LR424 in 2014 noted that a more exhaustive examination of the availability of mental health care in Nebraska must be undertaken by the Legislature. Specifically, this study shall examine the availability of behavioral and mental health services as an essential public safety strategy.

The issues examined in this study shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) The relationship between the availability of behavioral and mental health services and criminal activity;

(2) An examination of crimes committed by, and incarceration rates of, people with behavioral and mental health diagnoses;

(3) The demand for public behavioral and mental health services in relation to the supply of such services through the behavioral health regions and the medicaid program, including supply and demand (a) by region, (b) for those with a criminal charge related to their behavioral or mental health status, and (c) for juvenile justice; and

(4) Reviewing best practices from other states and other strategies to address needs.

The study committee is encouraged to work with the Health and Human

Services Committee of the Legislature and the Department of Correctional Services Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature to examine the issues involved in this study and, if and when appropriate, hold joint hearings.

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

1. That the Judiciary 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.