

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 33

Introduced by Krist, 10.

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) began to develop the ACCESSNebraska system. ACCESSNebraska is a system that is intended to efficiently determine public assistance eligibility and provide service delivery. Since the implementation of this system, the Legislature has conducted several hearings on bills and resolutions related to ACCESSNebraska. In these hearings, the realities and problems faced by clients navigating the ACCESSNebraska system were revealed, including long call wait times, lost documentation, erroneous public assistance decisions, and a general difficulty for clients to get the assistance they needed in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, the One Hundred Third Legislature, Second Session, adopted Legislative Resolution 400, which created the ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature to study the ACCESSNebraska system; and

WHEREAS, on December 15, 2014, the committee issued a report and recommendations related to ACCESSNebraska. The committee found the ACCESSNebraska system has been and continues to be plagued with problems. The committee also found ACCESSNebraska front-line workers have not been given the proper tools to complete daunting work loads; and

WHEREAS, the committee recommended among other things that the ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee be continued to provide ongoing oversight for the ACCESSNebraska system.

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

1. That the Legislature hereby calls for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council to meet forthwith and appoint a special committee of the

Legislature to be known as the ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature. The committee shall consist of seven members of the Legislature appointed by the Executive Board. The committee shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson from the membership of the committee. The Executive Board is hereby authorized to provide the committee with a legal counsel, committee clerk, and other staff as required by the committee from existing legislative staff. The Executive Board is also authorized to hire outside legal counsel, consultants, and investigators as required by the committee. The committee shall be an investigative committee and is hereby authorized to hold hearings and issue subpoenas as is deemed necessary by the committee.

2. The ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature is hereby authorized to study the adequacy of staffing and training of DHHS employees working within the ACCESSNebraska system, including the number of employees for local offices, the number of employees for call centers and document imaging centers, the type and amount of training received, the education levels and years of experience of employees, client access to employees, and the need for and availability of dedicated caseworkers for clients. The scope of the committee's investigation shall include, but not be limited to, the adequacy of technology used within the ACCESSNebraska system, including telephone systems, computer software, case management, information technology, and use of and access to databases to allow for data matching. The committee shall also investigate the effectiveness of processes and structures used by the ACCESSNebraska system, including system design, management structure, and system goals. The committee shall also investigate the need for new or additional data collection to determine system effectiveness. The committee shall analyze the experiences of clients and their family members and examine customer service experience, access to benefits, and responses to changing family needs. The committee shall utilize existing studies and reports and legislation developed to address the current conditions. The committee shall not be limited to such studies, reports, or legislation. The committee

shall issue a report with its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than December 15, 2015. The report to the Legislature shall be submitted electronically.