LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 936

Introduced by Bolz, 29; Campbell, 25; Lathrop, 12.

Read first time January 16, 2014

Committee: Appropriations

A BILL

FOR AN ACT relating to state wards; to create and provide duties for
the State Ward Permanency Pilot Project; to provide for
 collection of data and reports; to provide for
termination; and to state intent relating to fund
 transfers and appropriations.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,
Section 1. (1) The State Ward Permanency Pilot Project is created. The purpose of the pilot project is to provide developmental disabilities services to state wards in order to provide optimal habilitative supports and promote permanency.

(2) The pilot project shall serve (a) state wards who are eligible for services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities of the Department of Health and Human Services and who do not qualify for priority status and (b) state wards who are in need of habilitative supports to achieve permanency. Services shall include any service provided pursuant to the Developmental Disabilities Services Act available to persons under twenty-one years of age.

(3) A state ward shall be eligible to participate in the pilot project if he or she qualifies for developmental disabilities services or has been assessed to need habilitative supports. State wards currently receiving an enhanced level of care through letters of agreement between the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Division of Developmental Disabilities of the department and state wards with above-average habilitative needs as indicated on assessments shall be given priority to participate in the pilot project.

Sec. 2. The Division of Developmental Disabilities of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Division of Children and Family Services of the department or any lead agency, the State Department of Education, and developmental disabilities service
providers shall collaborate to implement the State Ward Permanency Pilot Project to promote stability and permanency for state wards, to provide assessments, and to provide training to caseworkers and service providers.

Sec. 3. The State Ward Permanency Pilot Project shall collect data on the following:

(1) The impact of services provided pursuant to the pilot project on state wards' developmental progress;

(2) The number of state wards participating in the pilot project who achieve permanency in the child welfare system, including adoption, permanent guardianship, reunification, or another form of permanency;

(3) Data which indicates the level of stability in placements for state wards participating in the pilot project;

(4) The total number of state wards participating in the pilot project and their current status in the child welfare system; and

(5) The impact on the overall support to families before and after permanency is achieved through adoption, permanent guardianship, reunification, or another form of permanency for twelve months following court involvement.

Sec. 4. The State Ward Permanency Pilot Project shall report the data collected pursuant to section 3 of this act to the Foster Care Review Office which shall analyze the data and electronically provide a report to the Health and Human Services
Committee of the Legislature and the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature every six months during the term of the pilot project.

Sec. 5. The State Ward Permanency Pilot Project shall terminate June 30, 2016.

Sec. 6. It is the intent of the Legislature (1) that $972,000 be transferred from funds available to the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services to the Division of Developmental Disabilities of the department in FY2014-15 and FY2015-16 and (2) to appropriate $528,000 each fiscal year of FY2014-15 and FY2015-16 to carry out sections 1 to 4 of this act.