

One Hundred Third Legislature - First Session - 2013

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB561

Chairperson: Senator Brad Ashford

Committee: Judiciary

Date of Hearing: March 07, 2013

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

Legislative Bill 561 would reform and reorient our juvenile justice system to treat and rehabilitate the children who are at risk rather than punishing them. Our current system is inadequate and we are failing our children and communities. We must act now to address the gaps in our system and create a continuum of care that includes comprehensive diversion programming, mental health programming and reentry programming that is evidence-based.

This bill would expand the Nebraska Juvenile Service Delivery Project statewide and create the Office of Juvenile Assistance under the Supreme Court. The OJA would coordinate diversion programming, violence prevention programming, the distribution of juvenile grants and the collaboration between juvenile justice entities and the Juvenile Justice Institute, the University of Nebraska Medical Center and national experts. The Office of Juvenile Services and the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers in Kearney and Geneva would be eliminated or substantially transformed pursuant to a transition plan developed and implemented prior to January 1, 2015. Juveniles in the system would be supervised by Probation and treated in their homes and communities whenever possible utilizing evidence-based practices. The County Juvenile Services Aid Program would be enhanced with an additional \$10 million to help counties develop community-based service options. The bill would also provide for the use of social impact bonds to finance projects authorized by the Office of Juvenile Assistance.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Brad Ashford