



Ninety – Sixth Legislature – Second Session – 2000
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 1101

Chairperson: Senator Jim Jensen
Committee: Health and Human Services
Date of Hearing: 2-17-2000

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

LB1101, The Nebraska Senior Companion Program, will pair low-income senior volunteers (Senior Companions) with the frail elderly in an effort to provide these frail elderly the option of staying in their own homes. By taking care of simple chores, providing transportation to medical appointments, and offering contact to the outside world, Senior Companions often provide the services that frail elderly need to live independently.

The Nebraska Senior Companion Program will benefit the Senior Companions, the frail elderly (recipients), and the community. Recipients are linked with a trustworthy, dependable helping hand. That extra assistance, which is free of charge to the recipient, fills a gap in care which, if left unfilled, would result in costly, unnecessary nursing home/residential/ assisted living care costs. The cost of nursing home care per person, per year, is approximately \$35,000; an amount often paid for by taxpayer funded reimbursement programs such as Medicaid and Medicare. However, the annual cost for one Senior Companion Volunteer to provide services to five recipients is \$3,850.

The Nebraska Senior Companion Program will also benefit those seniors that volunteer their time and efforts as Senior Companions. Senior Companions are hard working volunteers who are among the very poorest people in our community. Each low-income volunteer is provided a non-taxable stipend of \$2.55/hour along with travel reimbursement, and a meal. The Nebraska Senior Companion Program will mobilize these very special men and women to serve as companions for this ever-expanding population of seniors in need, and to prove that life is worth living to the maximum.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Ray Aguilar