

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 16, 2000 LB 1197, 1363

Those in favor say aye. Those opposed nay. The bill is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President, I believe, proceeding to General File, LB 1363. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 19 of this year, referred to the Business and Labor Committee. The bill was advanced to General File.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Connealy, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR CONNEALY: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. LB 1363 will address the issue of the successful and productive integration of our immigrant workforce into our communities. I see the bill as an enhancement of a lot of work that has been done already through the Mexican-American Commission, through Governor Johanns and Lieutenant Governor Maurstad's work with the commissions that have been going on. In particular, I see this addressing the fourth point in the task force recommendations that came out from Lieutenant Governor Maurstad's commission. And I have copies of those that I'm handing out. The fourth recommendation called for a community liaison, and this really answers that. Recent discussions about Nebraska's immigrant workforce have brought to the attention of both the Governor and the Legislature the importance of addressing the issues of successfully integrating these people into our communities. Nebraska's minority population is growing at a much faster rate than the majority population. A report by the Mexican-American Commission showed that Nebraska's ratio of ethnic minority grew by 25 percent from 1980 through 1990, while the population as a whole only increased by .5 percent. In addition, the report said that approximately 4,000 migrant workers and their families pass through Nebraska each year. As these immigrant populations settle in Nebraska they face issues such as housing, overcoming language barriers, access to health care, transportation in general, just acclimating themselves to the community. In the past these issues about migrant workers have been addressed reactively, however, the data collected starts to begin to show that we need to look at this for action in the future. It requires us to look ahead and to assess where we are in the state and what we need to do to provide communities help. LB 1363 is an attempt to provide legitimate