



Ninety-Eighth Legislature - First Session - 2003  
**Introducer's Statement of Intent**  
**LB 688**

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**Chairperson:** Floyd P. Vrtiska  
**Committee:** Business and Labor  
**Date of Hearing:** February 10, 2003

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

Just as the Declaration of Independence spelled out a detailed bill of particulars justifying the separation of the American colonies from England, LB 688 sets forth very precise and specific reasons that lead inexorably to the conclusion that University of Nebraska-Lincoln football players are entitled to compensation in the same manner that other students are compensated when they perform work for the university. Plus, they are the only category of students that produce, rather than consume, revenue.

Because of the plethora of tangled, complicated and often unfair rules imposed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), big-time college football players are subjected to treatment, restrictions and conditions that would never be tolerated if applied across the board to all students -- for example: restrictions on employment, limitations on freedom to transfer to another school without penalty, prohibitions against receiving things of value; being subject to football-related "duty" practically year-round as a condition of their athletic "scholarship" (which is more like a contract of indenture and is not awarded on the basis of scholarship or need); exposed to the possibility of crippling injury; subjected to sometimes-cruel public ridicule and excoriation at the hands of fickle fans.

Legislative Bill 188 will engender serious discussion of the need to bring fairness and at least the "equity of the marketplace" into the relationship between athletes and the institutions and athletic conferences which they enrich through arduous labor and dedication.

The bill provides (when appropriately amended) that a stipend -- the amount of which will be determined by the university -- be granted to players when laws granting a similar stipend are enacted in at least three other states having teams that compete in the Big 12 Conference or its successor. This is a "fail safe" provision that protects the university from risking its eligibility when LB 688 becomes law. No stipend will automatically have to be granted.

Passage of LB 688 will let the NCAA know that legislators are concerned about the treatment of athletes and that the rules relative to financial assistance must be modified by the Association.

**Principal Introducer:**

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**Senator Ernie Chambers**