

NINETY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION  
LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 217

Introduced by Wehrbein, 2

Read first time May 18, 2005

Committee:

PURPOSE: With international growth of population and prosperity, world trade is becoming a larger and more dynamic factor in economic growth, both for America and for Nebraska. Nebraska does business with one hundred eighty countries in everything from beef and grain to athletic equipment, modular homes, computer hardware and software, medical and surgical products, and farm-raised fish. Our exports exceed \$2 billion a year.

Nebraska has more and more international investment in the state, from Kawasaki to Klaas. Such investment creates jobs and growth for Nebraska.

Beginning in 1990, Nebraska Governors have regularly gone on trade missions abroad, especially to the Pacific Rim, to increase sales of Nebraska products, both agricultural and industrial. Governor Johanns went on eight trade missions as governor.

The World Trade Organization now includes many of Nebraska's trade partners, such as Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia, among others. The North American Free Trade Association is continuing to have an impact on

Nebraska farm products from cattle to sugar. Nebraska is the United States' top exporter of livestock and the number two exporter of feed and feed grain. Many new foreign trade issues are arising that directly impact Nebraska from Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy disease scares in Japan, Mexico, and Taiwan, and other Pacific Rim countries to GMO issues blocking additional sales of Nebraska corn to the European Union as a growing free trade market.

Nebraska state government is working hard to help develop international ties and opportunities through the Department of Agriculture, Department of Economic Development, and Secretary of State's Office. In addition, the University of Nebraska has an International Relations, International Studies, or International Health Systems Office at each of its four campuses; some 3600 foreign students add approximately \$70 million each year to Nebraska's economy.

The UNL Japanese Agricultural Training Program has been training Japanese agricultural students for some thirty years, and has sustained close ties with those students as their careers develop in Japan.

Nebraska's Secretary of State has authority to be a goodwill Ambassador as Chief Protocol Officer. He regularly meets foreign guests, and has traveled to Taiwan, Bosnia, and Austria to represent the State of Nebraska.

The United States Department of State finances and sends some three hundred foreign dignitaries to Nebraska each year to become acquainted with Nebraska citizens and to learn about our unicameral and our agricultural production methods.

The United States Department of State is also actively

looking at Nebraska for other international programs, from Fulbright Scholar Orientation Programs, to possible nontraditional programs for Muslim women from the Middle East.

Another significant program is the State Partnership Plan developed by the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C. Each participating state national guard adopts an emerging democratic country, focused right now mostly in eastern Europe, and works with their military counterparts in that country to help them develop the training, command, and infrastructure system to be compatible with civilian democratic leadership in those countries. Right now the Nebraska National Guard has adopted the Czech Republic in central Europe.

In light of the multitude of state programs and state initiatives to develop effective and long-term relationships overseas and to enhance efforts of Nebraska exporters to reach new and larger markets overseas, as well as to connect the potential gains arising from the benefits of cultural and educational engagement with citizens and leaders from overseas, a study shall be done on the impact of these and other international affairs on Nebraska's economy. The following subjects shall be considered during the study:

- (1) An assessment of whether these state-sponsored programs should be subject to a higher level of coordination through an appropriate oversight committee of the Legislature;

- (2) Consideration of the various programs and initiatives already in place. This would help avoid duplication of efforts and could be used to better coordinate Nebraska's efforts in the future; and

(3) Consideration of the inclusion of other entities, both public and private, into participation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE NINETY-NINTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That a committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.