



Ninety-Ninth Legislature - Second Session - 2006
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 1144

Chairperson: Patrick J. Bourne
Committee: Judiciary
Date of Hearing: February 8, 2006

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

Nebraska Revised statute 23-1824 states that autopsies should be performed when a minor dies a sudden death, except that no autopsy needs to be performed if the death was caused by a readily recognizable disease or the death occurred due to trauma resulting from an accident and the death did not occur under suspicious circumstances. However, in practice, autopsies are not always performed. The recommended manor to declare an infant's death SIDS includes a complete autopsy, a review of the child's medical history and the death scene investigation yet autopsies are not always performed.

LB 1144 is a mechanism to encourage county coroners to have complete autopsies performed on minors who die unexplained deaths and to set standards for county attorneys to use in determining what tests and samples to request in autopsies.

It would also require a SIDS determination be made only after an autopsy, a death scene investigation and a review of the child's medical history reveal no other possible cause.

The bill will provide funding through the Attorney General Child Protection Cash Fund to reimburse counties for up to 50 percent of the cost of an autopsy on a child, with an emphasis on autopsies on children 5 years of age and younger. It would specify expert witnesses and autopsies as the purpose for this fund, but not limit the fund to only this purpose.

The statistics from HHSS show that historically there are approximately 100 deaths of children age 5 and younger per year in Nebraska. To fund 50% of 100 autopsies a year, estimating \$3,000 per autopsy, \$150,000 is needed to fund this bill.

Principal Introducer: _____
Senator Ray Aguilar