

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION
LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 202

Introduced by Johnson, 37;

PURPOSE: The Legislature finds that:

(1) The health of our children is of paramount importance to families in our state.

(2) Poor child health is a threat to the educational achievement, social, and psychological well-being of the children of our state.

(3) Nebraska has more parents in the workforce than most states and more jobs that are part-time, seasonal, or without full benefit packages.

(4) Many other factors have caused health care premiums to increase dramatically for the last several years, making it difficult for employers and low to middle income families to maintain coverage.

(5) The state children's health insurance program (SCHIP) of this state, which enrolled 44,981 uninsured children in federal fiscal 2006, is an integral part of the arrangement for health benefits for the children of the State of Nebraska.

(6) The average monthly cost for SCHIP per child, including state and federal funds, was \$152.00 in Fiscal Year 2006.

(7) The federal State Children's Health Insurance Program

covered 24,226 children as of March 2007, and the state depends on the federal government's enhanced match rate payment of 71% of the cost of this program.

(8) A small reduction in the enhanced match rate could result in either a large increase in state expenditures to provide coverage for eligible children or in the loss of insurance coverage for poor children.

(9) The federal State Children's Health Insurance Program should be reauthorized and funded by Congress by December 31, 2007, to provide stable funding, to cover existing covered children, to cover children eligible but not enrolled, to provide flexibility, and to be affordable; and

(10) There is a need to review the availability of insurance and types of coverage provided, particularly for jobs with wages that bring families to an income level of at least 200% to 400% of the poverty level. This review will include the number of employers offering coverage, the types of coverage offered, the cost to employees, the number of Nebraskans not employed by employers offering affordable coverage, and the number of those households that have children.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to determine what actions might be taken to harmonize Nebraska's state children's health insurance program to changes allowed by the federal State Children's Health Insurance Program as reauthorized and funded by Congress and the availability of other types of

insurance to meet the needs of lower-income Nebraskans and their children.

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.