

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE  
SECOND SESSION  
LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 276

Introduced by Pirsch, 4.

PURPOSE: To examine the standards and oversight of death investigations in Nebraska.

The duty of a coroner is to determine cause of death, decide whether a death involved foul play, and determine whether the circumstances of a death require an autopsy.

Since 1917, Nebraska has utilized its county attorneys to serve as coroners. Nebraska remains the only state in the nation using county attorneys as coroners.

Nebraska's county attorneys are not required by law to obtain training in the performance of coroner responsibilities.

The issues addressed by this interim study shall include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Present-day autopsy rates in Nebraska;
- (2) Existing levels of coroner training;
- (3) Apparent quality of death investigations;
- (4) Existing state standards and oversight;
- (5) County rates of solved and unsolved death cases;
- (6) Current variance and effectiveness of death investigations in Nebraska's ninety-three counties;
- (7) Death investigation practices utilized in other states;

(8) Identifying qualified physicians willing to assist with death investigations;

(9) Proposed policies to improve Nebraska's medical examiner system; and

(10) Other related matters.

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

1. That the Judiciary 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.