



Hundredth Legislature - Second Session - 2008
Introducer's Statement of Intent
LB 842

Chairperson: Lavon Heidemann
Committee: Appropriations
Date of Hearing: February 12, 2008

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

State appropriations to support community based services for persons with developmental disabilities ideally are developed through a state methodology which, when applied, produces recommended annual provider rate increases roughly equivalent to salary increases granted to state employees at the Beatrice State Developmental Center, who perform similar tasks to those performed by employees of community based programs. The original appropriation for the 2008-2009 biennium failed to do that, partially because the negotiations which resulted in significant state employee salary increases continued to be ongoing during the appropriations process.

This has resulted in a situation where front-line staff of community developmental disability programs are over two dollars per hour behind state employees doing similar duties at the Beatrice State Developmental Center, where it has been admitted that a failure to recruit and employ sufficient staff is the main cause of the Center's licensure and certification problems.

LB 842 is intended to fill the funding gap created by last year's budgetary actions by appropriating \$8,532,820 in General Funds and \$10,500,908 in Federal Funds to be used to enhance the reimbursement of providers in order to make it possible for them to grant employee salary increases for the coming year which will place them within striking distance, at least, of state workers performing the same responsibilities. As is usual for such appropriations, providers would be required, by the expressed intent of the Legislature, to utilize a minimum of sixty-five percent of the funds appropriated to compensate front-line staff.

Principal Introducer:

Senator Russ Karpisek