

**ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2021**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LR29**

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**Hearing Date:** Wednesday February 10, 2021  
**Committee On:** Executive Board  
**Introducer:** Cavanaugh, M.  
**One Liner:** Provide for appointment by the Executive Board of a special committee to be known as the Eastern Service Area Child Welfare Contract Special Investigative and Oversight Committee of the Legislature

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**

Report to the Legislature for further consideration with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**

<b>Aye:</b>	8	Senators Geist, Hilgers, Hughes, Lathrop, McCollister, Pansing Brooks, Slama, Vargas
<b>Nay:</b>	1	Senator Lowe
<b>Absent:</b>		
<b>Present Not Voting:</b>		

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**Oral Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Senator Machaela Cavanaugh  
Lana Temple-Plotz  
Monika Gross  
Kerry Winterer  
Kevin Nelson

**Representing:**

Introducer  
Children and Family Coalition of Nebraska  
self  
self  
self

**Opponents:**

Danette Smith

**Representing:**

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

**Neutral:**

**Representing:**

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**Submitted Written Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Julie Erickson

**Representing:**

Voices for Children

**Opponents:**

**Representing:**

**Neutral:**

**Representing:**

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

LR29 would create the Eastern Service Area Child Welfare Contract Special Investigative and Oversight Committee of the Legislature to study the quality of care and related issues of Saint Francis Ministries and its interactions with families and children, foster families, courts and with the Department of Health and Human Services.

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The committee would also investigate placement and quality of care received, and study the Department of Health & Human Services and the Department of Administrative Services with respect to the award, implementation, and oversight of the provider's contract.

The committee would consist of nine members of the Legislature appointed by the executive board:

- Three members of the Health and Human Services Committee, with at least one member representing the eastern service area;
- One member of the Appropriations Committee;
- One member of the Education Committee;
- Three members of the Judiciary Committee, with at least one member representing the eastern service area; and
- One at-large member of the Legislature.

The committee would receive assistance from existing legislative staff and the Executive Board could authorize outside legal counsel, consultants, and investigators as required by the committee.

The committee could hold hearings and issue subpoenas. A report with findings and recommendations would be due to the Legislature no later than December 1, 2022.

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**Explanation of amendments:**

The committee amendment strikes some of the WHEREAS provisions. It also changes to the membership of the special committee, as follows:

- Two members of the Health and Human Services Committee;
- Two members of the Appropriations Committee;
- Two members of the Government Committee;
- Two members of the Judiciary Committee; and
- One at-large member of the Legislature who is a resident of the eastern service area.

The committee amendment further strikes reference to studying quality of care and related staffing issues of the contractor, the contractor's interaction with families and children, or placement decisions. The study retains the focus on the Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Health & Human Services with respect to the award, implementation, and oversight of the child welfare contract and the bid process.

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Dan Hughes, Chairperson