

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 393

Introduced by Cavanaugh, J., 9.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to examine the committee hearing procedures of the Legislature and explore changes that would improve access to participation from the public.

One of the advantages of a unicameral form of government is better transparency, accountability, and access to the legislative process for members of the public. To realize these benefits, the Legislature should ensure committee procedures maximize opportunities for public input, especially during the committee hearing process where the goal is to allow for participation from the "second house".

The COVID-19 public health emergency led to changes in how the Legislature collects and records public comments on legislative bills, including implementation of an online public comment portal and the practice of accepting written testimony. It also allowed many to become more familiar with technology that facilitates virtual communication. These circumstances necessitate an examination of committee procedures and practices and potential improvements.

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

(1) An examination of current and past committee hearing procedures, including procedures on taking and recording testimony and written comments;

(2) An overview of the public comment portal implemented in 2020 and its effectiveness;

(3) A review of methods used in other states and other Nebraska government bodies for input from the public on policy issues; and

(4) Potential improvements in committee hearing procedures that increase public participation and input from all Nebraskans, especially those often left

out of the policy process.

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

1. That the Executive Board of the Legislative Council shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.
2. That the board shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.