

**ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2025**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LB608**

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**Hearing Date:** Wednesday February 05, 2025  
**Committee On:** Revenue  
**Introducer:** Bostar  
**One Liner:** Change insurance provisions relating to firefighters and include correctional officers, youth detention officers, and certain children in the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**

**Aye:** 8 Senators von Gillern, Bostar, Dungan, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Murman, Sorrentino  
**Nay:**  
**Absent:**  
**Present Not Voting:**

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**Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Senator Eliot Bostar  
Brad Johnson  
Brad Alexander  
Neil Miller  
Anthony Conner  
Patrick Sullivan  
  
Gary Bruns  
Marcus A. Ring  
Jay Wilson

Daniel Goodman  
Patrick Dempsey  
Jon Cannon  
Larry Meyer

Christy Abraham

**Opponents:**

**Neutral:**

Paul Turman

**Representing:**

Opening Presenter  
Lancaster County  
Lancaster County Youth Center, Lancaster County  
Buffalo County, Nebraska Sheriffs Association  
Nebraska Fraternal Order of Police  
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 8, Douglas County  
Corrections  
Nebraska Professional Fire Fighters Association  
Offutt Air Force Base Fire Department  
Fraternal Order of Police Union Lodge 88 Protective  
Services  
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 32  
Omaha Police Officers Association  
Nebraska Association of County Officials  
Nebraska State Fraternal Order of Police, Lincoln  
County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 26, Lincoln  
County Sheriff Jerome Kramer  
League of Nebraska Municipalities

**Representing:**

**Representing:**

Nebraska State College System



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

LB608 changes the definition of a professional firefighter for purposes of certain insurance protections to include firefighters providing protection to federal military installations. The bill also expands the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act to include correctional officers and youth detention officers, as well as children of first responders, for 100% tuition waivers to state postsecondary institutions. The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education will reimburse 50% of such tuition waivers.

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**Explanation of amendments:**

AM904 to LB608 is a white copy amendment that strikes and replaces the original sections of the bill. The amendment adds defined and redefined terms to the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act, including changing the definition of professional firefighter to include firefighters providing protection to federal military installations. The amendment provides 100% tuition waivers for a first responder, a first responder's qualifying child, an eligible disabled person, or an eligible disabled person's qualifying child, as prescribed to state postsecondary institutions; provides procedures for application for and approval of such tuition waivers; and provides for reimbursement of state universities for 50% of tuition waivers provided to correctional officers or youth detention officers, eligible disabled persons who were such officers, and the qualifying children of such officers or disabled persons. The amendment also outright repeals sections 85-2603 and 85-2603.01 to harmonize with the new sections added to the Act.

Section-by-section Summary

Section 1: Amends section 44-314 to add firefighters providing fire protection to federal military installations to the definition of professional firefighter.

Section 2: Provides that sections 2 through 18 of this act shall be known as the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act.

Section 3: Amends section 85-2602 to add definitions for correctional officer, eligible disabled person, first responder, qualifying child, qualifying degree, superior officer, youth detention officer, and redefines professional firefighter to include a firefighter providing fire protection services to federal military installations.

Section 4: Outlines criteria for a first responder to be eligible for a tuition waiver from any state postsecondary institution. Limits such tuition waivers for correctional officers and youth detention officers to attendance at state universities.

Section 5: Outlines performance criteria for a first responder to qualify themselves or their qualifying child to be eligible for tuition waivers.

Section 6: Outlines criteria for an eligible disabled person to be eligible for a tuition waiver from any state postsecondary institution. Limits such tuition waivers for an eligible disabled person who was a correctional officer or youth detention officer to attendance at state universities.

Section 7: Outlines performance criteria for an eligible disabled person or their qualifying child to be eligible for tuition waivers. The person must have been a first responder as prescribed at the time he or she became disabled.

Section 8: Places a five-year limit on such tuition waivers, so long as the first responder or eligible disabled person



continues to be eligible.

Section 9: Outlines the application elements and requirements for the qualified children of first responders or eligible disabled persons to apply for tuition waivers. Limits such tuition waivers for qualified children of correctional officers and youth detention officers to attendance at state universities.

Section 10: Amends section 85-2605 to replace "legal dependent" with "qualifying child" to harmonize with changes made to section 85-2601.

Section 11: Places a five-year limit on tuition waivers for qualified children, so long as they maintain eligibility. The five years begins when the child first receives the tuition waiver and continues for the next five consecutive years.

Section 12: Requires state postsecondary institutions to make a determination and provide written notice of eligibility or ineligibility within forty-five days after receipt of a completed application. If ineligible, such notice shall include reasoning used in the determination.

Section 13: Requires that a state postsecondary institution that has granted a tuition waiver must waive one hundred percent of resident tuition charges after subtracting any federal financial aid, scholarships, and grants for the tuition waiver so long as the recipient remains eligible.

Section 14: Beginning July 1, 2026, requires the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education to reimburse each state university fifty percent of the tuition waivers awarded. Outlines the process for state universities to request such reimbursements. Outlines the pro rata process in the event appropriations are insufficient to fully fund the tuition waivers.

Section 15: Amends section 85-2604 to harmonize with other changes made in the amendment.

Section 16: Amends section 85-2606 to harmonize with other changes made in the amendment.

Section 17: Amends section 85-2607 to replace "legal dependents" with "qualifying children" to harmonize with changes made to section 85-5601.

Section 18: Amends section 85-2608 to replace "legal dependents" with "qualifying children" to harmonize with changes made to section 85-5601.

Section 19: Repealer

Section 20: Outright repeal of sections 85-2603 and 85-2603.01.

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R. Brad von Gillern, Chairperson

