

any method designated by that public body. This bill does not change the substance of that law, but provides an optional definition of reasonable. Reasonable notice to mean, "publication at least three days prior to the meeting in a legal newspaper in the county where the principal office is located, or if there is no such paper, in any legal newspaper widely circulated in the county." The issue of what constitutes reasonable advance public notice has been challenged in the courts. LB 628 is necessary because a federal district judge ruled in December of 1988 that notice published in a legal newspaper was not reasonable advance public notice. Unfortunately, that same judge did not define what was reasonable. It is our job as legislators to define what reasonable is. LB 628 is necessary to make a legislative statement that notice published in a legal newspaper three days in advance of the meeting is reasonable. Without legislative guidance, public bodies have no assurance that the notice they give will be adequate. Because of the possibility that an action taken at a public meeting without reasonable advance public notice can be declared void, we must provide a specific definition for reasonable advance public notice. LB 628 corrects this situation by giving one definition of what is reasonable advance public notice. Right now, under the law if proper notice of a public meeting is not given, any action taken at that meeting can be challenged and potentially may be declared void. This is the case even if the public body did not intentionally fail to give proper notice. So what we are really talking about here is that a public body may be in technical violation of the open meetings law, even though unintentionally. LB 628 is not concerned with electric rates or even with public power districts. It is only concerned with the portion of Nebraska open meetings law. The purpose of this bill is only to remove the uncertainty which currently exists as to the law's notice requirements for all agenda items at all public meetings at all levels of local and state government, including every city, every county, every school board, every NRD, and on and on and on. The ability of a court to declare any and all that actions taken during a public meeting void based simply on a technical violation is such a severe sanction that there should be no room for uncertainty regarding the meeting of the notice requirement and the word "reasonable". But reasonable is not defined in statute nor have the courts given us any guidance. The federal court's order needs to be dealt with by the Legislature for the sake of all public bodies in the state. In summary, all public bodies need to know that actions taken at a