

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. LB 138 creates the Volunteer Services Commission in statute. The commission, which would be established, would be between 15 and 25 members and up to 10 nonvoting members, and I should tell you that this commission is already in existence. It was established by executive order in 1984, and what this bill would actually do would be to provide that it is an ongoing commission. The appointments to the commission are made to the Governor every three years and the current members would serve out their existing current terms. You have been given some information on your desk this morning and I'd just like to draw your attention to a couple of things in this material. On the back page of it, it tells you what some of the programs are that are under this Volunteer Services Commission. And, really, the impetus for this commission probably came from AmeriCorps and the federal level. And there are funds that come in to this commission, about 1.6 million, I believe it was this last year, from the federal government to help fund this entity. But these...there...besides the national service of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA, there's Learn and Serve America, which is community based and school based and also higher education based, and there is a Senior Service Corps, which are Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program. And then if you look at your map right inside the front cover, you will get some indication of where these different programs exist. And I think it started out with a real concentration in the eastern part of the state and there's still quite a concentration there, but it's gradually making its way across the state so that even in places like Blaine and Loup, Garfield and Wheeler you have the Learn and Serve America school-based program. The Volunteer Service Commission actually works with over 50 Nebraska counties. It sponsors an annual Governor's Conference on Community Services, which brings together over 350 volunteer managers and volunteers to learn state-of-the-art information on volunteerism. It funds seven primary agencies who this year recruited and placed 150 AmeriCorps members, who generated additional volunteers in both urban and rural areas of the state. It funds 11 community-based Learn and Serve Programs. One of the interesting things that they did several years ago was to recruit 20 AmeriCorps volunteers to come in and help Lincoln recover from that...that dreadful snowstorm that we had, and it's my understanding that