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LB 1352

CLERK: LB 1352, Mr. President, by Senator Janssen. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 19 of this year, referred to the Health Committee, advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM2535, Legislative Journal page 843.)

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Janssen, you're recognized to open on the bill.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. LB 1352 would establish an Electronic Benefit Transfer Task Force. The purpose of this task force would be to provide recommendations and assistance to the Department of Health and Human Services and the Policy Cabinet during the following of the process of developing and implementing an electronic benefit transfer system. As you know, the state of Nebraska is required to transition from a paper-based benefit to an electronic benefit system for food stamp programs. An electronic benefit transfer is a system that utilizes magnetic stripe cards in conjunction with the point of sale and deliverance for delivering public benefits. Essentially, the recipient swipes the card through a machine at the store to pay for the food, instead of using the physical paper food stamps. There is an electronic count of money for that person and the amount they spend is deducted from their electronic account. They must enter a personal identification number for the transaction to be complete. The idea is that this will save money, reduce fraud and be more convenient for the recipient. EBT has been an issue that has been the interest of the Legislature since 1995, when the Nebraska Electronic Benefit Transfer Task Force was created, in LB 455. This original task force was made up of representatives from the banking industry, the grocery industry, electronic transfer systems industry, state government, the Legislature and those receiving benefits. The original task force studied the different methods of EBT out there, and made recommendations to the Legislature on the course of action that should be pursued. The task force concluded the EBT...that the EBT would be beneficial to Nebraska, and recommended beginning the EBT planning process. Further, the task force recommended that there be an overall development team for the EBT. The EBT team should include representatives from the state programs and administrative agencies directly or