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LB 478

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Cornett, you're recognized to open on LB 478.

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. LB 478 is a bill that was introduced to attract and retain some of Nebraska's most highly sought after and skilled workers. The taxes we collect because of their residence will more than pay for the fiscal note of this legislation. Further, the industry they would serve is largely recession-proof. LB 478, as introduced, would give military retirees a 50 percent exemption on their retirement the first year, with a 10 percent increase every year until 100 percent exemption was obtained. This exemption would serve a twofold purpose. The first is to show our appreciation for the sacrifice these men and women and their families have made to protect and serve our country. The military is a unique profession in which service members often move up to ten times during their career. In addition, members of the armed services are often separated from their loved ones for prolonged periods of time while on duty in global hot spots that many of us only read about in the news or see on TV. Most of all, these men and women often forfeit their precious times with their families--birthdays, holidays, weddings, graduation, and even the births of their children--in order to stand guard in defense of our nation. The second reason for offering this exemption is more self-serving. As a member of this Legislature, Nebraska knows it has had nearly static population for the last hundred years. Because of this, we are faced with a situation of an aging population and rising Medicaid budget. Nebraska needs to find ways to stop the brain drain that is occurring. We need to develop ways to keep and attract people to our state. Nebraska needs to grow in order to survive. You may question why we would want to keep and attract people that are retired if an aging population is a problem. The reason is simple. The average age for retirement from the military is between 38 and 45 years of age. The men and women of the armed services are a highly skilled and dependable workforce that, upon retirement, often choose to build second careers, which will only benefit our community. Neither they, nor their spouses, will ever be a burden on our healthcare systems. This is due to the fact that their healthcare is permanently covered under TRICARE, which is