

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 7, 2006

LB 994

Nebraska's waiver expired on June 30 of 2003. Deletion of the outdated language will bring Nebraska's law into compliance with federally prescribed limits on approved work activities. A work activity that meets the federal definition can be counted when determination of a state's work participation rate. If a work activity does not meet the federal definition, it cannot be calculated when determining the work participation rate. As I stated early...earlier, AM2157 changes three sections of Nebraska law to conform to changes in federal law. The first section is in 68-1713. When the statute was written, Nebraska was operating under a federal waiver. The waiver allowed Nebraska to define "job search" and prescribe that unlimited job search could be calculated when determining Nebraska's work participation rate. The federal statutes and rules now limit ADC recipient's job search to a maximum of six weeks in a fiscal year. In terms of calculating the work participation rate, if a state allows job search for a recipient beyond six weeks in a fiscal year, then the activity cannot be calculated when determining the work participation rate. Unlimited job search is no longer in compliance with federal law. Secondly, AM2157 amends Section 5 of Section 68-1721. Deletion of the last sentence in subsection (5) is a by-product of the above change that I described. And thirdly, AM2157 amends Section 4 of Section 68-1721 because federal law no longer limits work experience to only three months. Nebraska met its targeted work participation rate in FY 2004 at 34.5 percent. The new requirement for the DRA requires Nebraska to meet a 50 percent participation rate. I might mention, there's only about six states in the United States that are at 50 percent or above. According to a publication of the "Federal Funds Information for States," or FFIS, the number of Nebraska families meeting required work participation rates in FY 2003 was 2,100. The total number of families that will be needed to meet the new 50 percent rate is 3,800. The changes contained in AM2157 will put Nebraska in compliance with federal law and better position the state to meet the higher work participation rates. Further changes may be needed. Those will be discussed over the interim, and recommended in the 2007 Session. I might mention the Health and Human Services Committee intends to do a complete welfare reform study this summer. This will help us also to look at how we must comply in 2007. It's now been 12 years