

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 201

Introduced by Fredrickson, 20; McKinney, 11.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to examine mental health and addiction issues within the Nebraska criminal and juvenile justice systems, options to increase mental health and addiction services, and alternatives to the current responses of the criminal and juvenile justice systems to such issues.

Adequate and available mental health services are presently lacking for all Nebraskans, but particularly for youth and adolescents in the criminal or juvenile justice system. Mental health services are most needed for system-involved youth and those youth who are subject of any filing under the Nebraska Juvenile Code, particularly those who are subject to potential liberty restrictions or secure detention.

Additionally, Nebraska's jails and prisons are often required to accommodate detainees or prisoners who struggle with mental illness. A disproportionate number of individuals in Nebraska's jail and prisons have a history of mental illness. Some estimates state that approximately fifty-six percent of state prisoners in Nebraska have at least one mental health diagnosis. The number of prisoners who have alcohol or drug problems is also disproportionate.

This study shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) An evaluation of potential changes to Nebraska's criminal justice and juvenile justice systems to address individuals who have mental health and substance use diagnoses;

(2) An examination of any necessary and appropriate investments and funding sources for providing for mental health treatment, programs, and facilities to meet the needs of Nebraska youth, adolescents, and adults through

community-based services and accessible residential and inpatient care;

(3) A determination of how the state can provide assistance in supporting measures to improve mental health care in communities;

(4) An examination of opportunities for collaboration with mental health providers for individuals transitioning out of the criminal justice or juvenile justice system; and

(5) An examination of any changes to law necessary to enhance community mental health treatment and addiction services as alternatives to the current responses of criminal justice and juvenile justice systems to mental health and addiction issues.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.