

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 142

Introduced by Day, 49.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to examine Nebraska's policies relating to veterans and to evaluate the competitiveness of Nebraska for veterans and current service members when choosing where to live after retirement. As of 2020, Nebraska had 126,951 veterans, 39,888 of which are experiencing a service-connected disability. Additionally, Nebraska is home to 5,849 active duty service members. Making Nebraska an appealing destination for these service members to live after retirement can be part of the solution for increasing the population and economic growth in the state. An evaluation of the state's policies might help determine if Nebraska is working towards becoming a welcoming and prosperous place for Nebraska's existing veterans.

Improving the quality of life for veterans can be achieved in a number of areas through legislation, including reducing tax rates on retirement and other income relative to other states; increasing access to housing, medical care, mental health care, and employment; and reducing barriers for spousal employment.

This interim study shall include, but need not be limited to, an examination of the following:

- (1) Competitiveness of the cost of living for veterans in Nebraska compared to other states;
- (2) Challenges faced by veterans in Nebraska;
- (3) The current taxes paid by veterans in Nebraska;
- (4) Strategies to lower the tax burden paid by veterans in Nebraska;
- (5) Strategies other states have utilized to attract retired service members to live in such states;

(6) Employment opportunities and challenges for veterans and their spouses, including occupational license reciprocity and temporary occupational licenses;

(7) Housing challenges for veterans, including access, affordability, and source-of-income discrimination relating to obtaining loans; and

(8) Areas of potential legislation relating to the mental health of veterans, including barriers to care, access to mental health care, representation on mental health boards, and suicide prevention.

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

1. That the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs 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.