

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
NINETY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION
Legislative Bill 25
FINAL READING

Introduced by Crosby, 29; Pedersen, 39

Read first time January 5, 1995

Committee: Health and Human Services

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to hearing-impaired persons; to amend sections
2 71-4720, 71-4727, 71-4728, 71-4729, and 71-4732, Reissue
3 Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to provide duties for the
4 Commission for the Hearing Impaired and the Department of
5 Public Institutions; to provide for access to
6 comprehensive mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse
7 services for hearing-impaired persons; to harmonize
8 provisions; and to repeal the original sections.
9 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 71-4720, Reissue Revised Statutes of
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3 71-4720. There is hereby created the Commission for the
4 Hearing Impaired which shall consist of nine members to be
5 appointed by the Governor subject to approval by the Legislature.
6 The members of the commission shall be appointed within thirty days
7 of August 24, 1979. Six of the members of the commission shall be
8 hearing impaired and all members shall be familiar with the
9 problems of the hearing-impaired community in the State of
10 Nebraska. At least four of the six hearing-impaired members shall
11 know manual communication. Hearing-impaired employees of any state
12 agency other than employees of the commission shall be eligible to
13 serve on the commission. When appointing members to the
14 commission, the Governor shall consider recommendations provided by
15 the Nebraska Association of the Deaf.

16 As used in sections 71-4720 to 71-4732 and sections 4 to
17 6 of this act, unless the context otherwise requires, commission
18 ~~shall mean~~ means the Commission for the Hearing Impaired.

19 Sec. 2. Section 71-4727, Reissue Revised Statutes of
20 Nebraska, is amended to read:

21 71-4727. The commission may employ any other employees
22 it considers necessary to carry out the purposes of sections
23 71-4720 to 71-4732 and sections 4 to 6 of this act.

24 Sec. 3. Section 71-4728, Reissue Revised Statutes of
25 Nebraska, is amended to read:

26 71-4728. The commission shall serve as the principal
27 state agency responsible for advocating public policies and
28 programs which shall improve the quality and coordination of

1 existing services for the hearing impaired and promote the
2 development of new services when necessary. To perform this
3 function the commission shall:

4 (1) Inventory services available for meeting the problems
5 of the hearing impaired and assist hearing-impaired persons in
6 locating and securing such services;

7 (2) Prepare and maintain a statewide list of persons
8 qualified in various types of interpreting and make this
9 information available to local, state, federal, and private
10 organizations and to any interested person;

11 (3) Promote the training of interpreters for the hearing
12 impaired;

13 (4) Provide counseling to hearing-impaired persons or
14 refer such persons to private or governmental agencies which
15 provide counseling services;

16 (5) Conduct a voluntary census of hearing-impaired
17 persons in Nebraska and compile a current registry;

18 (6) Promote expanded adult educational opportunities for
19 hearing-impaired persons;

20 (7) Serve as an agency for the collection of information
21 concerning the hearing impaired and for the dispensing of such
22 information to interested persons by collecting studies, compiling
23 bibliographies, gathering information, and conducting research with
24 respect to the education, training, counseling, placement, and
25 social and economic adjustment of the hearing impaired and with
26 respect to the causes, diagnosis, treatment, and methods of
27 prevention of impaired hearing;

28 (8) Appoint advisory or special committees when

1 appropriate for indepth investigations and study of particular
2 problems and receive reports of findings and recommendations;

3 (9) Assess and monitor programs for services to the
4 hearing impaired and make recommendations to those state agencies
5 providing such services regarding changes necessary to improve the
6 quality and coordination of the services;

7 (10) Make recommendations to the Governor and the
8 Legislature with respect to modification in existing services or
9 establishment of additional services for hearing-impaired persons;

10 (11) Promote awareness and understanding of the rights of
11 hearing-impaired persons; and

12 (12) Promote statewide communication services for
13 hearing-impaired persons; and

14 (13) Assist hearing-impaired persons in accessing
15 comprehensive mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services.

16 Sec. 4. The commission shall not deliver direct mental
17 health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services but shall assist in
18 obtaining full access to comprehensive mental health, alcoholism,
19 and drug abuse services for hearing-impaired persons by providing
20 service coordination for hearing-impaired persons with mental
21 health, alcoholism, and drug abuse disorders including:

22 (1) Meeting the communication needs of hearing-impaired
23 persons including interpreter services and auxiliary aids;

24 (2) Education and training for persons who provide
25 treatment for mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse disorders
26 to hearing-impaired persons; and

27 (3) Placement of assistive-listening devices for
28 hearing-impaired persons in mental health, alcoholism, and drug

1 abuse treatment facilities.

2 Sec. 5. The commission shall appoint a mental health
3 specialist advisor. The specialist shall monitor and provide
4 advice to mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse programs which
5 provide treatment for hearing-impaired persons. The specialist
6 shall also serve as the commission's liaison to persons who provide
7 treatment or intervention services for mental health, alcoholism,
8 and drug abuse disorders which provide treatment for
9 hearing-impaired persons.

10 Sec. 6. The commission shall implement section 5 of this
11 act with the advice of a special advisory committee appointed by
12 the commission. The committee shall consist of five members as
13 follows: Three counselors familiar with mental health, alcoholism,
14 and drug abuse disorders in hearing-impaired persons and two human
15 services professionals. The Department of Public Institutions and
16 the commission shall each have a representative who serves on the
17 committee in a nonvoting technical capacity.

18 Sec. 7. Section 71-4729, Reissue Revised Statutes of
19 Nebraska, is amended to read:

20 71-4729. The commission shall in fulfilling its
21 responsibilities enumerated in section 71-4728 cooperate with any
22 state agency having authority related to the problems of
23 hearing-impaired persons. Such agencies ~~shall also are also~~
24 ~~directed to~~ cooperate with the commission. Avoidance of
25 unnecessary duplication of state-delivered services to the hearing
26 impaired shall be a primary objective of such cooperation.

27 Sec. 8. Section 71-4732, Reissue Revised Statutes of
28 Nebraska, is amended to read:

1 71-4732. There is hereby created a Commission for the
2 Hearing Impaired Fund to consist of such funds as the Legislature
3 shall appropriate and any funds received under section 71-4731.
4 The fund shall be used to administer sections 71-4720 to 71-4732
5 and sections 4 to 6 of this act. Any money in the fund available
6 for investment shall be invested by the state investment officer
7 pursuant to ~~Chapter 72, article 12~~ the Nebraska Capital Expansion
8 Act and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

9 Sec. 9. The Department of Public Institutions with the
10 assistance of the Commission for the Hearing Impaired shall adopt
11 and promulgate rules and regulations to define criteria and
12 standards for access by eligible hearing-impaired persons to mental
13 health, alcoholism, and drug abuse treatment programs.

14 Sec. 10. Original sections 71-4720, 71-4727, 71-4728,
15 71-4729, and 71-4732, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are
16 repealed.