

# COMMITTEE STATEMENT

## LB 1366

HEARING DATE: February 23, 2000

COMMITTEE ON: Health and Human Services

TITLE: (Beutler) Provide for a digital voice newspaper delivery system

### ROLL CALL VOTE – FINAL COMMITTEE ACTION

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Advanced to General File

Advanced to General File with Amendments

Indefinitely Postponed

#### Vote Results:

7 Yes Senators Jensen, Byars, Suttle, Thompson, Tyson, Price,  
and Dickey

No

Present, not voting

Absent

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#### PROPOSERS

Senator Chris Beutler

Barbara Walker

Amy Rut

Bob Burns

Ryan Osentowski

David Oertli

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#### REPRESENTING

Introducer

National Federation of the Blind of NE

Outreach Coordinator for Newsline for the Blind

National Federation of the Blind of NE

NE Association of Blind Students

Talking Book and Braille Service

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#### OPPOSERS

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#### REPRESENTING

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#### NEUTRAL

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#### REPRESENTING

#### SUMMARY OF PURPOSE AND/OR CHANGES:

LB 1366 states legislative findings relating to the significance of newspapers as a source of information, the limits that a written format places on the ability of blind and other print-reading-impaired persons to obtain such information, and the contribution of this "information deficit" to an estimated 75% unemployment rate among working-age blind persons. The bill further finds that a significant number of blind and print-reading-

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impaired persons in Nebraska who would benefit from having access to local and national newspapers, that such access can be provided to blind and print-reading-impaired persons by voice, and that the State should maintain a system to provide such access. The bill also states legislative purpose to provide a digital voice newspaper delivery system to enable blind and other print-reading-impaired persons to access newspapers in a timely and comprehensive manner.

The bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services, Rehabilitation Services for the Visually Impaired, to establish standards and procedures for a statewide digital voice newspaper delivery system and to oversee its operation. Users of the system will not be charged, except for in-state and out-of-state long-distance charges to access the system. The department is required to contract for the operation of the system; provide space for the location of distribution devices and other necessary equipment; provide daily monitoring of the system; advertise the system; recruit blind and other print-reading-impaired persons for user verification; develop and implement procedures for user certification; coordinate between the system operator and certified users, and adopt and promulgate implementing rules and regulations.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS, IF ANY:

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Senator Jim Jensen, Chairperson