

Health and Human Services Committee
LB 963
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Department of Health and Human Services

Good afternoon Senator Campbell and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Calder Lynch (C-A-L-D-E-R L-Y-N-C-H). I am the director of the Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care in the Department of Health and Human Services. With me today is Cynthia Brammeier, administrator of the State Unit on Aging. I am here to testify in support of LB 963. Thank you, Senator Fox, for introducing this bill and working to update and remove obsolete language concerning the State Area Agencies on Aging in our state statutes.

LB 963 makes two (2) changes to statutes regarding the Area Agencies on Aging:

1. The bill changes the Area Agency on Aging area plan submission timeframes to mirror the federal regulations.
2. This bill also repeals an outdated maintenance of effort funding requirement for four (4) of the Area Agencies on Aging in the Community Aging Services Act (CASA).

These changes have been discussed with the directors of the Area Agencies on Aging at meetings during the summer. They also support the changes.

Currently, state statute requires the Area Agencies on Aging to submit area plans to the State Unit on Aging every five (5) years. This does not comply with federal law. This change will bring Nebraska into compliance with Federal regulations, requiring the submission of a two- (2), three- (3), or four- (4) year area plan.

In addition, this bill will equalize how Area Agencies on Aging are funded locally. State laws passed in the 1980s required four (4) of the eight (8) Area Agencies on Aging to commit in future years the same amount of local funding to like services they were spending at that time. Today, this requirement is obsolete and does not take into account changes in priorities over the years.

The four Area Agencies on Aging that are identified in the law and must currently obligate funding are:

- Aging Partners – which includes eight counties including and surrounding Lincoln;
- South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging – which includes eight counties including and surrounding Kearney;

- Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging – which includes five counties including and surrounding Omaha; and
- Northeast Nebraska Area on Aging – which includes 22 counties including Norfolk, in northeast and north central Nebraska.

I have included a map showing the eight Area Agencies on Aging.

Passing LB 963 as proposed will bring Nebraska State Statutes into conformity with federal requirements regarding area plan timeframes and will equalize how the existing Area Agencies on Aging are funded locally.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I believe this bill will help DHHS continue our mission of helping people live better lives. I have the administrator of the State Unit on Aging, Cynthia Brammeier, here to answer any questions you may have.