

PRESS RELEASE

For additional information:

Kathy Wilmot

Date: March 6, 2017

Beaver City, NE 68926

308-340-3987

Two bills of interest to individuals in this area were heard by committees of the Nebraska Legislature on Thursday March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

LR1CA, introduced by Senator Murante, would place before Nebraska voters the proposition that all voters would be required to show voter ID when voting. Given the increase in the amount of voter fraud around the nation, it would make sense to ensure that votes cast are legal and legitimate. Approximately a dozen individuals testified in support of the bill. Kathy Wilmot of Beaver City was among those appearing to testify. She included information received from the Secretary of State's office that at least 10 cases over the past 10 years have occurred in Nebraska. The most recent cases remain before the court in Dawson County where two Somalian males voted more than once on November 8, 2016. "They stole my vote multiple times," she told the Government, Military and Veteran Affairs Committee.

Numerous groups were represented in opposition to the resolution, however very few – if any – cited statistics to support their position. Instead, individuals representing groups such as the ACLU, NAACP and others made appeals for emotional and empathetic decision making on the issue. They alleged the young, elderly and the poor would be disenfranchised by such a requirement, and that it would be unconstitutional.

It is important to note the U.S. Supreme Court declared that "the United States has a long history of voter fraud" when it upheld Indiana's strictest-in-the-nation voter photo ID requirement as not merely constitutional, but necessary to prevent fraud. The landmark opinion said there "is no question about the legitimacy or importance of the State's interest in counting only the votes of eligible voters" and that states have "justification for carefully identifying all voters participating in the election process."

The second bill of interest, LB505 introduced by Senator Brewer, would require the Department of Health and Human Services to complete reports concerning the refugees being resettled in Nebraska. Those reports would specify how many refugees were received and nation of origin or citizenship; state benefits received; federal benefits received, age, sex and family status; numbers by nation of origin and the number of refugees projected for the following year. The Legislature, the governor and each member of the state's congressional delegation could use that information to consider the fiscal impact on schools, law enforcement and communities and facilitate responsible budgetary projections and appropriation of tax dollars.

Lutheran Family Services (VOLAG that receives federal dollars for placement of refugees), Refugee Empowerment Center and Nebraskans Against Gun Violence were among those testifying in opposition. Several alleged those supporting the bill were racist and "afraid of color".

"It was interesting to note that several groups opposing LB505 make large amounts of federal dollars in the form of grants for counseling, literacy and securing their access to food stamps, affordable housing, TANF and other programs. Lutheran Family Services and the US Council of Catholic Bishops receive over \$2000 per refugee resettled here," said Wilmot. "It's pretty clear why they are opposed to any transparency of the dollars being spent by our taxpayers."

The Judiciary Committee was told by one opponent that refugees are not resettled who have communicable diseases. "That is false," said Jennifer Schukar, owner of Nurses Inc., who also testified. "Refugees are allowed to enter who have communicable diseases which are latent at the time of entry. One example would be latent TB." Schukar continued on to say, "According to the Refugee Health Coordinator in Lincoln, Kristin Gall, 20-30% of the refugees coming here have latent TB. The CDC states that 10% of latent TB carriers will develop active TB over the course of their lives."

There is still time for individuals to voice their wishes to Legislators serving on the Committees as both measure remain in committee at this time pending a vote to determine whether they will move to the floor for debate or not. Comments concerning LR1CA should be directed to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee chaired by Sen. John Murante. The Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Laura Ebke, would receive comments regarding LB505.