



LB 467 Testimony
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- Postsecondary distance education, especially online education, is increasing about 10 percent per year. Millions of students now take online classes.
- States regulate the offering of distance education in widely varying ways. Right now, each higher education institution that offers online education needs to check with every state in which it has students to determine if approval by that state is required. This is a cumbersome, time-consuming, and often expensive process. For example, the University of Minnesota recently budgeted \$500,000 for the potential costs associated with this process. A non-profit online institution in New York was told it would cost \$130,000 to apply for approval in Arkansas.
- From mid-2011, several higher education organizations have worked together to develop a better approach, based on reciprocity agreements. Those agreements will be put in place soon.
- The proposed bill would allow the Coordinating Commission to participate in such agreements, administer them in Nebraska, and enable Nebraska's colleges and universities to more efficiently offer their courses and programs online to students in states that participate in the reciprocity agreements.
- Nebraska institutions can choose to not participate in such a reciprocity agreement and continue to seek state-by-state authorization on their own. However, I see no downside for institutions to join this reciprocity agreement – only benefits.