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(Neb.)-Bill Seeks To Simplify Public Aid Benefits



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 03/15/2013 07:19 AM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska lawmakers are looking at ways to reduce paperwork and wait times for public benefits.

The committee review follows repeated complaints from recipients, some of whom were forced to apply multiple times for state services. Others were disqualified when they were still eligible. Much of the criticism Thursday was leveled at ACCESS Nebraska, which allows residents to apply for and renew state benefits.

Sen. Kate Bolz of Lincoln offered a bill to the Health and Human Services Committee that seeks to address the problem. The measure would direct the state Department of Health and Human Services to expand its information-sharing programs, streamline paperwork, and make "reasonable efforts" to reduce the number of case closures.

Department officials opposed the bill, saying federal rules prohibit certain information-sharing.