

Colleagues,

Last week, I testified in the Government Committee on [LB 1417](#) which would reorganize state government by eliminating and consolidating 43 boards or commissions out of the 284 agencies, boards and commissions in State government. One goal was to consolidate agencies with similar missions, or which share the same customers.

As an HR professional, a tool that is frequently used in organizational design science is examining the “spans and layers” of an organization. Organizations that span too wide or have too many layers in their hierarchy frequently suffer from diluted accountability and a lack of customer responsiveness. Another principle of organizational design is creating affinity of teams doing similar work and co-location of teams serving the same customers. These were the guiding principles in the most recent agency consolidation and elimination effort contained in LB 1417.

LB 1417 was the latest in a series of executive branch and legislative branch partnerships to consolidate agencies with which DAS has been involved over the years. By using these principles, [DAS has contributed to the creation of three new cabinet agencies](#) through the merger of smaller agencies doing similar work and serving the same customers.

The first of these was the merger of the Division of Veterans’ Homes (DVH) with the Department of Veterans Affairs (NDVA) in 2017 through [LB 340](#) which moved DVH from the Department of Health and Human Services to the NDVA. The merger has provided a higher level of service to Nebraska’s veterans by creating a one-stop-shop for all veterans served by the State of Nebraska. The merger has created a single team working for the State’s servicemembers, allowed for greater information and resource sharing among team members responsible for serving our veterans, and allowed DHHS to better focus on helping its customers live better lives.

Later that year, the Nebraska Department of Transportation was created by merging the Department of Roads and Department of Aeronautics through [LB 339](#). The merger eliminated inefficiencies and allowed more money to be spent on roads and runways, all without sacrificing jobs. Since 2017, NDOT has been a unified agency focused on Nebraska’s transportation needs, and the consolidation has allowed for a long-term, strategic approach towards building the 21st-century infrastructure needed to grow Nebraska. Nebraska was the last state in the Union to create a Transportation Department.

Most recently, in 2019 the merger of the Nebraska Energy Office with the Department of Environmental Quality created the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy through [LB 302](#). The new DEE has allowed the State to form a more unified vision and strategic plan for work in these related areas and has combined several similar functions and services of the two previously separate departments. The merger has generated a number of efficiencies and allowed for a better direction of resources towards achieving the State's environment and energy missions.

I'm proud of our collective efforts contributing to efforts to reduce the size of government through agency consolidation, and glad our team has been asked to contribute to this latest effort. Our past experience with these initiatives will make our team a valuable contributor to LB 1417's implementation if it becomes law.

Regards,

Jason Jackson
Director, Nebraska Department of Administrative Services