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Nebraska Legislative Committee Discusses Prison Issues

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - The chairman of a legislative committee says 162 Nebraska inmates convicted of violent crimes were freed early under a furlough program.

The program was revealed at a hearing Wednesday as the chairman, Sen. Steve Lathrop, questioned Gov. Dave Heineman. Heineman was subpoenaed to testify under oath as part of an investigation into miscalculated prison sentences and other problems.

Lathrop says the program allowed the release of inmates convicted of second-degree murder, manslaughter and other crimes.

Lathrop argues that the re-entry furlough program violated state law, because it was created without public hearings or a waiver signed by the governor. Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning and the Department of Correctional Services both say the regulations in question didn't have to go through that process and weren't illegal.

Associated Press