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February 15, 2021

Senator John Arch, Chair, and
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Unicameral
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB 677 (Linehan) Change provisions relating to eligibility for transitional child care assistance

SUPPORT

Dear Senator Arch and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska supports programs at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty. At a price of approximately \$1,000 per child per month, the cost of childcare in Nebraska is more than both rent and college tuition. On top of that, many young families are still paying for their own education. The average Nebraska college graduate has more than \$25,000 in student loans. At the current limit, a family of four earning \$2,838 per month would be at the cut off point for receiving aid with childcare, leaving them \$838 for rent, utilities, food, gas, necessities and their own college debt. Shouldering this kind of financial responsibility reduces the ability to pursue homeownership, higher education, entrepreneurship or even saving for a rainy day.

LB 677 focuses on giving families room to grow their earning potential by addressing the cliff effect, the point at which one has to curtail their earnings in order to avoid losing their childcare and, thus, their ability to work at all. They could participate until the time they earned \$4,366 per month, allowing them to accept a promotion/raise or work more hours.

Additionally, COVID-19 has highlighted how crucial our essential workers really are. They are our nurses, teachers, food handlers, shop keepers, drivers and first responders. Sadly, many of these positions do not pay on a level that is commensurate with how vital they are to the survival of our communities. These workers have kept our nation running during a very difficult time. While increasing their pay is outside the scope of this bill, passing it would be a means of showing appreciation and respect for all those whose work is invaluable.

Please advance LB 677 to General File for full floor debate. Thank you for considering our position and for all you do for the state of Nebraska.

Sincerely,

Sara Lee, Social Policy Committee
Carol Dennison, Director, Social Policy
Linda Duckworth and Dianne Bystrom, Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters of Nebraska