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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 68 (Day) Change provisions relating to reimbursement for services provided by the federal Child Care Subsidy program

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. LB 68 would make permanent the COVID-19 emergency declaration change in childcare policy enacted by Governor Ricketts which streamlined the billing process to make all childcare slots billable by enrollment rather than attendance. This has been beneficial for families, facilities and businesses. Facilities, which saw a 40% drop in enrollment due to the pandemic, benefit because they can depend on a predictable level of income, maintain staff and keep their doors open.

As a result, facilities can accept a greater number of students who would take part in subsidy programs, thus benefiting families. A family may qualify for childcare assistance, but be unable to access it if no slots are available to them. This especially impacts families with working women who have borne the vast majority of recent job loss. Before this change was made, facilities had to be judicious about accepting children into subsidy slots due to unguaranteed and lower income potential. Additionally, businesses benefit from the increased reliability and availability of their employees who use childcare.

We are confident in our support of this bill as we already have had the opportunity to experience how it would work and have seen positive results. This is a program that is both beneficial and fiscally responsible. Block grants and other federal COVID-19 relief funds can be used to cover the cost. Also, it is important to keep in mind how much tax revenue would be lost by an overall drop in the workforce, in both earning and spending power, due to scarcity of childcare or unaffordable childcare.

Please advance LB 68 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, Social Policy Director
Linda Duckworth and Dianne Bystrom, Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters of Nebraska