



4600 Valley Road
Suite 306
Lincoln, NE 68510
402-475-1411
<https://lwwnebraska.org>

February 16, 2021

Senator Steve Lathrop, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee
Nebraska Unicameral
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB 7 (Blood) Provide immunity for witnesses and victims of violent crimes

SUPPORT

Dear Senator Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska supports development of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence and believes government should take an active role in preventing violent behavior. There are many challenges to prosecuting a rape case. One of them is a reluctance of victims to report the crime, which often has to do with the fear that they will be prosecuted for prostitution or drug use. We support LB 7 to protect victims or witnesses of crime when reporting criminal actions.

A large percentage of rapes are committed by repeat offenders, who are more likely to target sex workers than single victim rapists are. Sixty percent of rapists are arrested for at least one other unrelated sexual assault, and there are hundreds of thousands of rape kits that remain untested across the United States, and it is often years before multiple rapes are attributed to the same person. The barriers to catching a rapist are many, and most rapists have multiple victims. Removing even one reason that a victim might not report could have the power to prevent similar crimes in the future.

We also consider human trafficking to be a form of modern-day slavery and believe that every measure should be taken to prevent it. Extensive essential services for victims should be applied where needed. Nebraska's incidence of trafficking is mainly defined by I-80 and I-29 with additional activity related to the College World Series. Trafficking victims need mental health care services, emergency shelter and crisis intervention. Unfortunately, it is difficult to access many of the resources they need most until their crime is reported, and 63% of victims have a lack of trust in the system.

Please advance LB 7 to General File for full floor debate. Thank you for considering our position on this issue.

Sincerely,

Sara Lee, LWWNE Social Policy Committee
Carol Dennison, LWWNE Social Policy Director
Linda Duckworth, LWWNE Co-President
Dianne Bystrom, LWWNE Co-President