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February 2, 2021

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

RE: LB 51 (Lathrop) Change and provide qualifications for and duties relating to certification of law enforcement officers, require accreditation of law enforcement agencies, prohibit chokeholds in law enforcement, and require policies on excessive force

Support

Please include this written testimony from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB 51.

Dear Senator Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The League of Women Voters of the United States passed a resolution on June 27, 2020, advocating for an end to systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. In response, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska initiated a study to consider the issues of public safety and law enforcement.

We support LB 51 as a significant bill that addresses dangerous methods of restraint and provides for the training and continuing education of law enforcement. To ensure that officers and agencies adhere to requirements of training, the bill imposes significant fines for the individual as well as the agencies, this to heighten the seriousness of the training issues.

LB 51 would help guarantee that Nebraska law enforcement officers have the alternative tools they need during apprehensions and arrests to keep the public safe and to enhance their skills. The assurance of initial screenings, background checks, certification and minimum qualifications will aid law enforcement agencies in hiring.

I am from Omaha and Omaha Police Department has worked hard on these issues. Our law enforcement officers have a dangerous job and should receive the support of training and clear expectations with regards to the use of force. This bill promotes public safety. In the end it will also protect the officer's standing and the agency's liability.

Please advance this bill to General File for debate on the floor.

Sincerely,

Carol Dennison
LWVNE Social Policy Director

Linda Duckworth and Dianne Bystrom
LWVNE Co-Presidents