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March 4, 2021

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

RE: LB 116 (McCollister) Change provisions relating to handgun transfer certificates and require suicide prevention training and informational materials

**Support**

Dear Senator Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The League of Women Voters supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The League also believes in the active role of government in preventing violent behavior.

Although we generally focus on homicides when discussing gun violence, most gun-related deaths are suicides. In 2018, the United States suffered 10,474 more gun suicides (24,432) than gun homicides (13,958). Not only are the majority of gun-related deaths suicides, but more than half of completed suicides are gun deaths. Firearms are the most lethal suicide method, 2.6 times higher than the second method which is suffocation. Military veterans who die by suicide choose a firearm 67% of the time, resulting in more than 17 deaths per day. Suicide is also the second highest cause of child mortality. The odds of a child being killed by a firearm are 36 times higher in the United States than in other high-income countries.

Reducing access to lethal means and even just delaying action until the immediate desire has passed can save lives. This bill allows a firearm to be transferred to another person in a safer way, including a background check with a built-in delay plus important information on suicide prevention and safe storage. It also adds suicide prevention content to the training course curriculum. While approximately 40% of Nebraskans own a firearm, 100% of us will at some point face something intensely difficult. Having to wait even 48 hours may be enough to allow sufficient time for someone to see other possibilities for their life.

Please advance LB 116 to General File for full floor debate. Thank you for considering our position and for all you do for Nebraska.

Sincerely,

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