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May 2, 2021

Executive Board of the Legislature  
Senator Dan Hughes, Chairperson  
State Capitol, Lincoln NE

Dear Senator Hughes:

For over 100 years the League of Women Voters has relentlessly advocated for voting rights and policies that protect democracy. It is from this vantage point that we are deeply disturbed by the April 23, 2021 introduction of Legislative Resolution 107 by Senator Mike Groene for both its content and the way that it was brought to the floor of the legislature.

The first concern is the content itself. LR 107 begins by accusing the federal government of a coordinated plot to usurp all states' rights. It haphazardly pulls incomplete phrases from the United States Constitution to "support" a handful of highly politicized state issues including guns, abortion, religion, sexuality, voting access, federal land use, and vaccinations. The League is particularly concerned with Section 5 which addresses the election process. The authors of LR 107 appear to lean into the false narrative that the recent election was fraudulent despite countless fact-based reports to the contrary, utilizing this fabricated propaganda to assert the state's right to suppress voter access through ID requirements, voter record purging, and restrictions in voter supports.

We live in a challenging time facing a global pandemic, an uneasy transition of federal power, a heated debate about individual versus collective rights, and a resurgence, or more accurately put, a reluctant acknowledgment of racial discrimination and violence. We are subject to excessively divisive language from the media, from our workplaces, even from our own friends and neighbors. Whether by intention or negligence, it is inappropriate and unacceptable for our state leaders to fan the flames by not speaking out in opposition to LR 107.

In addition to the disquieting content of the resolution, the process through which it has found its way to the floor of our Unicameral legislature is atypical. All proposed legislation goes through a process outlined by the Rules of Legislature with heavy reliance on the use of committees. This allows for the legislation to be heard by a subset of Senators, with "subject-matter jurisdiction" to act as gate keepers. The citizens of Nebraska, acting in their capacity as the second house, may provide commentary on legislative proposals. In respect to LR 107, it is the manipulation of this important process that causes our concern to turn to alarm because instead of referring the resolution to the Government Committee, which is the appropriate committee for the content of this resolution, the drafters referred it to the Executive Committee, which manages the work of the legislature. Why?

To answer that same question and resolve the misassignment, Senator Megan Hunt introduced a motion on April 29 to re-refer LR107 to the appropriate committee. In her comments she reported that one of the lead writers of LR107, Senator Steve Halloran, explicitly stated that the political decision was made to send it to the Executive Committee because he was afraid that the resolution would not be voted out of the Government committee due to previous "split votes on bills," which we interpret to mean bills related to

voter suppression and campaign financing. In response, Senator John McCollister, who serves on both the Executive Board and the Government Committee stated publicly that the committee assignment for LR107 was incorrect and was one of the votes to re-refer. Sadly, the motion to re-refer failed and LR107 now waits to be moved along in the legislative process. It appears Unicameral leadership has circumvented the checks and balances of the legislative process.

Of the many Legislative Resolutions this session, including those calling for interim studies; those congratulating a variety of Nebraska individuals, organizations, and teams; even the good nature and light-hearted recognition of the "one true Josh;" this is the only resolution that includes the phrase "requests cooperation." Those are words of action, not observation, not statement of stance, but a call to action that is followed by false, incendiary, and partisan statements. It may be "only a resolution," but it is a government document which formally, legally, speaks on behalf of the people of Nebraska. We, at the League of Women Voters Nebraska, know this is a mischaracterization of the majority of our friends and neighbors.

There has been much talk from the floor of the legislature these past few weeks of needing to trust and have good faith in one another. Frankly, that is an impossible ask when resolutions like LR 107 are advanced through manipulation of our systems with the support of 30 senators who either are not paying enough attention or, more concerning, are failing to represent and serve all the people of Nebraska as they promised to do in their solemn oath of office.

As advocates of empowering voters and defending democracy, we as the League of Women Voters, call on every Senator to read the resolution in its entirety, speak publicly against its dangerous and radical language, and most importantly, vote against LR107.

Sincerely,



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Rachel M. Gibson  
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