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Senator Tom Brewer, Chair  
and Members of the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee  
State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

RE: LB1077 (Hansen, B.) – Prohibit public schools, public postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities from training or teaching certain concepts relating to race and sex and provide for withholding of state funds.

## **OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Brewer and Members of the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee:

Since its founding in 1920 after the passage of the 19th Amendment as a nonpartisan political organization, the League of Women Voters has worked diligently for equal rights of all Americans, particularly advocating for those marginalized and discriminated against. At its 2020 national convention, the League recommitted itself to the advocacy of equal protection under the law for all individuals “regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and gender identity or sexual orientation.”

While LB1077 claims to protect these individuals, we believe it does the exact opposite by attempting to silence the experiences of specific groups in an effort to alleviate potential discomfort of others. It is in this tradition of civic engagement and equity that the League of Women Voters of Nebraska strongly opposes LB1077.

LB1077 states that it will prohibit “governmental entities, public postsecondary institutions, and public schools” from “conducting mandatory staff or student training or education involving certain concepts relating to race and sex.” Contradicting this statement, it also proposes that the bill be not used to “Inhibit or violate the rights of students or employees under the First Amendment” and has specifically identified topics that are not to be discussed. Additionally, the bill states it is not meant to prevent these entities from providing training to foster an environment that is respectful of all, responding to questions regarding race, or promoting diversity and inclusiveness.

If an organization is not allowed to facilitate a conversation that recognizes the different experiences and histories of individuals, their families and our country, it cannot promote diversity and inclusiveness. In abiding by Section 2.1 of the bill, an entity would be violating Section 2.4 A-F. The same contradiction exists for Sections 3 and 4. These contradictions make LB1077 unenforceable.

Section 4.4 also prohibits public school students from engaging in work or service learning in association with legislation or in social or public policy advocacy. From a civic standpoint, this would effectively eliminate Nebraska’s youth from becoming involved with their communities and the

Legislature that governs them. Adding this provision to the bill would substantially decrease youth involvement across the state, keeping legislative knowledge and power in the hands of those who already have it and limiting the voices of those whom current legislators have taken an oath to serve and protect.

Economically, this bill would limit students from gaining real work experience and developing relationships with organizations that may encourage them to stay in Nebraska for additional schooling and/or employment. A unique advantage of many public high schools in Nebraska is their connection with businesses in their surrounding area with which students can volunteer for school credit to get a feel for what might interest them as a career path. Because of the broad language of the bill, many organizations within Nebraska would be unable to provide student school-connected internships, employment or service-learning opportunities. As a point of perspective, here are some of the organizations students might be unable to work with due to their registered lobbyist designation with the Nebraska Legislature:

Alzheimer's Association	Lindsay Corporation
American Federation for Children	Lutheran Family Services
American Heart Association	Millard Public Schools*
Americans for Prosperity	Mosaic*
Autism Center of Nebraska	Mutual of Omaha*
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska	National Rifle Association
Bryan Health	Nebraska State Fair Board
Cargill	Platte Institute for Economic Research
CHI Health	Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
Children's Hospital & Medical Center*	Quality Living Inc.*
Cities of Hastings, Lexington, Lincoln, Norfolk, Omaha or Ralston	Ralston Public Schools*
DC West Community Schools*	Union Bank & Trust Company*
Food Bank of the Heartland	Union Pacific Railroad*
Grand Island Public Schools	Westside Community Schools*
Hawkins Construction*	Windstream Communications
History Nebraska Foundation	Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
Kiewit Corporation*	YMCAs of Nebraska

The foremost question the Nebraska Unicameral should answer when crafting policy is: will this benefit Nebraskans? If the answer is an unequivocal no, as in the case of LB1077 – with its negative economic, social and psychological impacts – it should not be pursued as policy. It is for these reasons that the LWVNE is strongly opposed to LB1077 and ask that you do not advance this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Taylor Sterba, Education Policy Action Team, LWVNE  
Rachel M. Gibson, Director of Education Policy, LWVNE

\*Indicates organizations hosting internships through Intern Omaha during the 2021-22 school year.