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Feb. 1, 2023

Senator Ben Hansen, Chair,
and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln NE

RE: LB626 (Albrecht) – Adopt the Nebraska Heartbeat Act

OPPOSE – *Please include this position statement from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB626.*

Dear Senator Hansen and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

In 1983, the national board of the League of Women Voters of the United States announced its public policy position regarding reproductive rights: *“The LWWUS believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.”*

In the 40 years since adopting this position, the LWWUS has worked through legislative and judicial action to defend the right of reproductive choice. As part of that work, at the beginning of the 108th legislative session, the LWWNE shared several practical concerns in anticipation of proposed legislation limiting access to abortion with each Nebraska state senator (attached).

Since the 1980s, the League has advocated for the right of privacy for an individual to make reproductive choices. And, since our founding more than 100 years ago, the League has advocated for women’s ability to participate in and contribute meaningfully to American society – civically, socially and economically. We have pursued policies and programs that prevent or reduce poverty; promote self-sufficiency of individuals and families; expand affordable, quality childcare; and make the democratic process more inclusive and representative. LB626 and bills like it undermine the basic goal of all of these initiatives as well as independence and self-sufficiency. They take away women’s ability to actively and meaningfully participate in all parts of society in the way that is best for her and her family.

Practically, LB626 is a poorly written bill. It haphazardly tries to address criticisms from all sides without actually providing solutions. It is contradictory. It is not medically accurate. It doesn’t place the issue in the context of the reality of Nebraskans and the healthcare they can access. Conceptually, the bill is paternalistic, an affront to pluralistic society, heavy-handed governmental overreach, discrediting of physicians’ expertise, an invasion of privacy, and dismissive of the independence and freedom of any person who has the potential to become pregnant.

What could be more foundational to the ideals of self-determination and freedom on which our country was founded than the ability to make health and family decisions in consultation with a care provider free of government intervention? We implore you to not advance LB626.

Sincerely,

Rachel Gibson, Vice President-Action, LWWNE
Dr. Phyllis Salyards, Health Care Director, LWWNE
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWWNE