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February 28, 2023

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

RE: LB748 (Cavanaugh, M.) – Adopt the Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Assistance Act

SUPPORT – *Please include this position statement from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB748.*

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

The League of Women Voters believes that every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of healthcare that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care, acute care, long-term care and mental health care. As such, the League supports regulatory incentives or programs to encourage cost-effective alternative ways of delivering and paying for healthcare. Notably, such programs should protect the health of its most vulnerable populations – urban and rural.

LB748 will allow any eligible non-profit organization that provides sports opportunities to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to apply for a grant for up to \$500. It is estimated that there are currently 35,000 individuals in Nebraska with an intellectual or developmental disability. Individuals with IDD are one of the state's most vulnerable populations. These individuals die 12 to 23 years prematurely due to undiagnosed and untreated conditions.¹ The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in 2006 noted "there is a marked disparity of health between persons with IDD and the general population".² These individuals also face stigma when trying to access care, and providers do not often have adequate training to work with this population.³

Among the non-profit organizations that could benefit from this legislation is Special Olympics Nebraska. This non-profit serves about 6,000 people, providing basic healthcare screenings at no cost to participants. They advocate for individuals to lead healthy active lives and increase their community involvement through sports programs. They also train volunteers – including healthcare professionals – who return to their practices with increased knowledge and compassion for people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics Nebraska serves individuals across the state, providing particularly needed services in rural areas where accessing medical care may already be limited.

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska supports LB748 for its intention to support non-profit organizations in our state such as Special Olympics Nebraska. Grants to deserving organizations like these could allow them to expand services and help provide care for more individuals with IDD. This program would expand healthcare opportunities for some of the most vulnerable individuals in our state. For these reasons, the LWWNE supports this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We urge you to pass LB748 to the floor for full debate.

Sincerely,

Angela Gleason, Mental and Behavioral Health Action Team, LWVNE
Palistene Gray Moore, Mental and Behavioral Health Co-Director, LWVNE
Rachel Gibson, Vice President-Action, LWVNE
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWVNE

¹U.S. Multiple Cause-of-Death Mortality Files. National Vital Statistics System (2008-2017).

²American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. (2006). *Declaration on health parity for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

³Nichols A. D., Ward R. L., & Freedman, R. I. (2008). *Left out in the cold: Health care experiences of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Massachusetts*. Waltham, MA: The Arc of Massachusetts.