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January 26, 2022

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

RE: LB785 (Groene) Change Provisions Related to Early Voting

**OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Brewer and Members of the Committee:

For the record, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska opposes LB785, which would decrease the amount of time allowed to vote by mail from 35 to 22 days. Data from the 2020 election indicates that 50% of Nebraskans cast their votes by mail or dropped off their ballots prior to the official election day. Mail-in voting is convenient and popular. Even with the 2020 election's record turnout, no allegations of fraud were brought to the Secretary of State's office. Secretary Evnen indicated that early ballots, either mailed or dropped off, were cast securely. The League works to promote proactive election reforms including increased, rather than decreased, access to early voting.

A common narrative when considering voting by mail is whether this safe means of casting ballots advantages a particular party. This topic has been well studied, and peer reviewed publications show that easing voting and registration restrictions increases turnout but has no effect on electoral outcomes. For example, one study used mandatory vote by mail as a treatment variable. This included federal elections in California (five counties, 2018); Oregon (all since 2000); Washington (staggered, 1996–2012); Utah (staggered, 2012–2020); Colorado (all since 2014); and Nebraska (four counties, 2018). Results were consistent with other election law studies that show easing voting and registration restrictions increases turnout but has no effect on electoral outcomes (Barber, Michael, & John B. Holbein. 2020. The participatory and partisan impacts of mandatory vote-by-mail. *Science Advances* 6/35 eabc7685.)

The statement of intent for LB785 states that this legislation also “reemphasizes the honored tradition of voting in person on the first Tuesday of November.” It is simply not feasible for all eligible voters to appear in person to vote on Election Day due to barriers associated with employment, childcare, health and transportation. Given these barriers to participation in our civic process, legislation should encourage expanded access to early voting rather than exacerbating these issues.

The League of Women Voters works to remove barriers to voting. We oppose further action on LB785.

Sincerely,

Sheri St Clair  
League of Women Voters of Nebraska