



PO. Box 29816  
Lincoln NE, 68529  
(402) 982-1572  
lwnnebraska.org

March 9, 2023

Senator Tom Briese, Chair, and Members of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council  
State Capitol, Lincoln

RE: LR2CA (Erdman) – Constitutional amendments to change from a unicameral legislature to a bicameral legislature, provide for election of members of the Legislature on a partisan ballot, require election of legislative officers and committee chairpersons by a public vote, and require all meetings of the Legislature to be open to the public

**OPPOSE** – *Please include this written testimony from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LR2CA.*

Dear Senator Briese and Members of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council:

Political scientists have long debated the relative merits of bicameral and unicameral state legislatures, but the arguments made by George Norris in 1934 are still viable on why Nebraska should maintain the unicameral system:

1. The people are the checks and balances with the unicameral called the “second house.”
2. The unicameral procedures are easy to follow, give the press greater privileges and allow greater public awareness.
3. No action can be concealed because every bill has a public hearing where the second house may voice its opinion and committee decisions may be changed or amended on the floor of the legislature.
4. The unicameral is also unique because it is nonpartisan and was ratified by the second house in 1934 with the overwhelming vote of 286,086 (60%) for and 193,152 (40%) against.
5. The one-house system is efficient lawmaking, as the legislative process is simpler, there is no possibility of deadlock between two chambers or disputes on which house is upper or lower.
6. The one-house system reduces costs by reducing the number of legislators as well as fewer institutions to maintain and support financially.
7. The unicameral system is both more democratic and effective.

As Norris noted in advocating for a unicameral system, “every act of the legislature and every act of each individual must be transacted in the spotlight of publicity” (1).

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska **opposes** LR2CA and recommends LR2CA be Indefinitely Postponed.

Respectfully,

Sheri St Clair, Government Co-Director, LWVNE  
Walta Dodd, Voter Services Co-Director/Government Action Team, LWVNE  
Rachel Gibson, Vice President-Action, LWVNE  
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWVNE

1. Nebraska Legislature. (2023) The Nebraska Experience.  
[https://nebraskalegislature.gov/about/ou\\_experience.php](https://nebraskalegislature.gov/about/ou_experience.php)