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January 31, 2024

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

RE: LB861 (Linehan) Change procedures to remove a name from a petition under the Election Act

OPPOSE – *Please include this testimony from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB861.*

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

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska is opposed to LB861 since the removal of one's name from a petition should require more than a simple letter. The amount of time and effort that is required to initiate and conduct a petition drive is significant, specifically in the person-to-person process of gathering signatures. Therefore, the process to remove a name should be in parity with the process to add a name.

The object clause of the petition is submitted to the Secretary of State and revisor of statutes for review well before the signature collection process begins. The circulator also reads aloud the object clause of the initiative to each and every signer. Each petition circulator is required to sign an affidavit before a notary swearing that they witnessed every act of signage and that to their knowledge the date and information written by the signer is correct.

Simplifying the signature removal process raises the potential for a well-funded opposition organization to use false media promotions, misleading advertisements and even provide voters with stamped, pre-addressed envelopes. Additionally, it may open signatories up to possible harassment.

Nebraska's new voter identification laws were adopted to add security to the election process; this proposal relaxes the security that exists in the petition process.

LB861 should not advance from the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Sincerely,

Sheri St Clair, Government Co-Director, LWVNE
Rachel Gibson, Vice President-Action, LWVNE
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWVNE