

Health and Human Services Committee

LB 284

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Jenifer Roberts-Johnson
Deputy Director, Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Human Services

Good afternoon, Senator Riepe, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Jenifer Roberts-Johnson (J-E-N-I-F-E-R R-O-B-E-R-T-S-(hyphen)-J-O-H-N-S-O-N) and I am the Deputy Director of the Public Health Division of the Department of the Health and Human Services (DHHS). I am here today in support of LB 284.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant, also called the Child Care and Development Fund, is the primary funding source from the federal government that provides child care subsidies and activities that improve child care quality. Nebraska receives over \$30 million dollars annually from the Child Care and Development Block Grant. This act was reauthorized and signed into federal law in November of 2014.

As a part of the reauthorization a new mandate was placed upon all states. All states that receive Child Care and Development funds must ensure that FBI fingerprint background checks are completed on all licensed child care programs as well as programs that are not required to be licensed but receive subsidy. LB 284 would amend provisions in the Child Care Licensing Act relating to criminal history record information checks. Currently, the law states the Department may investigate the character of applicant or licensee, staff, or members of the licensee's household by making a national criminal history record check. If passed, this legislation will require the Department to conduct FBI fingerprint background checks of all child care providers, staff, and household members of the applicant or licensee.

The federal implementing agency has advised states that failure to be in compliance with federal requirements would jeopardize this vital funding.

I would like to briefly speak to the fiscal note. This bill has no fiscal impact on DHHS; however, it does have an impact on a one of our other agencies, the Nebraska State Patrol. We have been in conversation with our colleagues at the State Patrol in regard to this matter and have provided them information on the anticipated number of licensed childcare providers that would need to be fingerprinted, so we agree and understand the fiscal repercussion to their agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. LB 284 does not align with our mission for more effective, efficient and customer-focused state government, however, it is critical for allowing the agency to continue to receive Child Care and Development Block grant

funding to assist in providing necessary child care services as well as protection for **ALL** children being cared for in licensed settings or those that are not required to be licensed according to the law but that are providing care for families receiving subsidy. We will continue our mission of helping people live better lives by giving all parents assurances that their children are being cared for by individuals who have had these additional background checks completed. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.