

**Health and Human Services Committee**  
**LB 342**  
**February 15, 2017**

**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 – J-O-H-N-S-O-N) and I am a Deputy Director in the Division of Public Health in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). I am here to testify in support of LB 342. Thank you, Senator Erdman, for introducing this bill and working with the Department to adopt the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact and to streamline the licensure process for military spouses.

LB 342 will allow Nebraska to join the new Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact or e-compact. The goal of the Nurse Licensure Compact has always been to improve patient care by allowing nurses to practice freely across state lines with one license. Nebraska has been a member of the original Nurse Licensure Compact since its inception in 2000 and would like to continue to afford RNs and LPNs the ability to practice with one multi-state license by adopting the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact. The Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact will go into effect on December 31, 2018, or when 26 states have joined this new compact. If Nebraska does not act on this legislation, the state will remain in the current (old) compact, restricting compact licensure and its terms to only those states who remain under the original Nurse Licensure Compact.

The Nurse Licensure Compact has many benefits for our state. During times of disaster, the Nurse Licensure Compact allows nurses to easily cross state lines to help patients in need. The Nurse Licensure Compact also helps military families. Military spouses are burdened with applying for a new nursing license each time the family must relocate. Under the Nurse Licensure Compact, the spouse's employment can continue seamlessly. An added benefit of the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact is a higher level of inter-state communication regarding disciplinary cases. Adoption of the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact by Nebraska will ensure that Nebraska-licensed nurses continue to have mobility to practice in all participating states.

The Division of Public Health, Licensure Unit, and the Nebraska Board of Nursing hosted a stakeholder meeting in October 2016 to hear the current Administrator of the Nurse Licensure Compact speak about the current compact and outline proposed changes with the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact. Stakeholders from nursing, medicine, hospitals, long-term care and dialysis were in attendance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and for considering this very important issue for nurses and patients in Nebraska. We believe LB 342 will help DHHS continue in our mission of helping people live better lives. I ask the Committee to advance LB 342 to General File, and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.