

Health and Human Services Committee
LB 690
January 21, 2016

Doug Weinberg, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Good afternoon Senator Campbell and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Doug Weinberg (D-O-U-G W-E-I-N-B-E-R-G). I am the Director of the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. I am here to testify in opposition of LB 690.

Currently, in Nebraska, a person can have up to two felony convictions for possession or use of a controlled substance; and have participated in or completed treatment, and be eligible for SNAP benefits. The Department is supportive of those citizens who strive to overcome drug addiction and meet eligibility standards for assistance by allowing a person to have up to two felony convictions for possession or use of a controlled substance and remain eligible for SNAP benefits.

The bill also eliminates the exclusionary criterion of a felony conviction for the sale or distribution of a controlled substance or the intent to sell or distribute a controlled substance.

LB 690 proposes to remove this language making all offenders eligible regardless of felony drug use or felony drug distribution. The potential inability to participate in the SNAP program will no longer serve as incentive to participate in or complete treatment and a disincentive to dealing illegal substances. As a Director at Health and Human Services, I have stewardship of tax dollars earned by the hard work of our neighbors. The Department cannot support a bill with the potential consequence of the use of tax dollars to support those who choose to sell and distribute addictive drugs to the children and families in our communities.

In addition, the increase in recipients would require additional Department resources to determine and process eligibility. LB 690 would increase the number of SNAP recipients by an estimated number of 777 individuals resulting in the need for additional case managers. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.