

Judiciary Committee

LB 561

March 7, 2013

**Thomas Pristow, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services**

Good afternoon Senator Ashford and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Thomas Pristow (T-H-O-M-A-S P-R-I-S-T-O-W). I am the Director of the Children and Family Services division of the Department of Health and Human Services and I'm here to provide support testimony on LB 561.

My testimony today relates to the creation of the Office of Juvenile Assistance within the judicial branch of state government. I see this as an opportunity to create a seamless juvenile justice system by creating the means to provide community-based services to juveniles in the early stages of court involvement and enabling the juvenile's needs to be met in the least intrusive and least restrictive manner.

I commend the committee for recognizing the importance of developing a uniform and consistent juvenile justice system in the State of Nebraska. As we move forward, the Department will continue to work collaboratively with the Legislature and the Office of Probation Administration to eliminate barriers so juveniles receive the programming and services that are in their best interest and to ensure the safety of the communities of Nebraska. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.