



February 10, 2014

Senator Heath Mello, Chairman – Appropriations Committee
Room 1004, State Capitol
Lincoln NE, 68509

**Re: Support for LB 936 – Funding for the State Ward Permanency Pilot Project:
providing developmental disability services for children in the state’s care**

Dear Chairman Mello and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

All of Nebraska’s children need our protection and care to thrive and reach their full potential. For children in foster care, this means that the child welfare system must respond swiftly and thoughtfully to make sure children have everything they need to have safe, loving, and permanent homes.

Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB 936 because it appropriates funding that will allow critical developmental disabilities services to be provided to qualifying children in or exiting our child welfare system to a permanent home. Not only will this bill ensure that children and families get the services they need, but it will also prevent cost shifting to the child welfare system and allow Nebraska to maximize federal dollars for developmental disabilities services. Additionally, data collection and analysis will provide important information to further improve outcomes for children both involved in the child welfare system and impacted by developmental disabilities.

As our state maintains its commitment to child welfare reform, we must ensure that the specific needs of especially vulnerable children, youth, and families are taken into account. LB 936 provides an important opportunity to both ensure children have access to needed services and to continually evaluate our child welfare system so that we can make strategic and meaningful investments in better care for children and families. We respectfully request you advance this legislation and would be happy to answer any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,

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