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February 14, 2018

Senator Riepe, Chairman – Health and Human Services Committee
Room 1510, Nebraska State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509

RE: Support for LB 1060 – Adopt the Healthy Kids Act and require tests for lead-based hazards in housing

Dear Chairman Riepe and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Our future economic prosperity depends on our ability to ensure that Nebraska kids have the best chances to be healthy in adulthood. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB 1060 because it would identify a serious environmental threat to a child's health prior to occupancy in a home with lead hazards.

Lead poisoning is extremely toxic to childhood development. Lead exposure has been linked to cognitive impairment, diminished brain and nerve function, poor educational outcomes, and behavioral issues or delinquency.ⁱ No level of lead exposure is safe for children, and the best way to address the crippling effect of lead on child development is to prevent exposure.

The Nebraska Legislature took steps to protect our state's children from lead exposure in 2012, passing LB 1038, which created a broad statewide effort that included assessment of blood lead level, public education, and treatment of children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLL). Testing and screening of children for EBLL ensures that children who are exposed to lead are adequately treated, but a comprehensive plan must also prevent exposure from ever occurring.

In 2010, 172 Nebraska children, or 0.7% of those tested,ⁱⁱ had elevated blood lead levels above the "level of concern" as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).ⁱⁱⁱ By contrast, in 2016, 411 Nebraska children, or 1.2% of children tested, had elevated blood lead levels.^{iv}

As blood lead level screening becomes more commonplace for all children, more lead-exposed children in Nebraska are being identified. Nebraska must now turn its efforts toward primary prevention of lead exposure among children by ensuring that environmental risks in housing are identified early.

We thank Senator Wayne for his leadership on this issue and the Committee for their time and consideration. We respectfully urge you to advance LB 1060. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia Tse".

Julia Tse, Policy Coordinator

ⁱ Council on Environmental Health, "Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity," *Pediatrics* 138, no. 1 (2016), <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/1/e20161493.full-text.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ *2011 Kids Count in Nebraska Report*, Voices for Children in Nebraska.

ⁱⁱⁱ Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention, “Low Level Lead Exposure Harms Children: A Renewed Call for Primary Prevention,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012, https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/acclpp/final_document_030712.pdf.

^{iv} *2017 Kids Count in Nebraska Report*, Voices for Children in Nebraska, <http://kidscountnebraska.com/health/#healthrisks>.