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February 6, 2019

To: Chairman Lathrop & Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Juliet Summers, Policy Coordinator for Child Welfare & Juvenile Justice
Re: Support for LB 167, to prohibit conversion therapy

Dear Chairman Lathrop & Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Children and youth deserve to feel safe and supported as they develop their unique identity. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB 167, in particular the provision found in Section 3, (1). This section would prohibit the provision of conversion therapy to minors, ensuring that our state's youth are not harmed by an unscientific, dangerous practice during the delicate years of their personal development.

Conversion or reparative therapy attempts to change a person's sexual identity or orientation. Methods used by therapists vary but aim to inflict shame. Often, minors are subjected to physically or emotionally painful stimuli and the traumatic experience is then associated with their identity. This practice can lead to lifelong trauma and feelings of shame. Moreover, research has indicated that family rejection and episodes of victimization for sexual identity can lead to increased rates of suicide and self-harming behavior in LGBTQ youth.^{1 2}

Major medical, scientific, and professional associations have declared that conversion therapy is dangerous and unnecessary, including the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American School Counselor Association.³ There is no scientific research to show that conversion therapy can change a person's sexual orientation, and should LB 167 pass, Nebraska youth would be safe from exposure to this practice.

We thank Senator Hunt for standing for vulnerable children on this issue, and this Committee for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Summers".

¹ Family Acceptance Project™, *Family rejection as a predictor of negative health outcomes in white and Latino lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults*. Pediatrics, 2009: 123(1), pp 346-52.

² IMPACT, *Mental health disorders, psychological distress, and suicidality in a diverse sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youths*. American Journal of Public Health, 2010: 100(12), pp 2426-32.

³ See Human Rights Campaign, *Policy & Position Statements on Conversion Therapy*.

Available at <https://www.hrc.org/resources/policy-and-position-statements-on-conversion-therapy>