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February 27, 2019

To: Chairman Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Juliet Summers, Policy Coordinator at Voices for Children in Nebraska
Re: Letter of support for LB 516, Change provisions relating to child abuse, the Child Protection and Family Safety Act, human trafficking, and child welfare services

Some of the most vulnerable and voiceless among us are those children subjected to labor or sex trafficking. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB 516, because it would institute additional statutory protections for child victims of trafficking to ensure their needs are met through swift action.

Since 2017, recommendations from the Trafficking Subcommittee of the Nebraska Children's Commission have included as a priority that the Department of Health and Human Services should perform an intake response whenever a child presents with indicators of having been trafficked, *regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator is a caretaker or a third party.*¹ This practice would ensure that children who have been trafficked, whether in-home or out-of-home, have their needs identified and may be matched swiftly with services to prevent revictimization. The Department's current regulation related to intake when trafficking is in question is to distinguish between cases where the caretaker is the identified perpetrator and cases where the perpetrator is a third party. From the trafficked child's perspective, however, the perpetrator is less relevant than the need for safety, support, and a trauma-informed response. We support LB 516 because we believe that providing for an intake and assessment response whenever a child shows indicators of having been trafficked is the first step to ensuring those needs are met.

LB 516 seeks to strengthen protections for an especially vulnerable population, and we thank Senator Pansing Brooks for bringing this legislation forward. We also thank the Committee for your thoughtful consideration and commitment to achieving justice, security, and well-being for all of Nebraska's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliet Summers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

¹ Trafficking Subcommittee of the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee. *Report to the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee*. November 2017. Available at [http://www.childrens.nebraska.gov/PDFs/Reports/SFA/Trafficking%20Report%20\(Final\)%202017.pdf](http://www.childrens.nebraska.gov/PDFs/Reports/SFA/Trafficking%20Report%20(Final)%202017.pdf)