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PRO-KID LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD

Nebraska state senators recently wrapped up the legislative the 106th Legislative Session (2019-2020). The second year of the biennium was suspended in mid-March because of the coronavirus pandemic. When senators reconvened in July, after the world around them had changed, they were limited by legislative procedures in acting on a direct response to the crisis, though two pandemic-related amendments came to a vote. In addition, 14 of Voices for Children's priority bills made it to a vote before the full body. We present our fourth Pro-Kid Legislative Scorecard—a complete accounting of how senators voted when it came to pro-kid policies during the 106th Nebraska Legislature.

SCORECARD METHODOLOGY

The votes included in the Scorecard are the final votes on each bill. All votes consistent with Voices for Children's position on the bill earn one point. We equate "Present - Not Voting" (PNV) votes with a "No" vote. For example, both a "No" and "PNV" vote on a bill we opposed earns one point, while a "Yes" vote earns zero points. Similarly, a "Yes" vote on a bill we supported, such as lowering the gross income limit for food stamps, earns one point, while a "No" and "PNV" vote earns zero points.

We do not count votes that were "Excused - Not Voting" (ENV), so senators have different possible totals based on which votes they were present for.

RESULTS

No senator's tenure is the sum of just a few votes, but we believe it is important to show the public where our elected officials stand on a broad range of issues that matter for kids and families. To that end, the bills we selected cover multiple issue areas that Voices for Children works in: child welfare, economic stability, health, and juvenile justice.

VOICES POSITION		S	S	O	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S - SUPPORT O - OPPOSE		
LD	SENATOR	LB 15	LB 66	LB 147	LB 160	LB 169	LB 230	LB 329	LB 354	LB 390	LB 610	LB 619	LB 848	AM 3172 TO AM 2913 TO LB 866	AM 3205 TO AM 3008 TO LB 1008	LB 1061	LB 1148	VOTED FOR KIDS	TOTAL POSSIBLE	VOTED FOR KIDS/TOTAL POSSIBLE
17	ALBRECHT	Y	N	Y	N	N	PNV	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	PNV	7	16	7/16
14	ARCH	Y	N	Y	Y	PNV	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	10	16	10/16
3	BLOOD	Y	Y	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	15	15/15
29	BOLZ	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	15	16	15/16
23	BOSTELMAN	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	7	16	7/16
32	BRANDT	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	11	16	11/16
43	BREWER	Y	N	Y	PNV	N	Y	PNV	ENV	Y	ENV	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	7	14	7/14
41	BRIESE	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	ENV	Y	Y	10	15	10/15
6	CAVANAUGH	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
11	CHAMBERS	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	15	15/15
2	CLEMENTS	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	7	16	7/16
45	CRAWFORD	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
10	DEBOER	Y	Y	N	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	15	15/15
30	DORN	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	11	16	11/16
47	ERDMAN	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	7	16	7/16
34	FRIESEN	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	N	N	Y	PNV	9	16	9/16
25	GEIST	Y	N	Y	Y	PNV	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	10	16	10/16
40	GRAGERT	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	10	16	10/16
42	GROENE	Y	N	Y	Y	N	PNV	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	ENV	N	N	Y	N	7	15	7/15
33	HALLORAN	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	PNV	Y	N	7	16	7/16
16	HANSEN, B.	Y	N	Y	PNV	PNV	ENV	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	PNV	6	15	6/15
26	HANSEN, M.	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
21	HILGERS	Y	PNV	Y	Y	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	PNV	8	16	8/16
4	HILKEMANN	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	ENV	Y	11	15	11/15
9	HOWARD	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
44	HUGHES	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	N	N	Y	PNV	8	16	8/16
8	HUNT	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
31	KOLOWSKI	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	16	15/16
24	KOLTERMAN	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	12	16	12/16
49	LA GRONE	ENV	N	Y	Y	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	PNV	7	15	7/15
12	LATHROP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	16	15/16
18	LINDSTROM	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	12	16	12/16
39	LINEHAN	Y	N	Y	Y	PNV	Y	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	10	15	10/15
37	LOWE	Y	N	Y	N	N	PNV	N	PNV	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	5	16	5/16
20	MCCOLLISTER	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	16	15/16
5	MCDONNELL	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	13	16	13/16
46	MORFELD	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
22	MOSER	Y	N	Y	ENV	N	Y	N	Y	PNV	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	7	15	7/15
38	MURMAN	Y	N	Y	N	PNV	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	N	N	Y	Y	8	16	8/16
28	PANSING BROOKS	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15	15	15/15
35	QUICK	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	16	16	16/16
19	SCHEER	Y	N	Y	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	11	15	11/15
1	SLAMA	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	PNV	8	16	8/16
48	STINNER	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	PNV	Y	11	16	11/16
7	VARGAS	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	15	16	15/16
15	WALZ	Y	Y	N	ENV	Y	Y	Y	ENV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	Y	13	14	13/14
13	WAYNE	Y	ENV	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	ENV	14	14	14/14
36	WILLIAMS	Y	PNV	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	12	16	12/16
27	WISHART	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	PNV	Y	Y	15	16	15/16

FINAL VOTE:

48-0-0-1	19-23-6-1	32-15-1-1	36-7-2-4	28-16-5-0	44-0-4-1	25-7-14-3	46-0-1-2	48-0-1-0	48-0-0-1	49-0-0-0	35-10-3-1	19-30-0-0	16-28-4-1	46-0-2-1	35-6-7-1
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KEY: **Yes (Y)**
No (N)
PRESENT - No VOTE (PNV)
EXCUSED - No VOTE (ENV)

PRO-KID VOTES

CHILD WELFARE

LB 849 (PANSING BROOKS): LB 849 protects young adults aging out of child welfare cases in tribal court proceedings where the age of majority is 18, by closing a gap in eligibility for the Bridge to Independence Program which previously disallowed entry until Nebraska's age of majority at 19. Under LB 849, age of eligibility for the program is now defined as 19, or 18 if the young adult has aged out of a tribal court proceeding. An amendment made during the summer legislative reconvening sets out the start date for this change until June 2021 due to budgetary concerns following the COVID-19 economic crisis. Voices for Children supported LB 849. The bill was amended into LB 848, which passed into law, 35-10-3 (August 11, 2020).

LB 1061 (CRAWFORD): LB 1061 modifies provisions of child welfare statute relating to the child abuse and neglect hotline reporting, intake process, non-court cases and alternative response model, with the aim of supporting the increased use of voluntary intervention to protect and support children in their own homes, while ensuring children stay safe and all parties understand their rights. LB 1061 authorizes the Department of Health and Human Services to continue using an alternative response approach within the child welfare system. LB 1061 also establishes clearer definitions, safety guidelines and protections for children, families, and caregivers involved in other non-court child welfare cases. It creates an advisory committee through the Nebraska Children's Commission to provide ongoing oversight and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding non-court and alternative response cases. Voices for Children supported LB 1061. The bill passed into law, 46-0-2 (July 21, 2020).

ECONOMIC STABILITY

LB 66 (HANSEN, M.): The bill would have required that cities include an early childhood element when adopting a new comprehensive plan or updating an existing comprehensive plan. Voices for Children supported LB 66. The bill failed to advance from general file, 19-23-6 (February 4, 2019).

LB 160 (QUICK): The bill authorizes the provision of grants and loans by local municipalities for the purposes of developing or expanding quality early childhood programs under the Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act. Voices for Children supported LB 160. The bill passed into law, 36-7-2 (March 15, 2019).

LB 169 (HUNT): The bill would have eliminated the lifetime ban on eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for people with certain drug-related felonies. Voices for Children supported LB 169. A motion to invoke cloture on amendments to the bill failed, 28-16-5 (March 27, 2019).

LB 329 (BOLZ): The bill would have eased the "cliff effect" in the child care subsidy program by increasing the initial income eligibility level from 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to 165% of the FPL, and the transitional income eligibility level from 185% of the FPL to 200% of the FPL. As amended by committee amendment AM 1183, the bill would only increase transitional eligibility to 200% of FPL and leave initial eligibility at 130% of the FPL. Voices for Children supported LB 329. The bill advanced to Select File, (25-7-14) but the Legislature did not take up the bill again before adjourning.

LB 610 (LINDSTROM): The bill was amended to include two bills related to increasing college savings opportunities for low-income Nebraska children. As amended by AM 1771, the bill incorporates LB 544 (Linehan), to create the Meadowlark Scholarship Program, which directs state and private funds towards a seeded Nebraska Educational Savings Plan Trust (NEST) account for every baby born after January 1, 2020. As amended by AM 1365, the bill incorporates LB 547 (Wishart), to create the College Savings Plan Matching Grant Program, which matches contributions made to 529 accounts by low-income families with state funds. Voices for Children supported LB 544 and LB 547. The bill passed into law, 48-0-0 (May 24, 2019).

HEALTH

LB 15 (BLOOD): The bill requires health insurance plans to include coverage for hearing aids and associated services for children under the age of 19. Voices for Children supported LB 15. It passed on final reading with a vote of 48-0-0 (May 23, 2019).

LB 619 (KOLOWSKI): The bill requires that health insurance plans that provide coverage for behavioral health treatment shall cover such services delivered in a school or educational setting. Voices for Children supported LB 619. The bill passed into law, 49-0-0 (April 11, 2019).

JUVENILE JUSTICE

LB 147 (GROENE): LB 147 would have provided legal and administrative immunity for teachers and school staff for use of physical restraint or physical contact with students. It would also have created a new, informal removal process for teachers to remove “unruly” students from the classroom setting for indeterminate lengths of time. Voices for Children opposed LB 147. It was defeated when a motion to invoke cloture and cease debate failed with a vote of 32-15-1 (July 30, 2020).

LB 230 (PANSING BROOKS): LB 230 eliminates the use of administrative and extended “room confinement” or solitary confinement of youth in government-run facilities. Under LB 230, youth in such facilities may only be segregated from their peers, alone during waking hours, when there is an imminent physical threat to self or others, and must be returned to the general population as soon as the threat has abated. The bill also requires notifications be made to parent and attorney whenever a youth is placed in room confinement for longer than one hour under these terms, and that the youth have free access to basic necessities such as food, water, lighting and hygienic materials and the same access as other youth in the facility to educational and reading materials, attorney and family contact, etc., while in room confinement. Voices for Children supported LB 230. The bill passed into law, 44-0-4 (February 6, 2020).

LB 354 (PANSING BROOKS): LB 354 amends several provisions related to the sealing of juvenile records, providing increased protections for youth confidentiality. It makes record sealing automatic in any case where a youth in diversion, or in juvenile or county court successfully completes the terms of his or her program or court order. In cases where a record is not automatically sealed, it sets out a clearer and more streamlined process by which an individual can later request to have it sealed. Voices for Children supported LB 354. The bill passed into law, 46-0-1 (March 21, 2019).

LB 390 (PANSING BROOKS): LB 390 requires any school that contracts for a School Resource Officer to have a memorandum of understanding defining the role and purpose of the officer in the school environment, and sets out training requirements for administration, staff, and officers in teenage development, implicit bias, and disability. Voices for Children supported LB 390. The bill passed into law, 48-0-1 (April 18, 2019).

LB 1148 (VARGAS): LB 1148 creates ongoing juvenile court oversight during the period in which a youth is committed to a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, and sets out a scheme of review hearings and a process for emergency review hearings that can be brought at the request of any party to reconsider a commitment. The bill permits the juvenile court to consider early discharge, with a list of factors to be considered. It requires the juvenile court order committing a youth be an order of commitment to a particular facility and requires the Department of Health and Human Services provide 7-day notice to all parties and opportunity for objection and hearing whenever they intend to move a youth between facilities. A Judiciary Committee Amendment added in provisions of other bills, related to reporting calls to the child abuse and neglect hotline, and how video recordings of child advocacy interviews may and may not be sought, used, and kept for court purposes. Voices for Children supported LB 1148. The bill passed into law, 35-6-7 (July 31, 2020).

COVID-19 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES:

AM 3205 TO AM 3008 TO LB 1008 (CAVANAUGH): This amendment to the mainline budget bill would have allocated a portion of the state's unspent federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) towards an immediate response to the urgent needs of Nebraska families, including increasing child care infrastructure, rental and utility assistance, direct payments to struggling families, food assistance, and child care assistance. Voices for Children supported AM 3205. A motion to adopt AM 3205 failed 16-28-4 (July 28, 2020).

AM 3172 TO AM 2913 TO LB 866 (MORFELD): This amendment to committee amendment AM 2913 to LB 866 would have authorized local governments to declare an eviction moratorium related to the public health emergency. Voices for Children supported AM 3172. A motion to overrule the chair on a germaneness (relating to the relevance of the amendment to the underlying bill) ruling failed 19-30-0 (July 27, 2020).

