February 17, 2021

Thank you Chairman Arch and members of the committee. My name is Julie Erickson and I am representing Voices for Children in Nebraska in support of LB 356.



7521 Main Street, Suite 103 Omaha, Nebraska 68127

(402) 597-3100

www.voicesforchildren.com

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LB 356 is a technical and no cost change to the SNAP program that ensures that children aren’t unnecessarily subject to increased hunger when a parent is sanctioned due to challenges with complying with the program requirements for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program. In Nebraska, this federal program is called Aid to Dependent Children (ADC).

Over 10,000 children in almost 5,000 families participated in the ADC program in 2019. Due to program requirements, a family must have a very low income to be eligible for ADC. Further, the income provided by the program is also minimal when compared to the cost of basic expenses. The monthly average payment per family in 2019 was just $424. Due to the family’s economic circumstances, these children in our state are often most in need of support to ensure that they have meaningful access to opportunity.

The federal program requirements for TANF were updated in the 1990s and are strict and outdated. For minimal income, families are subject to stringent work or education standards that can be challenging to meet in the best of times. During the pandemic, the challenges of meeting program requirements have been exacerbated. It is our understanding that Nebraska is not using the maximum flexibility allowed federally and has resumed “sanctioning” families for not meeting ADC program requirements. Applying this sanction to SNAP, even if the child is still eligible, impacts the family’s overall food budget.

Especially during a global pandemic, we should not be exacerbating child hunger by utilizing the stringent ADC program requirements to penalize families who are also relying on SNAP. We urge the committee to advance LB 356. Thank you.