February 19, 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 516.



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LB 516 clarifies and updates the requirements of our state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, known in Nebraska as Aid to Dependent Children (ADC). The purpose of the program is to provide temporary support to parents who are struggling with meeting their children’s basic needs. 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The federal program requirements for TANF were updated in the 1990s and are stringent and outdated.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.

An increasing amount of work and schooling is currently occurring virtually. After the pandemic, there may be work roles that continue remotely and online education has become increasingly more common. It makes sense for Nebraska to ease meeting program requirements where possible and clarify that those who are working or learning remotely are meeting requirements under the ADC program.

We urge the committee to advance LB 516. Thank you.