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January 31, 2024

To: Chairperson Wayne and Members of the Judiciary Committee
From: Katie Nungesser. Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska
RE: Support of LB 845, Prohibit eviction of certain tenants during the school year

Thank you, Chairperson Wayne and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Katie Nungesser and I am representing Voices for Children in Nebraska in support of LB 845, a piece of legislation that addresses the profound impact of evictions on the well-being of school aged children. We believe that every child deserves access to the essentials required for a healthy, secure, and fulfilling life. Among these essentials, stable housing stands as a cornerstone. LB 845 would ensure that a child's right to a stable home is upheld, particularly during the critical school year.

Evictions are not just legal proceedings; they leave lasting scars on a student's academic success and emotional development. Changing schools, losing valuable education time, experiencing emotional distress- these are all consequences that burden Nebraska's children experiencing the eviction process. The loss also extends to their vital connections with friends and support systems, furthering isolating a child during this time of need.

LB 845 represents more than just a legislative measure; it is an investment in the long-term success of our communities. By preventing school year evictions, we send kids a powerful message that we prioritize them and their well-being. We recognize that their success can be tied to the stability of their living conditions.

In Nebraska, many families struggle with the high cost of housing but the families eligible for assistance and unable to access it, are particularly vulnerable. The 2022 Kids Count Report highlights the reality that over 100,000 children in Nebraska are living in households with a high housing cost burden.¹ Additionally, the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program reported over 3,500 homeless families with children were homeless in 2021 and over 1,300 more families were at risk of homelessness.²

Resources to assist families facing eviction and high housing costs are inadequate and hard to navigate. For example, lack of funding leaves families waiting for years for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. On average nationwide 41 % of applicants wait two to five years to receive a housing voucher and eight percent of applicants wait over five years.³

I acknowledge the complexities surrounding housing policies and the difficulty of balancing diverse interests, but I am urging you to support LB 845 and provide safeguards for families during the school year and allow children to be educated without the looming threat of eviction.

Sincerely,

Katie Nungesser

¹ Kids Count Report 2022. Voices for Children in Nebraska. Housing and Homelessness, Page 52. [Final_KidsCount2022_.pdf \(voicesmain.wpenginepowered.com\)](#)

² [About Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program \(NHAP\)](#)

³ [Families Wait Years for Housing Vouchers Due to Inadequate Funding | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(cbpp.org\)](#)