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To: Chairperson Hansen and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
From: Anahí Salazar, Policy Coordinator for Voices for Children in Nebraska
RE: Opposition for LB 574- Adopt the Let Them Grow Act.

Every child in Nebraska should feel wholly embraced and welcomed as they develop into their own unique personhood. Research repeatedly shows that support and acceptance, from using young people's chosen names, enacting inclusive policies and practices and providing gender-affirming care all support the health and wellbeing of trans young people. For those reasons and more, Voices for Children in Nebraska opposes LB 574.

A holistic look at the wellbeing of youth, including transgendered youth, includes medical care, caring relationships, educational opportunities, and policies that prevent discrimination in every aspect of their life. Supporting young people in their wellbeing allows them to grow to become happy, healthy adults, helping them see they are welcomed and can contribute positively to their communities.¹ Research shows that when transgender individuals received gender affirming care during their adolescence, their wellbeing in young adulthood is similar or even better than other young adults of the same age, with results correlated with the gender affirming medical care they received.² Young people should be welcomed in their individual identities at school, within medical spaces, and in any public setting,

Gender-affirming medical care and mental health outcomes are linked. Polls across the country show that 85% of transgender and nonbinary youth have negatively impacted mental health due to the recent debates around anti-trans bills.³ These debates around gender-affirming care have led to nearly 1 in 3 trans youth not feeling safe to go to the doctor or hospital. The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 45% of LGBTQ youth considered suicide in the past year, and that includes 53% of transgender and nonbinary youth.⁴ Ensuring access to research-based support is thus essential to the health and survival of transgender youth. Blanket policies like banning gender-affirming care put young people at risk for physical and emotional distress, and even self-harm.

Bans like LB 574 put physicians at risk of not providing the medical care their patients need, thus endangering their patients. Medical groups all over the country have spoken in opposition of such bans, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and American Medical Association. Physicians supporting youth with gender-affirming care encompass social, psychological, behavioral, and medical

¹New Poll Emphasizes Negative Impacts of Anti-LGBTQ Policies on LGBTQ Youth." *The Trevor Project*, 19 Jan. 2023, www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/new-poll-emphasizes-negative-impacts-of-anti-lgbtq-policies-on-lgbtq-youth/.

² de Vries, A. L. C., et al. "Young Adult Psychological Outcome after Puberty Suppression and Gender Reassignment." *PEDIATRICS*, vol. 134, no. 4, 8 Sept. 2014, pp. 696–704, pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/134/4/696, [Young adult psychological outcome after puberty suppression and gender reassignment - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25811111/)

³ "New Poll Emphasizes Negative Impacts of Anti-LGBTQ Policies on LGBTQ Youth." *The Trevor Project*, 19 Jan. 2023, www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/new-poll-emphasizes-negative-impacts-of-anti-lgbtq-policies-on-lgbtq-youth/.

⁴ "New Poll Emphasizes Negative Impacts of Anti-LGBTQ Policies on LGBTQ Youth." *The Trevor Project*, 19 Jan. 2023, www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/new-poll-emphasizes-negative-impacts-of-anti-lgbtq-policies-on-lgbtq-youth/.

interventions, all designed to affirm an individual's gender identity. This healthcare practice is set up to best support young people, creating an environment and relationship where young people can feel safe with their emotions, questions, and concerns.⁵

Policies, practices, and care that accept and affirm young people's gender identities can help transgender youth thrive. Adults in children and young people's lives, from parents, to teachers and community members, can help them feel safe, loved, and respected by creating space to let them to be who they are. Nebraska strives to be a safe place for every youth, and that includes access to gender-affirming care. For all these reasons, Voices for Children in Nebraska opposes LB 574 and would respectfully urge the committee to not advance it. Thank you for your time and consideration.

⁵ Boyle, Patrick. "What Is Gender-Affirming Care? Your Questions Answered." AAMC, 12 Apr. 2022, www.aamc.org/news-insights/what-gender-affirming-care-your-questions-answered.