



January 21, 2026

To: Chairperson Bosn, and members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Anahí Salazar, Voices for Children in Nebraska

**RE: Support for LB751, Require a study to improve reporting and investigation of missing Black women and children**

A missing child is every parent's worst nightmare. Studies from the legislature can help improve our responses to crisis, like the “silent epidemic”, a term Black and Native American parents or loved ones have been using to describe their unthinkable experience in looking for their child or family member. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB751, which would require a study to improve reporting missing Black women and children.

According to the National Crime Information Center, in 2024 there were over 349,000 reported missing children, aged 0-17 years old. Black children account for over 141,000 of those missing<sup>1</sup>. Black children are overrepresented, making up 33% of missing children<sup>2</sup>, while making up 14% of the population in the United States<sup>3</sup>. There are no federal standards about how law enforcement agencies should investigate missing persons. There is no singular agency with the responsibility of overseeing all missing persons' cases or how cases are handled through law enforcement. There are standards for reporting a missing person and laws vary widely by state on what databases cases are entered into. Data is sparse and difficult to locate, but what is consistent is the percentage of overrepresented Black missing children.

In 2019, the Legislature passed LB154, which required a study of missing Native women and children in Nebraska. The results showed that two-thirds of Nebraska’s reported missing persons were minors (18 years old or younger). This report then led to collaborations with state agencies on further examining the context of missing Native children and women, specifically for out-of-home care placements.<sup>4</sup> Reports are helpful in identifying issues across trends and data, finding possible solutions, and analyzing the impact solutions can have. Reports also shed light on disparities, such as the noted responses in Amber Alert usage due to differences in case classification (e.g., “runaway” vs. “endangered”).

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<sup>1</sup> [2024 NCIC Missing and Unidentified Person Statistics — FBI](#).

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, [Our Impact](#), 2024.

<sup>3</sup> [Child population by race and ethnicity | KIDS COUNT Data Center](#).

<sup>4</sup> Nystrom, A., Wood, H., Cox, L., Richards, T.N., & Gross, M. (2022). [Special Report: Examining Missingness among Children in Out-of-Home Care Placements in Nebraska](#). Submitted to the Nebraska Legislator, February 7, 2022.

A study that further reports the systemic factors that could be leading to missing Black women and children in Nebraska such as poverty, housing instability or foster care involvement could be tracked and seen, as well as including policy recommendations to help mitigate the harm to Black communities across Nebraska. The study could also show the implications for public safety, and how Black women and children can remain safe across the state.

We want to thank Senator Spivey for bringing such important legislation and the committee for your time and consideration.