



February 25, 2026

To: Chairperson Bosn and members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Katie Nungesser, Voices for Children in Nebraska

**Re: Opposition of LB 1060, Adopt the Child Placement Services Preservation Act**

Child welfare policy must prioritize the best interests, safety, stability, and timely permanency of children. Every decision in this system should be guided first by what children need to heal, grow, and thrive. Voices for Children is in opposition to LB 1060, although it is framed as a bill about protecting providers and preserving capacity, when examined through a child welfare lens, it raises serious concerns. The structure and substance of this bill center institutional protections rather than children's access to timely, nondiscriminatory, and stable placements.

The bill does not establish the child's best interest as the standard. It does not require that service refusals avoid placement delays. It does not ensure that refusals protect a child's path to permanency. There is no safeguard to prevent a refusal from prolonging time in foster care, emergency placements, or congregate care.

Delays in placement are not neutral. They increase trauma, instability, and harm. Every extra day without a permanent, stable home matters for a child's emotional health, educational stability, and long-term outcomes. As of December 2025, over 4,000 children were in out of home placements in Nebraska and 413 is the average number of days in out of home care for these children.<sup>1</sup>

LB 1060 also creates a real risk of discrimination affecting children. While the bill uses broad language about sincerely held religious beliefs, the practical impact is clear. It allows agencies to refuse services in ways that can reduce placement options for children. This can affect children who need kinship placements, children who need culturally appropriate placements, LGBTQ+ youth, and children with LGBTQ+ parents or caregivers.

Children pay the price when adult belief systems limit the pool of safe and loving homes available to them. Fewer placement options means longer waits, greater instability, and higher risk of placement disruption.

The referral requirement in the bill does not solve this problem. A referral is not the same as access. The bill does not require that the alternative agency has capacity, is geographically accessible, or can place a child without delay. In many parts of rural Nebraska, there may be no

---

<sup>1</sup> Foster Care Review Office. (2025, December). *December 2025 quarterly report – final* (Report). Nebraska Foster Care Review Office. <https://fcro.nebraska.gov/pdf/FCRO-Reports/FCRO%20December%202025%20Quarterly%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf>

realistic alternative at all. The result is children waiting longer or being placed farther from family, school, and community connections.

LB 1060 also weakens state oversight. The broad definition of adverse action restricts the state's ability to use contracting, funding, and accountability mechanisms when agencies refuse services. This limits the state's ability to respond to patterns of exclusion, protect equitable access to placements, and ensure that public funds serve children's best interests.

The liberal construction clause further amplifies this harm by directing courts to interpret the law broadly in favor of agency protections. When agency beliefs conflict with a child's needs, the structure of the bill tilts away from the child.

Finally, the bill contains no accountability measures. There is no requirement to track placement delays, time to permanency, disrupted placements, or impacts on specific groups of children. There is no data collection to assess whether children are being harmed. A child-centered system must measure outcomes for children, not just protections for institutions.

From a child welfare perspective, LB 1060 is not a child-centered bill. It prioritizes agency protections over children's needs. It increases the risk of delayed or denied placements. It weakens state oversight and accountability. It creates inequitable access to permanency for vulnerable children.

If Nebraska's goal is to strengthen the child welfare system, legislation must be built around children's rights and outcomes. At minimum, a child-centered approach would include a clear best interests of the child standard, safeguards against placement delays, protections against discriminatory impact on children, preservation of meaningful state oversight, and required reporting on child outcomes.

Children should not bear the consequences of adult belief-based exclusions. Public systems exist to serve children, not institutions. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to oppose LB 1060.

Thank you to this committee for your time and for your commitment to Nebraska's children.