



February 5, 2026

To: Chairperson Hansen and Members of the Executive Board

From: Katie Nungesser, Director of Youth Justice and Child Welfare Policy for Voices for Children in Nebraska

RE: Support for LB 1155- Change provisions relating to legislative oversight

Children deserve to be safe, seen, and protected when they are in the care of state systems. Voices for Children is in support of LB 1155 because this bill strengthens the systems designed to protect children, particularly those involved in child welfare and the juvenile justice system, by improving oversight, accountability, and transparency.

At its core, LB 1155 ensures that when the state exercises authority over children, especially in restrictive or institutional settings, there is meaningful, timely, and independent oversight. That oversight is not abstract. It directly affects children's safety, well being, and long term outcomes.

We appreciate the clarification that probation administrators must provide requested records to the Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare within five business days. Delays in access to records delay investigations. Delays in investigations mean children can remain in unsafe or inappropriate situations longer than necessary. Timely access to information allows the Office of the Inspector General to do its job effectively, identifying systemic problems early, responding to critical incidents, and making recommendations that prevent harm before it happens.

LB 1155 also strengthens the intent language of the Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare Act by explicitly including the juvenile justice system. This matters because many children move between systems, and their experiences do not fit neatly into administrative silos. Oversight that fully recognizes the intersection between child welfare and juvenile justice is essential to understanding how policies and practices impact children in real life, not just on paper.

The bill's updates to room confinement reporting are especially significant for kids. Room confinement is a serious harmful intervention that can have lasting effects on a child's mental health, development, and sense of safety. By standardizing definitions and creating consistent, centralized reporting, the Legislature can more confidently compare data across facilities and identify patterns of overuse. Past reports from the Inspector General

already show that room confinement is happening too frequently and for extended periods in some settings. Clear, uniform data will not only reveal where the greatest discrepancies exist but also guide reforms to ensure this practice is used only when absolutely necessary, protecting the wellbeing of every child in care. **It's important to remember that each data point represents a real child—living through one of the most difficult and frightening moments of their young life.**

LB 1155 also strikes an appropriate balance between transparency and confidentiality. Allowing Inspector General Offices to share confidential information with legislative leadership when necessary helps keep the Legislature informed of emerging issues, while maintaining strict protections to ensure sensitive information is not improperly disclosed. This ensures accountability without compromising children's privacy or safety.

Finally, this bill reinforces the independence and effectiveness of legislative oversight by streamlining reporting and clarifying roles. Strong oversight systems are one of the most powerful tools we have to prevent abuse, neglect, and systemic failure. When oversight works well, it reduces the likelihood of crisis, litigation, and long term harm to children.

LB 1155 may appear technical, but its impact is deeply human. It strengthens the structures that protect children who are already among the most vulnerable in our state. By supporting timely investigations, better data on room confinement, and clearer oversight authority, this bill helps ensure that Nebraska's child welfare and juvenile justice systems are accountable to the children they serve.

For these reasons, I urge this board to advance LB 1155. Thank you for your time and your commitment to Nebraska's children.