



February 18, 2026

To: Members of the Executive Board

From: Katie Nungesser, Voices for Children in Nebraska

**Re: Support of LR 304, Designate the Legislative Oversight Committee to review, investigate, and assess the effect of child welfare efficiency practices on child safety, quality of services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, and public and private workforce stability**

Children deserve to be safe, seen, and protected when they are in the care of Nebraska state systems. Voices for Children in Nebraska is in support of LR 304 as legislative oversight is a necessary piece of successfully reforming our child welfare system. We have watched with some concern as Nebraska's child welfare system has undergone structural and financial changes including major budget cuts to Department and Health and Human Services in 2024 Special Session.

As of November 30, 2025, the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of more than five thousand children. These are not abstract numbers. These are children who have experienced trauma, disruption, and uncertainty, and who depend on the adults in this system to make careful, informed, and stable decisions about their lives. For them, policy choices are not theoretical. They shape daily reality.

This resolution recognizes that efficiency efforts and system restructuring must never come at the expense of child safety, stability, and wellbeing. It appropriately calls for careful legislative oversight to assess how these changes are affecting outcomes for children and families, the quality and continuity of services, and the stability of the public and private workforce that carries this work forward.

We strongly support the focus on evidence-based interventions, placement stability, and case manager continuity. Decades of research and practice show that children do better when they experience fewer placements, consistent relationships with caring adults, and access to services that are grounded in proven models. These are not luxuries. They are foundational to healing, permanency, and healthy development.

We also support the resolution's attention to workforce stability. High turnover, unmanageable caseloads, and frequent structural shifts weaken the system's ability to protect children and support families. A stable and supported workforce is essential for good decision making, ethical practice, and long-term outcomes.

Importantly, this resolution creates a framework for transparency and accountability. By examining the return on investment for consultant recommendations, the continuity of services across the state, and the system of fiscal and performance accountability, the Legislature affirms that public dollars must be aligned with measurable benefits for children and families.

This proposed oversight is about learning, improving, and ensuring that Nebraska's child welfare system is built on sound evidence, strong partnerships, and clear accountability. It is about making sure that efficiency efforts strengthen the system rather than fragment it, and that reforms lead to safer children, stronger families, and healthier communities.

We urge your support for this resolution and for a thorough, child centered review process that keeps safety, permanency, and wellbeing at the core of every decision. Nebraska's children deserve nothing less.

Thank you for Senator Fredrickson for introducing this legislative resolution and this committee your time and consideration.