



8 February 2019

Senator Sara Howard, Chair
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB459

Madam Chair and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of First Five Nebraska, I would like to submit our testimony in support of LB459.

Our organization is committed to working with policymakers to find practical and fiscally responsible solutions for closing the achievement gap affecting young children in need. When children enter kindergarten developmentally behind their peers, they often struggle to catch up even with the benefit of school-age interventions. In fact, research indicates that these children typically continue to fall further behind as they progress through the K-12 system. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is instrumental to Nebraska's efforts to close the achievement gap. Therefore, it is imperative that Nebraska maintain good standing in its partnership with the federal Administration for Children and Families' Office of Child Care. LB459 can help us do so by bringing our state into compliance with federal regulations.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant is the law that authorizes the CCDF. A stipulation of the 2014 reauthorization of this law is that FBI fingerprint background checks will be conducted for licensed child care providers to whom this bill applies. This is an important part of the thorough background checks that help us ensure the safety and well-being of our children. There is added urgency in passing this bill because states that fail to comply with this portion of the reauthorization risk a 5% penalty, which would cost our state nearly \$2.5 million.

We applaud this committee for its ongoing work to promote the health and well-being of all Nebraskans, especially our youngest children. We also commend Nebraska's Child Care and Development Fund Administrator—Nicole Vint—for her efforts to ensure Nebraska does not incur unnecessary fiscal penalties for noncompliance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant reauthorization. We hope you will see fit to move LB459 to General File

Sincerely,

Adam Feser
Policy Associate
First Five Nebraska