



8 February 2019

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

RE: LB590

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 LB590 and its amendment, AM240.

As you know, child care licensing is an important, but labor-intensive factor in verifying that providers meet core standards set by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for ensuring the health and well-being of children in their care. Currently, this process requires providers and state agency personnel to manually maintain and coordinate hard copy records of professional training and credentials. This is a necessary process, but one we can do more efficiently and with greater accountability for public dollars. LB590 and its amendment are designed to make that possible.

As amended, LB590 offers a way to integrate the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Records System into the state's child care licensing verification process. As an online system, it offers an alternative to making onsite visits to providers to check and coordinate hard copy records of staff credentials and trainings. It also reduces hours spent tracking down replacement records when that documentation goes missing—a problem that has required Nebraska's Early Childhood Training Center to revise its own policies on the amount of time it spends on these requests.

With AM240 in place, LB590 allows providers the choice to adopt NECPRS as their preferred method for managing professional records to meet licensing requirements, or continue using the existing, paper-based system. However, NECPRS can greatly simplify the record-keeping process and minimize the time providers must spend in meeting with DHHS personnel to check hard copy documentation. That means providers can focus more of their attention where it matters the most—on guiding the healthy development of children in their care.

Our best estimate suggests that well over half of Nebraska's child care providers are already registered in NECPRS. We are confident that, as providers encounter the benefits of this system through the child care licensing process, more will adopt it as their preferred method for coordinating professional records with the Department of Health and Human Services. As that momentum grows, we believe they will become more engaged in using it to manage their career

pathways and professional development and strengthen a critically important sector of Nebraska's statewide workforce.

We appreciate Senator Briese's leadership in introducing this legislation, as well as the state agency personnel whose insight provided crucial context for this issue. We believe LB590 exemplifies the principles of fiscal responsibility and administrative efficiency we should expect of public policies, especially those which directly affect the early care and development of young children.

We hope you will advance LB590 as amended to General File.

Sincerely,

Adam Feser
Policy Associate
First Five Nebraska