



February 2, 2023

Senator Ben Hansen, Chair
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB65

Chairperson Hansen and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Dr. Katie Bass and I am the Data and Policy Research Advisor representing First Five Nebraska. First Five Nebraska is a statewide public policy organization focused on supporting policies that promote quality early care and learning experiences for young children in Nebraska. I am here today to testify in support of LB65. I want to thank Senator Day for introducing this legislation.

During the LR266 interim study this past summer, concerns were raised about investigations of licensing violations that may be serious, but do not rise to the level of a child abuse investigation. In instances where a licensing violation has been documented and the result of the violation is one of the statutorily defined disciplinary actions against a child care license outlined in Neb. Rev. Statute 71-1920, there is no statutory requirement to notify parents. LB65 requires the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to provide notice by mail to all parents and guardians of children attending licensed child care when there is a disciplinary action against the child care license.

To be clear, there are many different types of licensing violations that can range from needing to caulk a toilet to inappropriate use of discipline against a child. This legislation would not require a mailed notice for every documented violation, but only those serious enough to lead to the issuance of a probationary license, the revocation of a license, a civil penalty or restrictions on enrollments or services.

This notification empowers parents to make informed decisions about their child care. It also encourages dialogue between the provider and parents about how the violation either did affect or could affect the care their child receives and what is being done to remedy the violation.

A second element of LB65 is adding information to the complaint tracking system for licensees under the Child Care Licensing Act. In discussions with child care providers during the LR266 interim, they expressed frustration because it was difficult for parents to differentiate self-reported licensing violations from complaint-related licensing violations. For example, if a child care business owner learns of an employee who uses inappropriate discipline against a child, they are obligated to report the incident to child care licensing and will take actions up to and including firing the offending employee, however, the incident is tracked as a violation against the business owner's child care license. LB65 would not change this, but would identify when a violation was the result of self-reporting or a complaint. This additional piece of information is important to providers and to prospective and current families as they educate themselves on child care options.

Nebraska is fortunate to have early childhood educators who make children's safety their top priority. When safety concerns do arise, it is important that we are transparent and accountable to the parents who are entrusting their children to the care of others. Thank you for your time today and for your consideration of LB65. I am happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Bass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "K" and "B".

Katie Bass, Ph.D.
Data and Policy Research Advisor
First Five Nebraska