



January 22, 2025

Senator Carolyn Bosn, Chair
Members of the Judiciary Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB51

Chair Bosn and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit online comment for the public record as a proponent of LB51. I would like to share context on the background check process for the child care workforce, which illustrates the need for LB51.

The reauthorized federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 requires states to conduct a comprehensive set of criminal background checks for all child care professionals prior to employment and renewal once every five years. After enactment of state legislation to comply with federal requirements in 2019 and 2020, a large influx of background checks in subsequent years caused delays, leading to disruptions in child care and in some cases programs shutting down.

During that time, First Five Nebraska fielded numerous complaints from child care providers, already experiencing a 30% turnover rate during the height of the delays in 2022. In a profession with a median hourly wage of \$13.34 at that time, many applicants simply left the profession for other occupations. According to a Legislative Audit Office report released in 2024, at its peak, the average yearly processing time for background checks was 46 days. Since then, the Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) and the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP) have implemented improvements to speed up the process.

LB51 will build upon those improvements by creating efficiencies with the national and interstate fingerprint-based background checks required by CCDBG. This will contribute to stability in Nebraska's child care industry and ensure a more streamlined process, especially in light of federally required five-year renewals in future years.

First Five Nebraska appreciates the efforts of NDHHS and NSP for their responsiveness to child care providers across the state by implementing various process improvements and Senator Ibach for her efforts in introducing LB51. Realizing efficiencies and cost savings to the state will minimize disruptions to child care, a critical industry for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I encourage the Committee to advance LB51 to General File.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchell Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mitchell Clark
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