

# Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

March 6, 2018

Dear Senators:

Disability Rights Nebraska is the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for persons with disabilities in Nebraska. People with disabilities have human and legal rights that protect their health, safety, personal integrity and self-determination and we work to protect and advocate for vulnerable people with disabilities to ensure they are free from death, abuse, neglect, and violations of their rights. As such, we fully support LR 288.

A review of death and abuse of children who are involved in the child welfare system, under the care of the Department of Health and Human Services, and the procedures that are in place to protect them is needed. The [incidents](#) that have occurred in the [adult service system](#) of Nebraska Health and Human Services should give the legislature pause and propel the legislature to conduct such a review of the child welfare system as called for in LR 288. Given the status of the children under the focus on LR 288, that is children under the care of the state, it should be incumbent upon the state to ensure that these children are safe and the processes are in place and are adequate to ensure that these children are protected by their caregiver—the state. Abuse at the hands of those who are supposed to protect the children under LR 288 has significant effects on the health, well-being, and psychological state of children; the legislature should examine and understand not only the scope of the issue, but also the mechanisms that are in place to protect children in the child welfare system and how effective they may or may not be.

Disability Rights Nebraska recommends advancing LR 288.