

# Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

**Testimony on LB 1004  
Before the Health and Human Services Committee  
Nebraska Legislature  
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Good afternoon Senator Riepe and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Brad B-R-A-D Meurrens M-E-U-R-R-E-N-S and I am the Public Policy Director for Disability Rights Nebraska, the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for people with disabilities in Nebraska. I am here today in strong support of LB 1004.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) project has demonstrated that there is a need for a “no wrong door” or “single point of contact” system whereby aging individuals and their families as well as individuals with disabilities and their families can get help and information. Disability is a natural part of the human experience. The longer we live, the chances of having a disability is increased. Aging and disability present significant life changes that affect not only the individual but often their families, too. However, this is often not a situation that many individuals and/or families plan for and is a situation that often requires individuals and/or families to possess a wealth of information in order to navigate (and access) public health and service systems. Individuals and families can feel overwhelmed as aging occurs and/or disability becomes present and they are going to have many questions about what to do, what is available, what are the options, and how to put things in motion. Simply put, they need help and information. This is especially important for those individuals who have an aging- or disability-related need but have no family, friends, or advocates who can help them figure it out. Having a singular place to get that help or information is critical, rather than have individuals and families fend for themselves. That’s the purpose of the ADRCs and why we support the change from a demonstration project. Data from the Year 2 Evaluation Report<sup>1</sup> indicate that the ADRCs have helped thousands of Nebraskans (including my family) to get the information and help they needed to assist with aging and/or disability issues:

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<sup>1</sup> “Nebraska’s Aging and Disability Resource Center Pilot: Year 2 Evaluation Report” (2017) available at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Reports/ADRC%20Evaluation%20Year%202%20Report%20-%202017.pdf>

- The ADRCs had 12,198 contacts from 6,329 different individuals from July 1, 2016, the beginning of the pilot period, to September 30, 2017. Of these individuals, 1,805 received basic information, 4,776 received I&R [Information and Referral], and 572 received Options Counseling or Enhanced Options Counseling.
- The ADRCs had 895 contacts from 341 different people ages 18-60. There were also a small number of contacts for children and individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Of these individuals, 74 received basic information, 296 received I&R [Information and Referral], and 49 received Options Counseling or Enhanced Options Counseling (Note: An individual is counted more than once if they receive more than one type of service, however the total reflects unique individuals).

However, we would suggest one small language change: to strike the words “congenital and acquired” in section 6 and leave it as “persons with disabilities”. We do not believe that such a delineation is necessary. However, that does not affect our support for the bill.

We recommend that the committee advance LB 1004.