

Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

March 29, 2018

Dear Senators:

Disability Rights Nebraska, the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for people with disabilities in Nebraska, writes in support of including the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) within LB 793 and extending the date to resume the guarantee for graduates with disabilities to receive services under the Developmental Disabilities Services Act.

As for LB 793, we were opposed to the initial proposal to remove the guarantee to developmental disability services permanently. Recognizing the difficult work of advocates to insert an entitlement to services in existing statute and the key role that this can and does play in the receipt of services for people with developmental disabilities, we would prefer that Nebraska retain its entitlement language—even if this retention is pushed out a few years. Our position is that this guarantee is a tool that families and individuals can utilize to procure services.

We support the inclusion of the language from LB 1004 into LB 793. The ADRC project has demonstrated that there is a need for a “no wrong door” or “single point of contact” system whereby individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as aging individuals and their families, can get help and information. Aging and disability present significant life changes that affect not only the individual but often their families. 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 their 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.

Disability Rights Nebraska encourages the legislature to amend LB 793 as proposed by Senator Bolz and advance the amended bill.

For further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience: brad@drne.org, or 402-474-3183.

Sincerely,

Brad Meurrens

Public Policy Director
Disability Rights Nebraska