

Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

March 10, 2020

Dear Senators:

Disability Rights Nebraska, the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for people with disabilities in Nebraska, writes in support of LB 1144.

Increased transparency in reports by the Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare over the last few years have already greatly expanded public dialogue about problems ranging from sexual abuse of state wards, the use of solitary confinement in youth facilities across the state, the lack of collaboration between DHHS and county attorneys, and more. LB 1144's expanded reporting to the Inspector General—and, in turn, the availability of these reports to stakeholders and the public—should provide unique insight into conditions at the YRTCs as we continue to improve outcomes for the youth placed there, their families, and the larger community. Additionally, we support the creation of the oversight committee in Section 4 to increase the level of transparency and oversight of operation and outcomes of the YRTC. We also support the annual structural and operational review undertaken by the Public Counsel in Section 15.

Disability Rights Nebraska recommends LB 1144 be advanced.

If there are further questions or comment, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience: brad@drne.org or 402-474-3183.

Sincerely,

Bradley A. Meurrens, MPA

Public Policy Director
Disability Rights Nebraska