

# Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

## Testimony on LB 678

Before the Business and Labor Committee  
Nebraska Legislature

February 13, 2023

Brad Meurrens  
Public Policy Director  
Disability Rights Nebraska

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 with Disability Rights Nebraska. We are the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for people with disabilities in Nebraska. I am here today in support of LB 678.

People with disabilities comprise almost 13% of our state's population—just shy of 250,000 people—and there are Nebraskans with disabilities in every county<sup>1</sup>. When compared to their peers without disabilities, they experience significant gaps across a spectrum of metrics — including employment. For example, data from the American Community Survey reports that in 2021, 56.2% of working-age Nebraskans with disabilities were employed, whereas 84.8% of working-age Nebraskans without disabilities were employed<sup>2</sup>.

Employment continues to be a priority policy issue for Nebraskans with disabilities. They want to work and the ability to enjoy the independence, dignity, and income that comes with employment as well as the ability to access the same luxuries, lifestyle choices, and social/community opportunities as their peers without disabilities. Then-President George H.W. Bush describes this as a central thrust of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a reason he signed the legislation into law.

As the designated Protection and Advocacy organization, Disability Rights Nebraska has consistently supported attempts by the legislature and others to increase competitive, integrated employment opportunities for Nebraskans with disabilities. Harmonizing existing state and federal definitions, so that all parties are using the same vocabulary and have a clear, mutual understanding of the current law, will benefit not only employers but (potential) employees with disabilities.

Disability Rights Nebraska recommends advancing LB 678.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A.J. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2023. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2023 | Disability Statistics & Demographics, available at [www.disabilitycompendium.org](http://www.disabilitycompendium.org)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.