



January 28, 2026

Senator Brian Hardin, Chair  
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee  
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB891

Chairman Hardin and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mitchell Clark (M-I-T-C-H-E-L-L C-L-A-R-K), a Policy Advisor at First Five Nebraska. We are a statewide public policy organization focused on the early care and education of Nebraska's youngest children. I am here in support of LB891 and want to thank Senator Hansen for introducing the bill.

At its core, LB891 is about reducing unnecessary administrative and regulatory barriers so child care providers can focus on what matters most—providing safe, high-quality care for children. To better understand where current rules are creating friction, First Five Nebraska held listening sessions with child care providers across the state last fall. The bill before you reflects many of the challenges they raised.

**LB891 addresses background check delays.** Child care providers consistently tell us that long waits for background checks make it harder to hire and keep staff. LB891 addresses this challenge in two important ways:

- It allows individuals who receive a qualifying result on either the state or federal fingerprint-based background check to begin working under supervision while the remaining checks are completed.
- And it establishes background check portability. Under this provision, individuals who have received qualifying background check results within the past five years—and who have not had a break in child care employment longer than 180 days—would not be required to resubmit fingerprints and could begin working immediately.

**LB891 improves transparency in public records.**

LB891 gives families clearer information by identifying the source of licensing violations—whether they resulted from a complaint, an unannounced inspection or a provider self-report. Providers agree that transparency is important, but they also want a system that fairly reflects responsible behavior, including when they self-report issues and take corrective action.

**LB891 provides flexibility around volunteers.**

Staffing shortages are particularly acute in rural communities. This bill allows qualified volunteers who have completed background checks and required training to count in ratio at a provider's discretion. That flexibility can be the difference between a program remaining open or closing.

Under the bill, volunteers may count in ratio, under supervision, after completing background checks. Volunteers working more than 20 hours per week in a nonfamily home setting must meet staff qualification requirements, including a minimum of 45 clock hours of training. Volunteers who meet staff qualifications and annual training requirements may count in ratio without supervision.

**LB891 removes unnecessary local barriers for in-home providers.**

LB891 prevents local ordinances from requiring a family child care provider to live in the home where care is provided. This helps expand child care options in residential areas while still allowing cities to enforce reasonable rules related to neighborhood safety, traffic and parking.

**Conclusion**

The licensing system plays a critical role in ensuring safety and quality. But when administrative processes become inefficient or unnecessarily restrictive, they add pressure to an already fragile system. LB891 takes a thoughtful, balanced approach by maintaining safeguards while removing barriers that do not advance child safety or quality.

Thank you Chairman Hardin and members of the Health and Human Services Committee for your consideration today. I urge you to advance LB891. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mitchell Clark".

Mitchell Clark  
Policy Advisor  
First Five Nebraska