



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **State Senator DeBoer Names LB304 as Personal Priority Bill for 2026**

#### ***Policymakers, Advocates, Business Leaders and Parents Gather at Capitol to Ask State Lawmakers to Protect Child Care Assistance by Passing LB304***

LINCOLN, NE – Policymakers, business leaders, working parents and child care advocates gathered for a news conference in support of [LB304](#) Thursday, where State Senator Wendy DeBoer (District 10), announced that the child care bill would be her personal priority bill for the session.

“Across our state, families are doing exactly what we ask of them,” Senator DeBoer said. “They’re working hard, raising their children and contributing to their communities. Yet too many parents are struggling to find and afford quality child care—not because they aren’t working, but because our child care system is stretched to a breaking point. LB304 responds to that reality.”

Joining Senator DeBoer at the news conference was State Senator Bob Hallstrom (District 1); Derek Branch, Nebraska Football Player; Hunter Traynor, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry Executive Vice President for Legislation and Policy and Hayley Overman, a working mom of three kids.

Branch touched on his experience as a player for the Nebraska Cornhuskers to point out that the strength of a team depends on how solid the foundation is. He said for our state, one of those foundational pieces is quality child care.

“Nebraska has been doing its part—holding a line steady so families can be successful, but also so businesses and communities can create local solutions to the workforce and talent challenges they face,” Branch said. “Now is not the time to drop the ball. I respectfully ask Governor Pillen and the Nebraska Legislature to stand shoulder to shoulder with working families and their children by passing LB304.”

Overman talked about her personal experience as a working mom.

“I know firsthand the challenges working parents face as we try to balance child care and work,” Overman said. “After losing my husband, I also lost the second income our family depended on. Overnight, everything changed. I had to re-evaluate every part of our budget and make difficult decisions about how to keep our home, pay the mortgage, cover our bills and put food on the table for my kids. Child care assistance makes it possible for me to work and provide for my family.”

Traynor pointed out the economic impacts associated with child care. According to a recent report released by First Five Nebraska, the Nebraska Chamber Foundation and the Bureau of Business Research at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the estimated annual impact of inadequate child care in Nebraska, both directly and indirectly, is \$1.74 billion in lost business output and \$1.61 billion in lost labor income.

“In Nebraska, access to affordable and reliable child care is a critical factor in workforce participation, talent attraction and retention,” Traynor said. “Addressing the state’s child care challenges is vital to growing our economy. LB304 would prevent tremendous disruption to thousands of Nebraska families and countless small businesses trying to grow in an extremely tight labor market.”

Senator Hallstrom echoed those economic and workforce concerns.

“Across Nebraska, employers are facing serious workforce challenges,” Hallstrom said. “When parents lose access to reliable child care, they are often forced to step away from work—and businesses lose dependable employees. LB304 helps keep parents on the job and employers fully staffed. This is a practical, Nebraska-focused investment—one that supports work, strengthens families and keeps businesses competitive in both rural and urban communities.”

By making current income eligibility requirements permanent, Senator DeBoer said LB304 protects access to child care assistance for working families who are already walking a financial tightrope.

“Without this bill, families could lose the care they depend on—forcing impossible choices between paying for housing, putting food on the table or keeping a job,” DeBoer said. “Let’s be clear: this is not just a family issue. This is an economic issue.”

LB304 is a carryover bill from 2024. The bill was referenced to the Health and Human Services Committee and had a hearing last January. For more information on LB304 and what the bill does, please check out this policy brief, [LB304: Maintaining current child care subsidy income eligibility levels set to expire](#).

*Since 2011, First Five Nebraska has been a leading voice in supporting public policies that advance the early care, education, and development of young children and positive maternal-child health outcomes. We bring together deep expertise in policy advisement, research and analysis, and strategic engagement to identify solutions to Nebraska’s most urgent early childhood challenges—and grow the political will needed to move them forward.*

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