

February 14, 2007

Senator Joel Johnson, Chairman
Health and Human Services Committee of the Nebraska Legislature
State Capitol, Room 1110
Lincoln, NE

RE: LB 523

Dear Senator Johnson,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc., the Center for Disability Rights, Law, and Advocacy to offer our support for LB 523. We are the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for people with disabilities in Nebraska. We believe the creation of the Quality Home Care Council proposed in LB 523 is a viable way of providing greater oversight to ensure the provision of quality home-care services. Consequently, people who utilize home-care services will have more confidence that their home-care service workers are highly qualified and will provide the best service possible.

We believe the establishment of a centralized registry of individuals working as home-care service staff will help to ensure continuity of home-care services in situations where an individual's home-care worker is unavailable to provide services due to an illness, inclement weather, etc. Persons who rely on home-care services should not be forced to forgo services due to the unavailability of a qualified home-care worker, nor should they be forced to endure inferior services because a qualified candidate is unknown or unavailable.

We strongly support the language in Section 7 specifying the right of the individual receiving home-care services to hire and fire the person providing home-care services. We also support the language in Section 6 (3) that gives the consumer the option of selecting a home-care worker not identified on or referred from the registry. People who use home-care services should have as much choice about and control over the services they receive as possible.

Finally, we request that you add language to Section 4 (1) regarding specific representatives of organizations identified to serve on the Council. We suggest adding a representative from a Center for Independent Living and a representative from a statewide or national disability advocacy organization to the list of required council members.

Senator Johnson
LB 523
February 14, 2007
Page two

We appreciate this opportunity to provide our support for LB 523 and hope that you will amend LB 523 as we have requested. If you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact Brad Meurrens in our office at 474-3183 or brad@nas-pa.org.

Sincerely,

Eric A. Evans
Director of Governmental and External Relations
Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc

EAE/BAM/jrm

CC: Sen. Gay, Sen. Erdman, Sen. Hansen, Sen. Howard, Sen. Pankonin, Sen. Stuthman, and Sen. Aguilar