LWV

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEBRASKA**

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February 17, 2016

Senator Les Seiler
Chair, Judiciary Committee
Room 1113
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
   Opposition to LB975

Dear Senator Seiler and Committee Members:

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Nebraska (LWVNE) wishes to voice its opposition to LB975. Like the national LWV, LWVNE "supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples." Since state law and practice currently allow same-gender couples to adopt children, it seems to us that all subcontractors with the state should honor the state law and practice—or they should not represent the state in this function.

Furthermore, Senator Kolterman's bill seems to be broad enough that it would permit subcontracted child welfare agencies to discriminate not only against same-gender couples, but against potential parents of different faiths or even different denominations. It would also allow such agencies to offer adoption only to parents affiliated with the particular faith or denomination with which the agency is affiliated.

These seem to us impermissible practices that do not represent the goals of the state adoptive services. Since we support the state's laws and practices in the adoption of children, we believe all subcontractors should represent those laws and practices. If there are agencies which are unable to be non-discriminatory in their adoption practices, they should not be sub-contractors for this service. Rather they should see it as their responsibility to refer potential adoptive parents to the state or to subcontract agencies which practice non-discrimination.

LWVNE opposes LB975. It allows state subcontractors to receive state funds while engaging in discrimination which is harmful to children eligible for adoption.

Sincerely,

John F. Else
Director, Social Policy Committee, LWVNE

Sherry Miller
President, LWVNE