



of Nebraska

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**Appropriations Committee
Nebraska Unicameral
Written Testimony
LB 776**

Chairman Heidemann and members of the Appropriations Committee. The Arc of Nebraska is a support and advocacy organization with and for people with developmental disabilities. We are a state affiliated chapter of The Arc of the United States. The Arc of Nebraska is a statewide organization with 17 local chapter and approximately 1,500 members across Nebraska.

The Arc of Nebraska supports LB 776 which provides funding for the community lifespan respite services program.

As a support and advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, we hear repeatedly about the needs for respite services. This need often goes hand-in-hand with the waiting list. Approximately 1,653 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities remain on the waiting list for services. This Committee, and the Legislature as a whole, has ensured that funding be appropriated to assist in alleviating the strain experienced by many folks/persons with developmental disabilities. While this has reduced the number of those waiting, the list still exists, and it has the potential to grow.

Many on the waiting list have families who are without any needed supports. These are families where respite services are desperately needed. LB 776 would provide a mechanism for families to obtain respite services until they can get full services for which they are eligible.

Further, families who need respite services often encounter barriers as to who can provide these services. Although approved for respite care for a family member, they may be unable to procure the care due to the area of the state in which they live. Because much of Nebraska is rural, families are spread far and wide within its borders. Often care providers are not close enough to provide necessary respite services. LB 776 strives to train more individuals across the state to provide respite services. This would ease the search for many families. The more people who are trained in Nebraska to provide respite, the more resources families will have.

While we understand the budgetary constraints felt by the Legislature and all Nebraskans, this is an expenditure that will act as an investment in Nebraska's families. Families who can utilize respite services would be able to be more productive in other aspects of their daily life. As such, they will be able to continue to be contributors to Nebraska's economy. Further, those trained to provide respite services and supports will be contributors as well.

We strongly urge you to move LB 776 to General File.