



of Nebraska

Kathy Hoell, President
Marla Fischer-Lempke, Executive Director
3601 Calvert Street, Suite #25
Lincoln, NE 68506
(402) 475-4407 / Fax (402) 475-0214
e-mail: arcneb@inebraska.com
www.arc-nebraska.org

LB 849 & AM 2120

Dear Senator:

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 chapters and approximately 1,500 members across Nebraska.

The Arc of Nebraska supports LB 849, Section 30, as it was originally written, part of which addresses the composition of advisory committees and board membership for service providers within the field of developmental disabilities. The intent behind the change to the existing law was to eliminate the requirement of utilizing elected officials as members of these boards or committees. This is a positive change, as we understand it was difficult to successfully fill these positions. While we support this effort, we are concerned with Amendment 2120, which eliminates the proportionate representation of membership to these boards and committees.

We greatly appreciate the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities as separate entities from guardians and parents. While on the surface it may seem that there should be agreement between these two groups, in actuality there can be differences that can leave people with developmental disabilities without an effective voice. Unfortunately, the elimination of the equal proportions of representatives puts the voices of persons with developmental disabilities at risk of not being heard. Essentially, the way in which Amendment 2120 is written allows for the potential of persons with developmental disabilities to not be included in such committees and boards at all.

At this time we would like to continue our support of the legislation if one or both of the following changes can be made:

- Retain the proportionate representation of 1/3 per group as LB 849 was introduced
- Change the "or" to an "and" (page 34, lines 8-14) to read as follows:
(a) persons with developmental disabilities, (b) family members or legal guardians of persons with developmental disabilities, ~~or~~ and (c) persons who are interested community members;

As an advocacy organization that works for the rights of individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families, we strongly support efforts to include people who are affected by the services provided by these organizations. It is unconscionable to exclude persons with disabilities from serving on the governing boards as proposed in Amendment 2120.

We would be glad to offer any additional information you may need.

Sincerely,

Marla Fischer-Lempke
Executive Director