

January 20, 2017

To Members of Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Re: Support for LB 36
Review occupational credentials

The ACLU of Nebraska is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that has worked tirelessly for over 50 years to defend and strengthen the individual rights and liberties guaranteed in the United States and Nebraska Constitutions through policy advocacy, litigation, and community empowerment. Today, we proudly represent thousands of supporters statewide and almost a million members nationally. Last biennium our organization took a position on over a hundred unique pieces of legislation and our position prevailed an impressive 76% of the time.

ACLU supports LB 36's requirement that agencies review occupational credentialing regulations to eliminate burdensome and ineffective requirements, especially where regulations have reflexive bans on individuals with a criminal conviction not related to the profession.

Approximately 1 in 3 adults in the U.S. has a criminal record—that's about the same number of Americans who have a college diploma. Our system of mass incarceration impacts many more lives than those people currently or formerly incarcerated as about 1 in 10 Nebraska children have a parent in the criminal justice system. Currently, almost 200 professions in Nebraska require some form of licensure and many regulations inquire about a criminal record or moral character. We've fully documented these legal and policy issues in our recent report: **Second Chances: How Professional Licensing in Nebraska Hurts the Workforce & Economy** which is enclosed for your review.

In recent years Nebraska took a step towards fairness in banning the box for public employment when the legislature nearly unanimously voted to enact LB 907 in 2014 to prohibit public employers from requiring an applicant to disclose their criminal history until it has been determined the applicant meets minimum employment qualifications.

Now as we proudly work with allies from across the political spectrum to seek meaningful reform on these issues, the time is right to take the next step to pull down the hurdles in the path of people in licensed professions. Removing hurdles to employment allows each Nebraskan to contribute at their highest potential which will grow our shared economy, increase public safety and save taxpayer dollars by reducing recidivism rates, and will support stronger more prosperous families.

We thank you in advance for your time, consideration, and service to our great state. We urge the committee to advance LB 36 to general file and are happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Amy A. Miller
Legal Director