



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

101ST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

February 8, 2010

Again, on this week’s Bill Summary, I’ve highlighted bills that are being heard this upcoming week in their respective committees. Below, I’ll discuss a couple of the bills in detail:

### **LB 940 – Require Drug Screening for Cash Assistance Benefits**

LB 940 would establish a process for drug screening of applicants and recipients of public assistance if the Department of Health and Human Services has reason to believe the applicant/recipient is using a controlled substance. If the applicant/recipient tests positive, they will be declared ineligible for public assistance for a year and will be referred to a substance abuse treatment program.

Voices for Children will oppose LB 940 because we believe it will harm, not help, families in already desperate conditions. Eliminating a parent’s ability to receive cash assistance will harm the vulnerable children in the household. We also oppose LB 940 because by eliminating eligibility for benefits, an applicant or recipient would lose his/her access to Medicaid – thus rendering them unable to afford any substance abuse treatment for which they were referred. The public policy goal of cash assistance is to transition to economic self-sufficiency and paid employment. LB 940 will push already struggling families further from resources that may help them get back on track.

**Hearing: Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm – Room 1510.** If your Senator is on the Health and Human Services Committee, we urge you to convey your opposition to LB 940.

Senator	Tim	Gay	<a href="mailto:tgay@leg.ne.gov">tgay@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2730	Papillion (Dist. 14)
Senator	Dave	Pankonin	<a href="mailto:dpankonin@leg.ne.gov">dpankonin@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2613	Louisville (Dist. 2)
Senator	Kathy	Campbell	<a href="mailto:kcampbell@leg.ne.gov">kcampbell@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2731	Lincoln (Dist. 25)
Senator	Mike	Gloor	<a href="mailto:mglloor@leg.ne.gov">mglloor@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2617	Grand Island (Dist. 35)
Senator	Gwen	Howard	<a href="mailto:goward@leg.ne.gov">ghoward@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2723	Omaha (Dist. 9)
Senator	Arnie	Stuthman	<a href="mailto:astuthman@leg.ne.gov">astuthman@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2715	Platte Center (Dist. 22)
Senator	Norm	Wallman	<a href="mailto:nwallman@leg.ne.gov">nwallman@leg.ne.gov</a>	402-471-2620	Cortland (Dist. 30)

### **LB 962 – Blood Lead Screening Prior to Kindergarten**

LB 962 will require blood lead testing prior to school enrollment.

**Hearing: Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 – Room 1525 in the Education Committee.**

**LB 901 – Change Child Custody Provisions**

LB 901 will allow situations in which mediation can be waived for divorcing parents. It also directs the court to make custody and parenting arrangements based on the best interest of the child, as defined in the bill.

**Hearing: Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm – Room 1113 in the Judiciary Committee.**

Last week, Voices for Children provided testimony on several bills:

LB 771 would change the penalties for assault in Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers to mirror those for similar crimes committed by adults within the Department of Correctional Services. Voices for Children in Nebraska believes that youth should be held accountable for their actions. However, we do not believe that a youth in the deepest end of our juvenile justice system should be given the same penalties as an adult in the adult prison system.

- See our testimony here:  
[http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB\\_771\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB_771_Testimony.pdf)

LB 984 will allow for stronger punishments and sentences for child abuse results in serious bodily injury, changing it from a Class III to a Class II felony.

- See our testimony here:  
[http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB\\_984\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB_984_Testimony.pdf)

LB 1001 would repeal the Dream Act in Nebraska. It would eliminate the ability of undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at Nebraska colleges/universities.

- You can see Voices for Children's testimony here:  
[http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB\\_1001\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB_1001_Testimony.pdf)
- Omaha World Herald's "In State Tuition Repeal Unlikely":  
<http://www.omaha.com/article/20100202/NEWS01/702029941>

LB 1106 would allow services provided by school-based health centers to be covered under Kids Connection.

- See our testimony here:  
[http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB\\_1106\\_Testimony.pdf](http://www.voicesforchildren.com/pdf/Legislative/2010/LB_1106_Testimony.pdf)

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Thanks,  
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