

Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

May 21, 2019

Dear Senators:

Disability Rights Nebraska is the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for Nebraskans with disabilities. Disability Rights Nebraska was created to assist individuals with disabilities and their families in protecting and advocating for their rights as well as working to protect Nebraskans with disabilities from abuse and neglect.

Disability Rights Nebraska strongly supports LB 539.

Whether or not abuse of an individual occurred should not be dependent on the end result of the abusive act. Relying on whether the caregiver's act resulted in impairment of physical function or if the abuse is reported allows abusive treatment to occur/recur and perpetrators to escape responsibility or accountability. For vulnerable people, especially those with disabilities, this is important because there often are power imbalances and/or aspects of the caregiver relationship which could be used to coerce silence—hence part of their vulnerability. Proving abuse by the end result of the action provides an incentive for abusers to use this coercion to keep the abused quiet, thus allowing abusers to perpetuate their behavior.

Disability Rights recommends this bill be addressed in the remaining days of this session or during the next.

Sincerely,

Bradley A. Meurrens
Public Policy Director