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February 23, 2017

Judiciary Committee
State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

RE: LB188 – Change provisions relating to paternity of a child conceived as a result of sexual assault

Dear Chairperson Ebke and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I was hoping to be there to testify in support of LB188 today but the weather decided to get in the way. Please submit this letter of support for LB188 into the formal record for the hearing.

The Women's Fund of Omaha is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls. To do this, we identify critical issues through research, fund innovative solutions through grants and influence dynamic change through advocacy to ensure that every woman and girl has the opportunity and ability to reach her full potential.

We are writing today in support of LB188 because this bill would protect not only the victims of sexual assault from their perpetrators, but it would also protect the child that resulted as an act of such sexual assault.

The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology estimates that each year more than 32,000 adult women pregnancies stem from rape. This study examined 34 cases of rape-related pregnancy and found that 32.2 percent opted to keep the infant.¹

Nebraska has experienced such cases. We were proud to have this issue brought to light for more than 1,500 business and community leaders by Lisa Ling, our keynote speaker during our annual lunch event this past October. Lisa described the experiences of one Nebraska woman in our audience who was a victim of rape who had decided to keep the baby that resulted from the horrible crime. This woman is forced to share parenting with her attacker and see him each week.

While current state law protects a child by automatically terminating parental rights in the case of sexual assault of a youth by an adult, it does not protect adults who are raped and results in pregnancy.

LB188 will provided needed changes to current state statute to protect adult victims of rape. In addition, we are also supportive of the proposed amendment to LB188 that addresses some technical corrections to the bill. We respectfully request the committee approve LB188 and move to General File for debate.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Traci Bruckner
Research and Policy Director

ⁱ Am J Obstetrics and Gynecology. 1996 Aug;175(2):320-4; discussion 324-5. ***Rape-related pregnancy: estimates and descriptive characteristics from a national sample of women.*** Holmes MM¹, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston 29425-2233, USA.