

Testimony on LB 257  
Judiciary Committee  
February 23, 2007

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Good afternoon Senator Ashford and members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record my name is Brad Meurrens, M-E-U-R-R-E-N-S, and I am the Public Policy Specialist and registered lobbyist for Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc. I am here today to offer our strong support for LB 257.

As the Protection and Advocacy organization for the state of Nebraska, frequently we are involved with representing individuals seeking to create or change guardians. We understand the need to find individuals to be guardians and recognize the difficulties encountered in developing appropriate guardianships for some individuals.

We are pleased to see a stated commitment to limiting the application and extent of guardianships in Nebraska. A full guardianship should not be instituted where a limited guardianship would suffice.

We recommend that the Public Guardian consult with current and former guardians, individuals with disabilities, and relevant advocacy groups in the development of the training curricula for the office's guardians. We also recommend adding a component to this training emphasizing the personal dignity and valued social roles of persons with disabilities.

Finally, we suggest that Section 6 of LB 257 be revised to require the inclusion of people with disabilities, family members and a representative of a disability advocacy organization in the prescribed membership of the Advisory Council on Public Guardianships. However, since Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc. is often asked to assist in the removal of guardianships, we would not be in a position to serve as a member of the Advisory Council.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.