

**ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2019**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LB332**

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**Hearing Date:** Thursday March 07, 2019  
**Committee On:** Health and Human Services  
**Introducer:** Bolz  
**One Liner:** Change eligibility requirements and other provisions of the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**

**Aye:** 7 Senators Arch, Cavanaugh, Hansen, B., Howard, Murman, Walz, Williams

**Nay:**

**Absent:**

**Present Not Voting:**

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**Oral Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Senator Kate Bolz  
Sarah Helvey  
Juliet Summers  
Christine Jones  
Rodney Edwards

**Representing:**

Introducer  
Nebraska Appleseed  
Voices for Children in Nebraska  
Nebraska Children's Commission  
Self

**Opponents:**

**Representing:**

**Neutral:**

**Representing:**

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

LB 332 amends various provisions of law relating to the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act to include (1) juveniles whose guardianship was disrupted or terminated after he or she had attained the age of 16 and (2) juveniles with adoption assistance agreements.

The goal of the Bridge to Independence Program is to support state wards transitioning to adulthood, becoming self-sufficient, and creating permanent relationships. (Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4502.) It is available to juveniles who became state wards due to abuse and neglect and who were in an out-of-home placement or were discharged to independent living at the time they turned 19 or juveniles with a guardianship assistance agreement. (Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4504.)

Under LB 332, juveniles whose guardianships were disrupted or terminated after they turned 16 years old would be included in:

- Provisions regarding written independent transition planning through which juveniles receive information about the Bridge to Independence Act (Sec. 3, page 8, lines 25-31 and page 9, lines 10-26);

- The eligibility sections of the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act (Sec. 3, page 11, lines 21-31 and page 12 lines 1-2);
- Court oversight provisions of the Bridge to Independence Act which require the filing of the voluntary services and support agreement and permanency reviews conducted by the court to review progress made under the agreement (Sec. 5, page 15, lines 31-31, page 16, lines 1-8, 26-29, page 17, line 31, and page 18, lines 1-4);
- Provisions regarding notice to juveniles who are eligible for both the Bridge to Independence Program and extended guardianship assistance or, through LB 332, extended adoption assistance (Sec. 6, page 19, lines 3-20);
- Provisions in the Nebraska Juvenile Code that identify the last hearing before jurisdiction is terminated by the court as an "independence hearing," and require that independence hearing to address future planning for the juvenile consistent with the terms of the Bridge to Independence Program (Sec. 1, page 3, lines 14-31)

LB 332 also amends the Bridge to Independent Act so that a person whose housing is paid for by a Medicaid home and community-based services waiver is not eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments under the Bridge to Independence Program. (Sec. 4, page 12, lines 28-31.)

LB 332 inserts language so that the Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee which is under the jurisdiction of the Nebraska Children's Commission, will continue to exist in the event that the Nebraska Children's Commission terminates. (Sec. 7, page 20, lines 29-31.)

Finally, LB 332 requires the Department of Health and Human Services to amend Nebraska's state plan amendment to seek federal IV-E funding for Bridge to Independence Program services for juveniles whose guardianships were disrupted or terminated after they became 16 years old. (Sec. 8, page 21, lines 4-16.)

**Explanation of amendments:**

AM 629 amends sections 3 and 4 of LB 332 to change the eligibility requirements for the Bridge to Independence Program in Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4504. First, AM 629 inserts a requirement in subsection (4) that the young adult be a resident of Nebraska unless the young adult was placed outside of Nebraska pursuant to the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children. (AM 629, page 2, lines 7-10.)

Second, AM 629 inserts a provision that a young adult is not eligible for the Bridge to Independence Program if they are already covered under a home and community-based services waiver. (AM 629, page 2, lines 11-12.) This section was originally included in section 4 in the green copy.

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Sara Howard, Chairperson