

## **One Hundred Third Legislature - First Session - 2013**

### **Introducer's Statement of Intent - LB507**

**Chairperson: Senator Kathy Campbell**

**Committee: Health and Human Services - Date of Hearing: February 20, 2013**

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

74% of children under age 6 in Nebraska have all parents in the workforce. A significant percentage of these children qualify for publicly-subsidized child care -- some 43,000 in FY2012. That year, the licensed providers that cared for these children received over \$94,000,000 in public funds in the form of child care subsidy payments. Assistance is vital for children who otherwise would go without care, but given the significant amount of public funds involved, the state should ensure that the care we support is of high quality. Program quality affects school readiness, later academic achievement, and success in life.

- LB 507 is intended to bring accountability for the public funds invested in child care and early childhood education, to help providers who choose to improve quality, to inform parents who seek child care and early childhood education for their children, and to improve child development and school readiness.

LB 507 adopts the Step Up to Quality Act, putting in place a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) with a scale of steps from one to five. The system is available to all child care and early childhood education programs voluntarily, but participation is required for programs that receive significant amounts of public funds. LB 507 phases in mandatory participation for such programs over three years starting July 1, 2014. At that time, programs that received over \$500,000 in child care subsidy assistance in FY2011-12 become participants. Beginning July 1, 2015, programs that received over \$250,000 in FY2011-12 become participants, and beginning July 1, 2016, programs that received over \$250,000 in the preceding fiscal year become participants.

The bill provides that the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services shall cooperatively develop, implement, and provide oversight for the quality rating and improvement system, and make program ratings public beginning in 2017.

**Principal Introducer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Senator Kathy Campbell**

