A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to child welfare; to amend section 71-1924, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022; to require suicide awareness and prevention training for employees of child-placing agencies and child welfare workers; and to repeal the original section.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,
Section 1. Section 71-1924, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2022, is amended to read:

71-1924 Sections 71-1924 to 71-1951 and section 2 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Children's Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act.

Sec. 2. The department shall establish standardized suicide awareness training requirements as described in section 4 of this act for all employees of child-placing agencies prior to any independent contact with youth and families to increase suicide prevention in the foster care system. Such training shall incorporate a baseline curriculum using the training materials described in section 4 of this act while also allowing child-placing agencies to incorporate training elements that meet the specific needs of an individual agency.

Sec. 3. All child welfare caseworkers, and any other appropriate personnel as determined by the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services, shall obtain at least ninety minutes of behavioral and mental health training with a focus on suicide awareness and prevention prior to any independent contact with youth and families and annually thereafter. All suicide awareness and prevention training shall incorporate evidence-based practices and may include, but not be limited to, (1) identification of early warning signs and symptoms of behavioral and mental health issues for youth in the child welfare system and (2) appropriate and effective responses for behavioral and mental health issues and trauma-informed care. This training shall be provided within the framework of existing training programs offered by the department.

Sec. 4. The department, in consultation with organizations and professionals with expertise in behavioral and mental health and suicide prevention including, but not limited to, the Nebraska State Suicide Prevention Coalition, the Nebraska chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska,
and the National Alliance on Mental Illness Nebraska, shall develop a
list of approved training materials to fulfill the requirements of
section 3 of this act.

Sec. 5. Original section 71-1924, Revised Statutes Cumulative
Supplement, 2022, is repealed.