

placements for Native American children and youth. Currently there are approximately six licensed Native American foster families living outside the boundaries of reservations in the State of Nebraska. This compares to approximately 154 Native American children and youth in foster homes in the state. As stated earlier, space requirements, sleeping arrangements, nonrelative character references are examples that have been cited across the state as standards that have kept Native American families from seeking licensure as a foster home. The recommendation that separate standards be developed was researched by Department of Social Services and legal staff. Based on current statutes, the authority of the Department of Social Service to promulgate licensing standards for foster homes does not include the authority to establish separate standards for a particular group. This legislation if enacted would establish this authority specific only to Native American families living outside the boundary of any reservation. There is no resources more vital to the continued existence and integrity of the Native American than their children, and we have a direct interest in recognizing the cultural and social standards prevailing in the Native American families. I ask for your support in passage of LB 451. If there are any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Engel. Is there any discussion on the advancement of LB 451? Seeing none, Senator Engel, do you wish to close?

SENATOR ENGEL: No, thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Closing is waived. The question before the body is the advancement of LB 451. All those in favor vote aye, all those opposed vote nay. Please record.

CLERK: 25 ayes, 0 nays, Madam President, on the advancement of 451.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: LB 451 advances. LB 285.

CLERK: LB 285, introduced by Senator Withem, Avery, Hartnett and Preister. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 10, referred to the Government Committee, advanced to General File. I have no amendments to the bill.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Chair recognizes Senator Withem to open on the