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Chairperson Sen. Lathrop and Judiciary Committee Members
District #12, Room 1103 State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

January 28, 2021

RE: LB28

Dear Senator Lathrop and Judiciary Committee Members,

My name is Jasmine L. Harris. I am the Director of Public Policy & Advocacy for RISE. I request that this letter be included as part of the public hearing record that shows RISE is in support of LB28.

RISE is a non-profit that works with people who are currently and formerly incarcerated. We run a six-month program that focuses on employment readiness, character development and entrepreneurship. We serve people incarcerated at seven of the Nebraska Correctional Facilities with this program and offer reentry case management services as people return home.

The Innocence Project, which works to exonerate wrongfully convicted individuals through DNA testing, has estimated that about 1% of the US prison population are wrongfully convicted. That is about 20,000 individuals. The Equal Justice Initiative has been providing legal services to people who have been wrongfully convicted and unfairly sentenced in prisons and jails in the United States since 1989. A lot of their exoneration cases have been based on wrongful conviction through false accusations made in court, government official and law enforcement misconduct, and false forensic science among other leading causes. According to the National Registry of Exonerations, there have been 2,721 exonerations since 1989 in the United States.

RISE's vision is that all people will find freedom from cycles of incarceration. LB28 would provide a way for Nebraskans who have been wrongfully convicted to appeal their case and submit new evidence to prove their innocence; therefore being freed from the cycle of incarceration where they are currently held captive. While working with incarcerated persons in the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services through our program over the past four and a half years, we have been able to interact with many individuals and have given them one thing that they need the most, a listening ear. There are stories within Nebraska's department of corrections right now that would benefit from this legislation. We are here to encourage all elected officials to look at this from the perspective of empathy. We must stand on the side of justice and what is right in order to facilitate the vision that all innocent people should be...free.

RISE supports LB28 and asks that committee members vote this bill out of committee to General File.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jasmine L. Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



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Jasmine L. Harris, MPH, CHES
Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, RISE