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

January 26, 2021

RE: LB128

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 LB128.

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.

One of the most important facets of reentry is ensuring that an individual has stable housing upon their release. We know that stable, safe and affordable housing is a factor that helps reduce the chance of someone recidivating. Landlords use conviction backgrounds, eviction history, and income to determine if a person is a good candidate. As we are working with our program participants to assist in their housing search upon reentry, we see that many people have received evictions prior to being incarcerated. These evictions along with their conviction records provide extreme barriers to overcome when trying to search for landlords that will rent to individuals starting over. Not being able to secure housing renders a large portion of people coming out of incarceration to homelessness which includes staying on couches of friends and family or in shelters.

As RISE works with people returning to our communities after incarceration to be successful with reentry, it is the government's role to ensure the economical, social, political and built environments are conducive to help in that process. LB128 known as the Residential Tenant Clean Slate Act will provide some solace knowing that petitioning the court after three years to seal an eviction record is possible and will help during housing searches for many people. I ask that this bill be voted out of committee to advance to general file.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jasmine L. Harris".

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