

# Nebraska State Legislature

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### **Senator Kate Bolz Introduces Legislation to Make Child Care More Affordable for Working Families**

**February 7, 2019 (Lincoln, NE)** -- Tomorrow in the Health and Human Services Committee, Senator Kate Bolz will introduce LB329, a bill to expand eligibility for Nebraska's successful child care subsidy. The program helps Nebraskans work, find a job, or pursue education while subsidizing child care costs, and creating a path out of poverty for low-income working parents.

"Nebraska's economy benefits when working parents have access to safe and affordable child care," states Senator Bolz.

LB329 would allow more working poor families to access child care assistance. The eligibility limits were dramatically decreased in 2002. LB 329 would modestly raise Nebraska's Child Care subsidy eligibility to 165% of the federal poverty level, or roughly \$27,159 for a single parent and one child. In 2018, the annual cost of child care for an infant in Nebraska averaged \$7,926<sup>1</sup>. Currently, eligibility is limited to those making 130% of the federal poverty level, or \$21,398 for the same family.

The outsized costs of child care leaves Nebraska parents with few options, "My income meets my budget needs. Once this baby is born, I will be short \$800/month unless I can find a child care that will take a toddler and infant for \$1000/month, so far, that doesn't exist - even for in home providers," said Omaha mother Bobbi Jo Howard. "My electricity, car payment, car insurance, fuel, and food costs are also as low as they can be. I don't subscribe to cable and my phone bill is currently covered by a family member. However, my child care, despite charging in the lower range for a center in the Omaha area, has wiped out my reserves and will soon be completely unaffordable when the child I am carrying is born."

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<sup>1</sup> Economic Policy Institute, The Cost of Child Care in Nebraska, available at <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/NE>.

LB329 would also extend eligibility after 12 months to 200% of federal poverty level and bring Nebraska into compliance with federal regulations by removing the 24-month limit for families below 200% of federal poverty level and revising the requirements for background checks.

“Without Nebraska’s child care subsidy, many working Nebraskans would be unable to maintain employment and find a stable child care provider,” said Senator Bolz. “Raising Nebraska’s child care subsidy gives working parents the opportunity to continue their jobs, without fearing that their kids are not safe. LB329 will help to ensure that every child in Nebraska has the supports necessary for healthy growth and development.”

*Senator Kate Bolz of Lincoln represents District #29 in the Nebraska Legislature*

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