



To: Judiciary Committee
From: Marion Miner, Associate Director for Pro-Life & Family Policy
Nebraska Catholic Conference
Subject: LB 97 (Provide for adoption by two adults) (Oppose)
Date: January 28, 2021

Chairman Lathrop and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church and advances the Gospel of Life through engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public.

The Conference opposes LB 97. As with LB 907 from a year ago and LB 426 from 2019, LB 97 would provide for adoption of a minor child by two adults regardless of those adults' relationship to each other. LB 97 diminishes the rights of a child to familial stability and permanency in favor of the desires of adults. We urge the committee to consider the harmful consequences to adopted children in some circumstances that would be made possible by this bill.

If two adults cannot make a commitment of permanency to each other, it makes little sense for the law to invite them to acquire children for themselves. Every child is a gift and a trust to his parents, and every child has the natural right to a permanent relationship with his mother and father. When a relationship with his natural parents is not possible, he has a right to a permanent relationship with adoptive parents who have made a permanent commitment to the child and to each other.

Marriage, as a civil institution, has been recognized, privileged, and regulated by the state for centuries precisely because of its protectivity of children. Marriage, in binding parents to one another with an expectation of permanency, protects the legitimate rights of the child which the child cannot assert for himself. LB 97 diminishes the rights of adopted children by removing the expectation of permanency from the picture.

On page 2, lines 6-7 provide that any "minor child may be adopted by any adult person or persons jointly, regardless of their marital status." That could mean any two people, with any kind of relationship to each other, or no relationship at all. It would allow for two people living in different households to adopt a child together. It would allow for total strangers to adopt a child together. It would allow for one unmarried person to adopt several different children, each with a different unmarried adult counterpart. LB 97 allows for these scenarios to become real. This is not conducive to the best interest of the child.

LB 97 undermines the very important right of children to stability and security in the family by removing a legally recognized expectation of family permanency that exists for their protection. For this reason, the Nebraska Catholic Conference opposes LB 97 and asks that you not advance it to General File.