



TO: Judiciary Committee
FROM: Tom Venzor, Executive Director
Nebraska Catholic Conference
DATE: February 3, 2021
RE: LB138 (Immigration Enforcement Agreement Notification) (Support)

The Nebraska Catholic Conference advocates for the public policy interests of the Catholic Church by engaging, educating, and empowering public officials, Catholic laity, and the general public. I am here today to express support for LB138 on behalf of the Conference.

The Catholic Church recognizes the right of a country to regulate its borders and to control immigration. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have noted: We should “not view the work of the federal government and its immigration control as negative or evil. Those who work to enforce our nation’s immigration laws often do so out of a sense of loyalty to the common good and compassion for poor people seeking a better life.”¹ But such enforcement must be done in light of the common good and should adequately balance the need for justice and mercy.

The Nebraska Catholic Conference believes that LB138 provides a reasonable balance to local immigration enforcement agreements by ensuring that a local governing body receive notice from the law enforcement agency regarding the agreement. This would permit for greater discussion within the local community regarding the public safety implications of an enforcement agreement.

In particular, the Nebraska Catholic Conference would raise concerns with local enforcement agreements, especially to the extent that they can undermine trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement. This could decrease the willingness of undocumented immigrants from reporting crimes or other public safety concerns to local law enforcement.

By providing a “notice and hearing” process for immigration enforcement agreements, the local community will better be able to determine the need and assess the public safety effects that such enforcement agreements can have for the immigrants against whom they are directed.

The Nebraska Catholic Conference respectfully urges your support for LB138.

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration and the Movement of Peoples,” found at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/catholic-teaching-on-immigration-and-the-movement-of-peoples.cfm>.