

# **One Hundred Fourth Legislature - Second Session - 2016**

## **Introducer's Statement of Intent**

**LB975**

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**Chairperson: Senator Les Seiler**

**Committee: Judiciary**

**Date of Hearing: February 17, 2016**

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB975 seeks to secure safe and loving foster and adoptive homes for children in need by protecting child-placing agencies against adverse action by the state. The bill allows and will encourage the Department of Health and Human Services to continue its practice of contracting with a diverse array of child-placing agencies, some of which are guided by their religious faith, to serve children in need. Such agencies actively recruit parents willing to take foster and adopted children into their homes, increasing the number of parents caring for state wards. Agencies in other states have recently had to close their doors due to adverse action by state and local governments. The bill ensures the State of Nebraska will maintain as many qualified child-placing agencies as possible by not allowing the state to take adverse action against such agencies based on their sincerely held religious beliefs.

**Principal Introducer:** \_\_\_\_\_

Senator Mark Kolterman