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Nebraska Education Collaboration

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COLLABORATION MEMBERS

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[Nebraska State Education
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[Greater Nebraska Schools
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April 28, 2020

There is a false narrative from some at the Capitol that schools are unwilling to compromise on property tax reform. It is important to provide context to the letter recently published in the Lincoln Journal Star regarding public education and property tax relief. State Senator Lou Ann Linehan indicated in her letter (Tax reform crucial right now, April 22) that LB1106 would provide property tax relief without harming schools. That is incorrect.

Let us be clear: when it comes to property tax relief that saves our communities money while keeping schools viable and strong, we are completely in support. We are saying no only to the harmful mechanisms in LB1106, which, among other problems, would make lasting changes to how we fund public schools based on a one-time projected revenue increase that has already disappeared in the COVID-19 recession.

In the April 22 article, Linehan used Lincoln Public Schools as one of her examples and has shared similar examples with other districts and communities across the state in other papers. The fact is that LB 1106 would harm schools of all sizes, urban and rural, and would impair local control.

We are completely on board with finding a property tax solution – a necessary condition of which includes being part of the discussion from the beginning. Over the past several years, the education community has offered numerous funding proposals to which we can say yes. Unfortunately, legislation that included these solutions has not been advanced by the Revenue or Education committees.

The Nebraska Education Collaboration believes the state aid formulas created in LB1106 (and related amendments) will be harmful to educational opportunities to public school students. Our coalition's membership includes the entire education community from multiple perspectives – representing school boards, teachers, administrators, service units and every one of the 244 public school districts, including Lincoln Public Schools. Coalition members have met with Sen. Linehan on many occasions. During these meetings we discussed methods and presented solutions for providing property tax relief without harming public education. These meetings proved unsuccessful in reaching an agreement.

On April 6, 2020, we shared the following in a letter to all Nebraska state senators. "All of public education, including school districts large



and small, urban and rural, along with educational service units, school boards, teachers, and administrators, stand united against LB1106 and its amendments. We do not want to stand in the way of property tax relief; however, in its efforts to bring about property tax relief, LB1106 instead does irreparable harm to the learning opportunities of children statewide.”

The Nebraska education community, including all our members and school districts, stands together ready to collaborate and work with Senator Linehan, as well as other senators, on a property tax solution that does not damage the educational opportunities for all school children across the state of Nebraska.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the signatory organizations for more information. We want to be part of a solution that is both good for today and good for the future.

Sincerely, **Nebraska Education Collaboration**

Nebraska Council of School Administrators
Nebraska Association of School Boards
Nebraska State Education Association
Educational Service Units Coordinating Council

Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association
Schools Taking Action for Children’s Education
Stand For Schools
Greater Nebraska Schools Association