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Legislative Bill 670 is Law: A Necessary Step to Qualifying for SIJ Relief

Omaha, NE – On April 23, 2018, Legislative Bill 670 (which included Legislative Bill 826 as an amendment) was signed into law by Governor Pete Ricketts. LB 670 was introduced by Senator Tony Vargas on January 4, 2018. The bill ensures that vulnerable youth in Nebraska can continue to access the relief for which they are eligible and that is in their best interest.

This amendment clarifies and reaffirms that Nebraska State courts—who are tasked with making determinations regarding the custody and care of juveniles—have the jurisdiction and authority to make factual findings related to (1) whether a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected, (2) whether parental reunification is viable, and (3) whether it would be in the child’s best interest to be removed to his or her country of nationality.

Such findings are crucial for immigrant youth in the United States seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) relief. SIJ relief can lead to work authorization, permanent residence, and eventually U.S. citizenship.

Former ILC client, Angela Escobar testified on how SIJ relief impacted her life, “I was born in a very small town in El Salvador where I had no opportunity to progress in life And I am very, very thankful that this great nation gave me the opportunity to stay I lived with my mother [in El Salvador]. She had a very rare mental illness. My father was an alcoholic. My brother was involved in violence That’s why I decided to come to the United States. And now I am able to have the life I’ve always wanted... This year I will be graduating [and] going to college to study medicine ... [,] with the goal to one day become a cardiologist and be able to inspire others.”

Interviews are available with ILC attorneys and former clients in relation to LB 670.

ABOUT IMMIGRANT LEGAL CENTER

Immigrant Legal Center (formerly Justice For Our Neighbors-Nebraska), is a nonprofit immigration legal services agency that provides free, professional legal consultation, clinics and court representation to immigrants who have incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. The Omaha-based Immigrant Legal Center (ILC)—founded as JFON-NE in 1999—remains an affiliate of the Justice For Our Neighbors Network of 16 Sites offering more than 40 legal clinics for immigration services across the country.

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An Affiliate of the Justice For Our Neighbors Network

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