February 4, 2013

Business and Labor Committee
Nebraska Legislature

**RE: Support for LB 560**

Dear Chairman Lathrop and committee members,

My name is Darcy Tromanhauser and I am the director of Nebraska Appleseed’s Immigrants & Communities Program. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans.

We are here to testify in support of LB 560, a bill that strengthens fundamental protections for hardworking Nebraskans. Fairness and dignity are key to any employment relationship. Many of us take for granted the simple fact that our employer will pay our wages on time and to the penny. LB 560 ensures fair and equitable treatment of hardworking Nebraskans by targeting those few dishonest employers who would undermine fairness for employees and a fair playing field for other employers by failing to pay for work performed. It is important to note that this bill, and wage theft bills in general, does not place additional burdens on honest employers in Nebraska. It only targets a few bad apples whose unlawful actions have a serious impact on both the people whose wages are stolen and on honest employers.

Currently, Nebraska’s wage theft laws are not strong enough to deal effectively with those few bad-apple employers who would steal workers’ wages. Many workers are unable to afford the cost of hiring an attorney or cannot wait for their case to make it through the court system. Furthermore, there is not much to prevent an employer from retaliating against a worker who wants to report unfair and unlawful wage practices. LB 560, however, is a strong, common sense step toward empowering and protecting workers who want to report stolen wages, and toward discouraging wage theft in the first place. Among other things, this bill contains important notice provisions that enable workers to make certain they are being paid for all hours worked, has robust whistleblower protection for workers who want to expose unscrupulous wage practices, and imposes criminal penalties on employers who steal wages from their workers.

If we can provide any further information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate
to contact me at 402-438-8853 or at dtromanhauser@neappleseed.org.

Sincerely,

NEBRASKA APPLESEED

Darcy Tromanhauser
Director, Immigrants & Communities Program