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AMIDST PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS, NEBRASKANS' PRIORITIZE HEALTHCARE, CONCERN FOR MEDICAID EXPANSION AND STATE JOB PERFORMANCE

OMAHA, NE - Today, Holland Children's Institute, a Nebraska nonpartisan nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization released survey results of the ongoing Nebraska Voters' Outlook series, a statewide public opinion research initiative measuring Nebraskans' opinions and views on the issues impacting children and families.

Given voter's robust support for 'making healthcare more affordable and available' (69 percent), it should come as no surprise that registered voters are concerned over Governor Ricketts' actions on Medicaid Expansion. Nearly six-in-10 (59 percent) said they were 'concerned' over the Governor's desire to add restrictions on who qualifies for the voter-approved Medicaid expansion measure and the delay in expansion implementation.

"Perhaps now more than ever, Nebraskans understand how important healthcare is to their lives, and the lives of others," said Hadley Richters, President and CEO of Holland Children's Institute. *"But, with the state approaching historically high unemployment, the Governor's added work requirements and regulations to Nebraska's Medicaid expansion policy further restricts Nebraskans from receiving the care and coverage they would otherwise qualify for under the expansion approved by Nebraska voters nearly two years ago,"* explained Richters.

"The research reveals Governor Ricketts' regulatory policies and further restrictions to healthcare access in Nebraska are severely out of touch, and out of sync with Nebraska families and their top priorities," said Richters. *"The Governor might consider the results on public opinion among his constituency, and high priority Nebraskans place on more accessible, affordable healthcare, and its importance to helping all Nebraskans and families across the state,"* Richters added.

Asked what concerns them most, one-in-five (22 percent) say that the Governor is unfairly limiting access to the kids and seniors most in need. Another 14 percent say that they disapprove of his refusal to follow the will of the people, while 8 percent say that the delay in

implementation itself is concerning.

“Amidst a public health and economic crisis, Nebraskans continue to remain in strong agreement on many of the same policy priorities they have previously favored, including affordable/accessible healthcare (69 percent), creating more high quality/better-paying jobs (61 percent), and fully funding K-12 public education (59 percent), among others,” added Richters.

Related, Nebraskans gave the state failing grades on its ability to provide paid sick (62 percent negative) and family leave (61 percent) right at the onset of social distancing. It should come as no surprise that a strong majority (56 percent) express support for the establishment of a paid family and medical leave program for every worker in Nebraska by increasing taxes on the wealthiest four percent of Nebraskans. Around four-in-10 (42 percent) are opposed.

While healthcare was top of mind, Nebraskans also had strong thoughts on jobs, both quantity and quality. While 61 percent prioritized “creating more jobs” in mid to late March, a similar number (58 percent) thought state government must ensure “all working people are paid a livable wage so they can afford basic needs.”

When Nebraskans were specifically asked to choose between quantity over quality, nearly six-in-10 (58 percent) favored “increasing pathways that allow Nebraskan workers access to quality high paying jobs with benefits” (quality), with under four-in-10 (38 percent) in favor of “increasing the number of jobs available in the state” (quantity). As the pandemic subsides, it will be important to continue to heed the call for high quality job creation that focuses on building a job market that provides Nebraskans with a middle-class salary, and benefits.

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Survey Methodology: These data reflect a survey conducted by [Patinkin Research Strategies](#) on behalf of the Holland Children’s Institute. The survey was conducted among 900 registered Nebraska voters, March 19 through 25, 2020. The survey was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers. Respondents were contacted via both landlines and cell phones with cell phones representing 45 percent of the sample. The margin of error for the sample as a whole is plus or minus 3.25 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

About Holland Children's Institute: Our vision is for Nebraska to become the national beacon in economic security and opportunity for all children and working families. The Holland Children's Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. www.hollandinstitute.org Twitter: @HcInstitute Facebook: @HollandInstitute