

My name is Melissa Wey M-E-L-I-S-S-A W-E-Y and I'm here to support LB 194.

I grew up in Nebraska and graduated from high school. After graduating high school, I moved out of state and with many years of perseverance in 2007 I finally graduated from college. I thought doors would open and my life would improve because that was what I had always been told. The year I graduated from college I was involved in a traumatic accident and had no choice but to return to my home state. I moved to Lincoln and I found my career in Omaha. I commuted to work for 6 months before eventually moving. I had just signed a year lease and used up all of my savings for deposits and moving expenses when 2 weeks later I was laid off. I was devastated.

The only income I had to depend upon while looking for another job was unemployment, I had no other choice but payday lenders. This led to a 6 year cycle of writing and rewriting and has cost me thousands of dollars. This issue needs to be addressed by the state legislature. LB 194 would allow people who have fallen on hard financial times to have access to credit, without the viscous cycle of debt which the current lending practice creates. The high interest rates on these loans have left many other Nebraskans in a similar situation as me. Their predatory nature creates a cycle of poverty that many cannot easily get out of and are forced to maintain an abusive relationship with these lenders.

When I look through my checkbook out of the 184 checks that I have written to date, 167 have been to payday lenders. The money that I was constantly spending to repay these loans is money I could have been saving to get me out of the predatory cycle of payday loans. One specific event comes to mind of how these loans have caused emotional pain in my life was when I had to figure out a way to repay a payday loan during my mother's funeral. The shame I felt, ME a college educated woman having to depend on payday lenders and having to hide that from my siblings and other family members when I should have instead been focusing on the grieving process.

If my payments had been capped at 5% of my monthly income, like LB 194 would do, then I would not have been caught in this predatory cycle. LB 194 would make it so that these loans could be paid off in a monthly payment plan rather than forcing people to pay back these loans in lump sums. This would help make payments more manageable, reduce the amount of borrowers who have to continuously take out loans and lessen the emotional burden these loans cause.

My hope is that I can help be part of positive change in my community on many levels through my activism. I am passionate about being a voice for this issue and others like it and making a difference in the lives of others. I see LB 194 as part of the change that is needed in the lives of many Nebraskans.

I wish to see a new climate for payday lending that makes it possible for people who have fallen on hard times to have access to financial help, but without the risk of falling into a trap of loan after loan. Instead of this being a predatory business, it should be one that helps the vulnerable in our communities when they need it the most and lets them make

payments in a way that doesn't further victimize people by putting tremendous emotional and monetary burden on them. LB 194 would produce these reforms and help Nebraskans escape they cycle of debt that is caused by payday lenders.

Thank you,  
Melissa Wey