

Testimony on LB 718
Public Hearing Before the Banking Committee
January 20, 2026

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on behalf of the Nebraska Society of Certified Public Accountants**

LB 718 - Change provisions relating to examination, permit issuance, and disciplinary actions regarding certified public accountants

Chairman Jacobson and members of the Banking Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Jodi – J-O-D-I – Eckhout – E-C-K-H-O-U-T, and I am a licensed Certified Public Accountant practicing at Woods & Durham, Chartered in Holdrege, Nebraska. I am here, as chairman of the Nebraska Society of CPAs, to urge your support for LB 718, which modernizes Nebraska's Public Accountancy Act and strengthens our CPA workforce pipeline while maintaining the profession's high standards.

Certified Public Accountants are the backbone of our economy. CPAs ensure financial transparency, guide families and businesses in making sound financial decisions, and uphold trust in our tax system and capital markets. Yet Nebraska—like much of the nation—is facing a growing CPA shortage as demand for these services increases. The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) has reported that 75% of today's CPAs will retire within the next 15 years.

For more than two decades, there has effectively been only one pathway to CPA licensure: a bachelor's degree with an accounting concentration plus an additional 30 credit hours, typically a master's degree, followed by either two or three years of supervised experience and passage of the Uniform CPA Exam. While well-intentioned, the 150-hour education requirement has become a barrier for many capable students due to added tuition costs and delayed entry into the workforce.

LB 718 removes that roadblock by creating an additional pathway. Under this bill, candidates may qualify for CPA licensure by completing:

- A bachelor's degree, including the required hours in accounting,
- Two years of supervised, qualifying experience, and
- Passage of the same rigorous Uniform CPA Examination required of all CPAs

Every CPA in Nebraska, regardless of pathway, must complete the same core accounting coursework, pass the same national exam, and demonstrate real-world competence under the supervision of a licensed CPA. LB 718 simply replaces additional classroom hours with meaningful, hands-on professional experience while aligning all experience requirements with Uniform Accountancy Act model rules.

This approach is accessible, affordable, and practical. It allows future CPAs to gain experience sooner, strengthens the talent pipeline, and improves access to trusted financial expertise for Nebraska businesses, communities, and taxpayers.

LB 718 also ensures Nebraska remains aligned with national standards. More than 30 states are considering or adopting similar pathways, and both the AICPA and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) support these reforms through updates to the Uniform Accountancy Act, preserving interstate mobility and strong regulatory oversight.

Now is the time to act. LB 718 is a thoughtful, balanced solution that protects the public, removes unnecessary barriers for students, and helps ensure Nebraska has a strong, sustainable CPA workforce for decades to come.

I respectfully urge the committee to advance LB 718.

Thank you for your time and consideration.