

{SIGNEE'S NAME} \_\_\_\_\_  
{ADDRESS} \_\_\_\_\_  
{CITY/ZIP}

Governor Ricketts  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 94848  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Dear Governor Ricketts,

As community minded, taxpaying individuals, we are asking for your *serious* consideration to care for the MENTAL HEALTH of our youthful population of NEBRASKA. For 10 years, the Eagle Riders of Nebraska (affiliated with the Nebraska Fraternal order of Eagles), and like-minded motorcycle riders have taken upon themselves to gain the attention of those who are in elected positions in our State. Each year we have ridden the **Pony Express Ride** across the entire state of Nebraska to deliver these letters to those who have the *potential* to make needed changes for our youth with mental health issues. Unfortunately, we have mostly received political rhetoric and lip service. Little significant change has happened! Most of the change that occurred has, in reality, *decreased* service at the local level.

As taxpayers, we are aware of the financial challenges that you, as Governor, face with budget shortfalls. We are hopeful you are *sincerely* considering the best possible solutions to this problem. Please consider the more positive impact of preventive solutions, as opposed to long term more punitive solutions, such as incarceration. **Statistics prove that prevention is much more cost effective than incarceration.** As you already know, our penal system is overflowing with adults with mental health conditions. Many of these individuals could have benefited from mental health treatment before entering the adult population. Perhaps they would not be involved in a MUCH more expensive system now, had they received treatment at a younger age, at MUCH less cost!

After traveling across our great state of Nebraska, on our motorcycles, we are delivering letters which have been signed by voters who feel as we do. Today, we are gathered on the steps of our Capitol, along with our *Family Organization allies*, which serve the children and families impacted by the LACK OF SERVICES FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN NEBRASKA. Many of these families, and the organizations that work with them, are saddened and frustrated on how to help their loved ones. As a unified group, we ask that our voices NOT ONLY BE HEARD, BUT ACTED UPON. We ask that you *use your political position* to influence how these youth and families can receive much needed services.

We believe that since **May is Children's Mental Health Awareness month**, this is the opportune time to express our views to you, and the Legislature, and ask you ALL to be sensitive to this issue. Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Signee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_