

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Floor Debate
January 07, 2009

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PRESIDENT SHEEHY PRESIDING []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the first day of the One Hundred First Legislature, First Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Harms. Would you all please rise. []

SENATOR HARMS: (Prayer offered.) []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Harms. Would you all still continue to rise. We will now have the Presentation of Colors from the Nebraska Army and Air National Guard. []

PRESENTATION OF COLORS []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: You may all be seated. Pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Section 10 of the Constitution of Nebraska, the One Hundred First Legislature, First Session of the Legislature of Nebraska, assembled in the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber of the State Capitol, at the hour of 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 7, 2009, is now called to order. Will senators please record your presence. Please record, Mr. Clerk. []

CLERK: Reporting, Mr. President. (Roll read, Legislative Journal page 1.) I do have a quorum present, Mr. President. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will now proceed to the appointment of temporary officers. The Chair recognizes Senator Dubas. []

SENATOR DUBAS: Mr. President, it's my pleasure to move to appoint Mr. Patrick J. O'Donnell as temporary Clerk of the Legislature, and Mr. Ron Witkowski as temporary Sergeant at Arms. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: The motion before you is the appointment of temporary officers. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, do you have resignation and appointment letters? []

CLERK: I have neither resignation nor appointment letters at this time, Mr. President. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Senator Wightman, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: Mr. President, I move that we proceed to the election of five

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persons to serve as the Committee on Credentials, who will forthwith report to the Legislature on the credentials of those claiming to be elected to the Legislature in the general election of November 2008. Thank you. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Wightman. The question is the adoption of the motion to elect the Committee on Credentials. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Heidemann, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR HEIDEMANN: I move to elect the following five members of the Legislature to serve on the Committee on Credentials: Senator Dierks, Senator Ashford, Senator Louden, Senator Friend, and Senator Stuthman. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Heidemann. The five senior members are Senator Dierks, Senator Ashford, Senator Friend, Senator Louden, and Senator Stuthman. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, all those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. The five senior members should retire to the rear of the Chamber to join with the Clerk and the Secretary of State. Mr. Clerk, you're recognized for report. []

CLERK: Mr. President, the Committee on Credentials has met, certified the roster of membership, noting no election contests have been filed. The roster consists of all members duly certified by the State Canvassing Board. (Legislative Journal pages 2-4.) []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Nantkes, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR NANTKES: Good morning, Mr. President. I move to approve the Committee on Credentials' report, as certified and presented by the Secretary of State. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Nantkes. The motion before you is to approve the report of the Committee on Credentials. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The report is adopted. Senator Stuthman, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. I move that a committee of five be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislative Chamber for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the members of the Legislature. Thank you. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Stuthman. The motion before you is to select a committee of five to escort the Chief Justice. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair appoints the following committee:

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Senator Heidemann, Senator Cornett, Senator Howard, Senator Nelson, and Senator Harms. Will you please retire to the Clerk of the Supreme Court to escort him to the Chamber. The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms. []

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Heavican. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: (Gavel) Would you all please rise. Would you all be seated. The Chair recognizes the Chief Justice Mike Heavican of the Nebraska Supreme Court. []

CHIEF JUSTICE HEAVICAN: Thank you very much. Would the following newly elected or newly reelected senators come forward to be sworn in: Lavon Heidemann, Scott Price, Heath Mello, Jeremiah Nordquist, Gwen Howard, Brenda Council, Tanya Cook, Charlie Janssen, Robert Giese, Scott Lautenbaugh, Mike Flood, Ken Haar, Chris Langemeier, Kathy Campbell, Colby Coash, Tony Fulton, Rich Pahls, Dennis Utter, Mike Gloor, Galen Hadley, Beau McCoy, Kate Sullivan, Deb Fischer, Abbie Cornett, Ken Schilz, and LeRoy Louden. (Oath of office administered, Legislative Journal page 4.) Thank you very much and congratulations. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice. Will the committee please escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber. You may all be seated. Senator Rogert, you are recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR ROBERT: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the rules, as now in our possession, be adopted for today only, Wednesday, January 7, 2009. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: The motion before you is the adoption of the temporary rules. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. We will now move to the election of permanent officers. The Chair recognizes Speaker Flood. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Mr. President, members, I move that the following officers recommended by the Executive Board be elected to serve for the One Hundred First Legislature: Clerk of the Legislature Patrick J. O'Donnell, Assistant Clerk of the Legislature Richard K. Brown, and Sergeant at Arms Ron Witkowski. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Flood. The motion before you is the election of permanent officers. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. We have truly enjoyed having all the members of the family and friends here this morning on the floor. However, now it is time for the Legislature to get to work and we'll be doing the election of Chairs, so at this time we would ask that family and friends please remove themselves from the floor. Would the floor please come back to order. Would the floor please come back to order. Senator Langemeier, you're recognized for a motion. []

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SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Mr. President, I move that we proceed to the election of the Speaker of the Legislature. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Langemeier. The motion before you is the motion to proceed with the election of the Speaker. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. At this time we will move forward with nominations. Senator Flood, you're recognized. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Mr. President, members, I respectfully nominate myself for a second term as your Speaker. As I promised in 2007, I do so again in seeking this post, three things: The first and probably most important is fairness. It is important that senators conduct the people's business in an open and fair environment. I will do my part to see that senators are given an opportunity to pursue their own agenda, the one that they feel is appropriate. Secondly, respect for the institution: In this era of term limits we have a duty to protect and defend the integrity of the nation's only Unicameral Legislature. The Speaker, in his or her role, must ensure that the policymaking branch of our state government remains strong and true to our mission as a separate but coequal branch of state government. And finally, the Speaker, as we all do, has a duty to move our state forward. The Legislature is Nebraska's marketplace of ideas. It is a duty that we all have to debate the impact and substance of our laws, but at the end of the day we must make forward progress on difficult issues facing the state. As Speaker, I take this responsibility seriously. For these three reasons, I would respectfully request your consideration and your support to continue in my role as Speaker of the Nebraska Legislature. Thank you, Mr. President. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Flood. Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares the nominations closed. Senator McGill, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Flood. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: The motion before you is the motion to cease nominations and declare Senator...Speaker Flood by acclamation. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. Speaker Flood, congratulations. Senator Lautenbaugh, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Mr. President, I move that a committee of five be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislative Chamber for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the officers of the Legislature. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Lautenbaugh. The motion before you is to

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select a committee of five to escort the Chief Justice to the Legislative Chamber. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair appoints the following committee: Senator Heidemann, Senator Cornett, Senator Howard, Senator Nelson, and Senator Harms. Will you please retire to the Clerk of the Supreme Court's Office to escort the Chief Justice. The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms. []

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Heavican. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: (Gavel) Ladies and gentlemen, the Chair recognizes the Chief Justice Mike Heavican of the Nebraska Supreme Court. []

CHIEF JUSTICE HEAVICAN: Thank you, Mr. President. We will now swear in the Speaker of the Legislature, the Clerk of the Legislature, and the Assistant Clerk of the Legislature, beginning with the Speaker of the Legislature, Mike Flood. Mr. Flood, are you ready to proceed? (Oath of office administered to Speaker Flood.) Thank you very much. Congratulations. And we will now swear in the Clerk of the Legislature, Patrick J. O'Donnell. (Oath of office administered to Clerk O'Donnell.) Thank you and congratulations. And we will now ask the Assistant Clerk of the Legislature, Richard K. Brown, to take the oath of office. (Oath of office administered to Assistant Clerk Brown.) Thank you very much and congratulations. And we will now swear in the Sergeant at Arms, Ron Witkowski. (Oath of office administered to Sergeant at Arms Witkowski.) Congratulations. (Legislative Journal page 6.) []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice. Will the committee please escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber. Senator Pankonin, you are recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR PANKONIN: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Committees. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: You have heard the motion to move forward on the motion to elect the Chair of Committee on Committees. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The floor is now open for nominations. Senator Hansen, you're recognized. []

SENATOR HANSEN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I would like to nominate myself for the Chairmanship of the Committee on Committees. This is the largest committee of the Legislature--13 members. It's also the shortest committee. We will conclude our business by tomorrow. So this is an important committee, it's a committee that represents all 49 members of the body, getting them on the committees that their caucus says that they should serve on, that they desire to serve on, do the work of the people of the Legislature and the people of the state of Nebraska. I'll do this with fairness and brevity, if we can, and report back tomorrow and let all the new

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senators, especially, know which committees they will be assigned to for the next two years. Thank you, Mr. President. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares the nominations closed. Senator McGill, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Hansen. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: The motion before you is the motion to cease nominations and declare Senator Hansen. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. Congratulations, Senator Hansen. Senator Karpisek. []

SENATOR KARPISEK: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of the remaining 12 members of the Committee on Committees and that we authorize the members residing within each of the three districts, as enumerated in Rule 3, Section 2, to nominate 4 members to be elected by the legislative body to serve on the Committee on Committees. Thank you, Mr. President. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Karpisek. You have heard the motion to caucus for election of Committee on Committees membership. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, you have a motion on your desk for names and nominations. []

CLERK: Mr. President, I do. I have reports from the three caucuses. The 1st District Caucus, chaired by Senator Stuthman, as the senior member of that caucus, announces that Senators Stuthman, Adams, Nantkes, and Pankonin have been selected to serve on the Committee on Committees. The 2nd District Caucus, chaired by Senator Ashford, as its senior member, reports the following members have been selected to serve on the Committee on Committees: Senators Cornett, Lathrop, White, and Senator Ashford. The 3rd District Caucus, chaired by Senator Dierks, as its senior member, reports on the following selections to the Committee on Committees: Senators Dierks, Loudon, Fischer, and Flood. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Senator Wallman, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR WALLMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the approval of the nominees to the Committee on Committees. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: You have all heard the motion on the nominations. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion is approved. Senator White, you're recognized for a motion. []

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SENATOR WHITE: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed with the...to the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator White. You've heard the motion on the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board Council. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. We will now move to nominations. Senator Stuthman, you're recognized. []

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor and members of the body. I would like to nominate myself for the Chairperson of the Executive Board. I have served the past four years on this Executive Board. I'm the only returning member to the body of the eight members of the board, outside of the Speaker and the Appropriations Chair. I have served on chairs of many committees, locally, state, and federally. As a Chair, I respect every member and will give them an opportunity and the time to air their concerns, but I will keep the meeting progressive and productive. I will make sure that the staff in the Capitol is treated fairly and compensated accordingly, and I will work very hard to make sure that all bills that are referenced to the committee are referenced to the appropriate committees. I am committed to maintaining the integrity of our Unicameral, and I feel that I'm very proud of this Unicameral and I will do everything possible, as the Executive Board Chair, to keep this in this way. Another item that I have a concern with is that I think something that the Executive Board needs to address this year is a long-range plan for the state of Nebraska. Where do we want the state to be in the next 5, 10, 20 years? What do we do now, at the present time, to make sure that all communities in the state of Nebraska, from Scottsbluff, to Omaha, to Lincoln, to Valentine, to McCook, to Beatrice, you know, are getting benefits of our long-range plan? In closing, what can I bring to the Executive Board? I bring four years of experience on the Executive Board. I respect all senators in the body. I have many years of experience as Chairman. And in two years I will have completed my two terms and, if elected as Chairman, I will step aside and give someone else an opportunity to serve as a Chairman and give someone else an opportunity to get into the leadership role. Thank you. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Stuthman. Senator Wightman, you're recognized. []

SENATOR WIGHTMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. For those of you who don't know me, I'm John Wightman. For those of you who do, I'm also John Wightman. I nominate myself for Chair of the Executive Board. The Executive Board, as most of you know, reports...responds to all administrative, management, and policy issues pertaining to senators and staff. I believe that I can be an asset to this body, that I would chair that committee with integrity and fairness. For you that have served with me, I think that I hope that you would feel that. I do have experience in chairing committees, served on a

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number of planning commissions and boards in my hometown in the city of Lexington. I believe I'm prepared to chair those meetings and public hearings that pertain to the Legislature as an institution. For example, the board would hear legislation that would...could repeal term limits. Referencing of bills is another important part of serving as Chair of the Executive Committee and of the Executive Committee. As an attorney for 45 years, I feel that I have the skills to consider fair referencing of bills to committees and certainly I would intend to administer that with an even hand, with fairness, and integrity. Another important duty as Chair of the Executive Board is develop human resources, policies, procedures, and resolve personnel issues. Again, I think my experience qualifies me for that. We would also be involved with the preparing and the overseeing of the Executive Council budget, which is the budget for the Legislature. Again, as a former mayor of the city of Lexington, I feel that I have experience in that capacity. So, in summary, I believe that I can be an asset to the Legislature as the Chair of the Executive Board and that I would bring assets that would help me serve in that capacity. Also, I'd like to point out, and this is probably not a major reason that you should elect me, but with my recent cataract surgery, I have had improved vision for the Legislature and the state of Nebraska. (Laughter) I would very much appreciate your vote. Thank you, Mr. President. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Wightman. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, I declare the nominations closed. We will now proceed to a vote. At your desks you will find pieces of paper that you will use to write down the senator's name that you are voting for. The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will collect the ballots. At this time I would ask the following senators to come forward to be tellers: Senator Carlson, Senator Friend, and Senator Fulton. Senator Wightman received 33 votes; Senator Stuthman received 16 votes. Congratulations, Senator Wightman. Senator Friend, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, I move to proceed to the election of the Vice Chairman of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Friend. The question is the motion to proceed to the election of the Vice Chairperson of the Executive Board. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The floor is now open for nominations. Senator McGill. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, members of the body, I respectfully submit my name for nomination for Vice Chair of the Exec Board. I'm running for Vice Chair because I believe strongly in this institution, and I want to see its traditions preserved, its strength maintained, and at the same time allow for the growth, whether it be in technology or philosophy, as we prepare Nebraska for the future. The Exec Board is where many of these decisions are made, decisions ranging from referencing to staff guidelines to the policy that runs our institution. I will be a strong voice for the Legislature, as I've tried to

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be leading the recent Children in Crisis Task Force. As Chairperson, I have focused on gathering information and building legislation developed through consensus. I would do the same thing with tough scenarios and decisions facing the Executive Board. I also want to serve as Vice Chair of the Exec Board as one of the youngest members of the body to make sure we are moving forward as an institution by using technology to the best of our ability. Our world is changing, communication is changing, and we need to make sure our body keeps up with those changes and maintains the best communication possible with all the people of Nebraska. I also believe I would be a good complement to the leadership of Senator Wightman, whom we've just elected. I believe diversity of leadership, whether it be age, gender or experience, especially on our governing board, is extremely important in maintaining the fabulous system we all know and respect. I will provide an open ear to all those who bring concerns or suggestions to my attention, whether it be senators or staff. Thank you, and I respectfully ask for your vote. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator McGill. Senator Nelson. []

SENATOR NELSON: Mr. President, members of the body, I rise to place my name in nomination for the Vice Chair of the Executive Board. I'm a lifelong Nebraskan. Although I practiced law in Omaha for 40 years, I was raised on a farm in south-central Nebraska. I still own the same parcel of ground that my great-grandfather purchased 115 years ago, so I have an interest in agriculture. I follow it. I feel comfortable in dealing both with rural senators and urban senators in their respective settings, and I am able to work with...and I have been able to work with any senator here in this body. Those of you who have been around for awhile know me fairly well and, for the benefit of some of the new senators, I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself. I bring a full life of experience, insight, and understanding of people. This began at the University of Nebraska where I was on the governing board of four different student organizations. After that I went to sea as a commissioned officer aboard a Navy destroyer where I had to lead and supervise 60 men in my division, and then I was responsible for the pay, the feeding, and the procurement for 270 sailors aboard the ship. After three years on active duty, I continued with the Navy Reserve and stayed with that for 22 years and then retired with the rank of commander. As a lawyer, I have counseled and represented a great many clients. I'm one of the older generation of professionals who believe in treating people courteously, especially other members of the profession, and during my career as a lawyer I've been able to bring opposing sides together and reconcile and achieve good solutions in many cases. While serving as a lawyer, I also spent time in the Douglas County Election Office as the chief deputy. I worked with the public there, worked with volunteers, staff. And I was also an administrative law judge for the Department of Labor where I heard appeals on unemployment compensation and had to settle controversies between employers and employees. I have been on the board of two foundations. I've been an elder and trustee in my church, chair of the Lawyer Referral Committee of the Omaha Bar Association, longtime member there, and also president

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of the Omaha Downtown Kiwanis Club. As a legislator, in the last two years I feel I've been able to build coalitions of senators on many of the bills that I've carried. Two in particular would be LB646, which dealt with some changes in the election laws, and also LB1165, which dealt with the Cultural Endowment Fund. Both of those bills passed with large margins. Most recently I was privileged to attend the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development in Madison. That was a week of concentrated effort toward honing my leadership skills and working toward further leadership in the Legislature. I have broad interests, as you know, then in agriculture, in business, in finance, in the arts, in entrepreneurship, and many other areas. So I'm here as a legislator to serve and develop good public policy, not only for my constituents but for all citizens of the state of Nebraska, and you will have to decide whether I have the qualifications for the job of Vice Chair. You know what the Chair...you've heard what the responsibilities are. As Vice Chair, I will be there to preside in the absence of the Chairman and certainly would fulfill all of the expectations that you have heard before me. So you will have to judge if I can serve this body as Vice Chair in that capacity, and I will appreciate your vote. []

PRESIDENT SHEEHY: Thank you, Senator Nelson. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, we will proceed to a vote. Again, you will find a piece of paper on your desk that you will use to write down the senator's name that you are voting for. The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will collect the ballots throughout the Chamber. I would ask the following members please come forward, once you're done voting, to be tellers: Senator Nantkes, Senator Dierks, and Senator Pahls. (Doctor of the day introduced.) Congratulations to Senator Nelson, receiving 33 votes; Senator McGill, 15. Congratulations, Senator Nelson. []

SPEAKER FLOOD PRESIDING []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Senator Hansen, you are recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the other six members of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, as outlined in 50-401.01. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: You've all heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk. []

CLERK: Mr. President, I have received reports from the three caucuses. The 1st District Caucus, chaired by Senator Stuthman, announces that Senators Langemeier and Karpisek have been selected to serve on the Executive Board; 2nd District Caucus, chaired by Senator Ashford, reports that Senators White and Pahls have been selected; and the 3rd District Caucus, chaired by Senator Dierks, reports Senators Fischer and Christensen have been selected to serve on the Executive Board. []

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SPEAKER FLOOD: Senator Dierks, you are recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR DIERKS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the approval of the nominees of the Executive Board for the Legislative Council. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Dierks. You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. The motion is adopted. Senator Lathrop, you are recognized. []

SENATOR LATHROP: Mr. President, I move that we proceed to the election of standing committee Chairpersons by secret ballot, in accordance with Rule 3, Section 7(a). []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Lathrop. You've all heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Motion is adopted. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Agriculture Committee. Senator Carlson, you are recognized. []

SENATOR CARLSON: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I wish to nominate myself for Chair of the Agriculture Committee. Serving in the Nebraska Legislature has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my life. The bipartisan spirit of the Nebraska Unicameral has allowed us to focus the majority of our time on passing good legislation for the people of Nebraska and a minimum amount of time on beating the opposition. If we ever lose that, the Unicameral loses its unique strength. It's an honor to be a candidate for the Chair of the Agriculture Committee. Whoever is elected follows a line of very competent senators: from Senator Erdman to Senator Kremer to Senator Dierks. These individuals were strong in agricultural knowledge, but they are even stronger as quality people. They are strong in faith, integrity, and character. It would be an honor to follow in their footsteps. Agriculture is the number one industry in Nebraska. It's the most important industry in our state. The more profitable agriculture is, the more profitable all of us are. Animal agriculture alone is an \$8 billion industry. When you include related businesses, it jumps to over \$13 billion. The Agriculture Committee should be the lead group in doing everything possible to provide a positive climate for grain and livestock producers and related agriculture services to be consistently profitable on a year-by-year basis. We need to consider legislation that provides incentives for farmers to maximize production while conserving water. This may be through a combination of timing of irrigation, alternative crops, crop rotation, minimum till, no till, or other innovative options. Expanding livestock production will provide opportunities for more young people to remain in agriculture, and we should promote this by encouraging counties to implement reasonable zoning laws and make sincere efforts to be friendly to livestock expansion. The three-strike rule needs to be reconsidered. Grain producers should be able to have great confidence that storing their grain at licensed, bonded warehouses is like putting money in the bank in a passbook,

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safe savings account. Perhaps a fund could be generated to help protect these producers. I'm not in favor of mandatory bonding for ethanol plants and commercial livestock operations, but these entities should have the option to be licensed and bonded on a voluntary basis. We should implement legislation to eliminate sales tax on agricultural equipment parts and repairs. This step would benefit everyone by preventing business from leaving the state. The Department of Ag has done a great job in administering the vegetation removal program provided for in LB701. Senators Hansen, Harms, Fischer, Dierks, and Preister have been very supportive in their service on the task force in this work and much has been accomplished in the last year and a half that LB701 has been law. This body made a good decision by passing LB701. We need to extend this effort for another two years, and I will be reporting the results of this work later in the session. We need to provide legislation to solidify the funding of the noxious weed program also through the Department of Agriculture. There's much to do but great opportunities to be successful. In conclusion, when grain and livestock producers make money, everyone in Nebraska benefits. When grain and livestock producers are hurting, everyone in Nebraska hurts. We must make our greatest effort for their success. Thank you, and I ask for your vote for Chair of the Ag Committee. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Carlson. Senator Dubas, you are recognized. []

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Colleagues, first of all, I'd like to welcome all of our new colleagues to this very incredible experience. It's been the most incredible experience of my lifetime, and I think you'll be quick to find out it's going to be right up there for you too. So welcome to the Nebraska Legislature. When I was running for the seat in the Nebraska Legislature, I was invariably asked many, many times, well, what committees do you want to serve on, and my response was always, first, I want to be on the Ag Committee. And I have been able to serve for the past two years on the Ag Committee, and I was also honored to serve as the Vice Chair of that committee and have had opportunities to actually chair committee hearings. So I think that the two years of experience and my experience as Vice Chair will serve me very well. I think we're all realizing that institutional memory is probably something that's not a given anymore, so I think any amount of experience that a person can bring into whatever position they are looking for will serve them well. And I also think my lifetime experience actually in production agriculture will also serve me in this capacity. For over 34 years I've worked side by side with my husband on our family farm. We are a five-generation farm and very proud of that. So I not only understand agricultural issues; I live them every day. And my son is usually quick to remind me of that when I come home on the weekends when he tells me, you're not in Lincoln anymore so get your boots on and get outside. The Ag Committee deals with a wide variety of issues and, while they may not appear real glamorous, they are extremely important to the economy of our state and to the future of agriculture. So whether we're talking about noxious weeds or pesticide application, fencing law, brand inspection, animal health, the devastating impact that diseases can have on the livestock industry in our state, grain warehousing, bonding,

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these are just the tip of the iceberg on the types of issues that the Ag Committee deals with. But I think, first and foremost, the Ag Committee's priority is to ensure the strength and sustainability of the agriculture industry in our state. That's why I wanted to serve on this committee and that's why I would like to serve as Chair of this committee. I'm not here for my benefit. I'm here for my son and the future of all of the sons and daughters whose heart is in ag and livestock production and want to stay on the family farm and to keep agriculture strong and prosperous in our state. So, as I said, while none of these issues are real glamorous, they are extremely critical to the economy of agriculture in our state and they impact me, they impact my family, they impact my friends and neighbors and all of the farmers and ranchers across the state. The Chair's work does not end when the committee hearing closes. That's actually when the Chair's work begins, and so I did not make this decision lightly because I understand the responsibilities of a committee Chair and I observed closely, serving as Vice Chair under Senator Erdman, the type of work that he did and I learned a great deal from him. Also have worked with Senator Dierks when he was in his capacity as Chair of the Ag Committee and I've learned an incredible amount from him. So some of the duties that I see and responsibilities of the Chair of the Ag Committee is, first and foremost, working with your fellow committee members and communicating with them and working on the bills that the committee feels are important to advance and then working with those vested parties that are involved with the various bills and bringing them together to work out the details because I think you'll quickly realize that our time on the floor here is very precious. So when those bills come out of committee, they need to be in the best shape that they possibly can be for us to debate. Running fair and impartial committees I think are...is also very important, and I pride myself on my listening skills and the ability to take in all sides and look at the bigger picture and how will this serve the greater good. And it's very important to be able to put your personal biases aside and recognize that everybody has a viewpoint and everybody's viewpoint has merit and then being able to facilitate those varied opinions and thoughts and, again, working for the greater good and putting out quality bills that can move forward and can serve agriculture in this state. So I do have an open mind, I am a good listener, and I think the next thing that's important for a committee Chair is to be able to articulate those bills on the floor and the amendments. If you're not on that particular committee, you recognize that you need to go to those people on the committee and ask the questions before you're going to vote. So I think I would be able to articulate the issues because of my understanding of them and to be able to answer questions to the best of my ability. It's hard work being a senator. It's rewarding work but it's hard, and it's even harder work to be the Chair of any committee. But I have worked hard my entire life with my husband on our farm, and I would work just as hard as the Chair of the Ag Committee. And just as so many of you have finished knocking on doors and asking voters to trust in your abilities and your leadership skills and to vote for you and send you to Lincoln, I'm asking you today to trust in my abilities, in my leadership skills, and my willingness to serve you as Chair of the Ag Committee. I would appreciate your support. Thank you. []

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SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Dubas. Seeing no other senators interested in being nominated, the Chair hereby declares nominations to have ceased. The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will be gathering ballots. The question is, should Senator Carlson or Senator Dubas serve as the Chairperson of the Nebraska Legislature's Committee on Agriculture? The Chair hereby appoints Senator McCoy, Senator Nelson, and Senator McGill to serve as tellers. Senator Carlson, 29 votes; Senator Dubas, 20 votes. Congratulations, Senator Carlson. The floor is now open for nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee. Those senators interested in being nominated, please stand so that you may be recognized. Senator Heidemann, for what purpose do you rise? []

SENATOR HEIDEMANN: Mr. Speaker, fellow members of the body, I rise to nominate myself for the position of Appropriations Chair. I'd like to talk about three brief things. One is history. For the last four years, all four years of my service of the Legislature has been on Appropriations and the last two years of that has been as Chairman of Appropriations. And as we go into these tough economic times that we see ourselves...coming at us, I believe that the service that I have on Appropriations and my service as Appropriations Chair for the last two years will come into play as a very positive role. The other thing, I am the only person in this body that has more than two years of service on Appropriations. And one of the more important things about that is that I had the opportunity to serve for four years with people that had a lot of institutional memory. And as Senator Dubas has said, we have lost a lot of that institutional memory. And I believe that I am the link between that institutional memory and to all of the new people that are coming in because of term limits, and I believe that is very important as we see ourselves coming into these economic times that are coming before us. I was able to learn a lot with the people that I served on. They had went through the tough times before in the early 2000s. And I believe that will serve me well by listening to them talk and learning how they went through it. I believe my proven leadership will come into play. I believe I have the capability to get our committee, the Appropriations Committee, to present a very responsible budget not only for the people that we serve but also for the people that are paying the taxes in this state. I believe that I will continue my policy of an open-door policy. My door is always open. My office door is always open. My door to my office is always open. Your views and opinions are very important to me. As the Appropriations Committee shapes its budget, we present it to the floor. But in the end, in the end it is the Legislature's budget that operates this state. So your views and opinions are very important to me. I would appreciate your vote and your support for reelection to the Chairmanship of Appropriations Committee. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Heidemann. Are there any other nominations for this position? Seeing none, the Chair hereby declares that nominations cease. Senator McGill, you are recognized for a motion. []

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SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Heidemann. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Senator Heidemann, congratulations. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. Senator Pahls, you are recognized. []

SENATOR PAHLS: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I place my name in nomination as Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. I've served in this capacity the last two years. And I would appreciate your support in allowing me to continue in this position. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Pahls. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this Chairpersonship? Seeing none, the Chair hereby declares that nominations cease. Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Pahls. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Members, you have heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All of those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Pahls. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Business and Labor Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. All those wishing to be nominated please stand. Senator Lathrop, you're recognized. []

SENATOR LATHROP: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues. I rise to put my name into nomination as Chair of Business and Labor. This is a committee that I've served on in the two years that I've been here. It is also a subject matter with which I am familiar as a practicing attorney. The subject matter of the Business and Labor Committee is in my practice field. Ultimately, I believe the Chair has the responsibility to ensure that bills that come before the committee have a fair hearing and that bills that come to the floor be in a position that they could be passed. They have been cleaned up. And those are the things that I think I can do well as Chair of Business and Labor. And I'd appreciate your support. Thank you, Mr. President. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Lathrop. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this position? Seeing none, it is the Chair's ruling that nominations cease. Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Lathrop. []

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SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Lathrop. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Education Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Adams, you are recognized. []

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I humbly submit my name to be the Chair of the Education Committee. I'm humbled, first of all, by the support that so many, many of you have shown throughout the last 12 months as I have moved towards this position. As Chair, I want to continue to try to do the things that I think maybe have helped me earn your support and your trust. I'll listen. I'll communicate with you and your constituents and the education officials in your districts. I'm also humbled by the responsibility of the Education Committee Chair. Making good educational policy for this state is a huge responsibility. We're so different from one end of the state to the other. And yet we're so much alike in our desire to make sure that every child in this state has an opportunity at an equitable education. And I take that responsibility very seriously. I hope for your support. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Adams. Are there others that wish to be nominated to this position? Seeing none, the Chair declares that nominations cease. Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Adams. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Adams. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the General Affairs Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Karpisek, you are recognized. []

SENATOR KARPISEK: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to submit my name for the Chair of General Affairs Committee. General Affairs is maybe not one of the glamor positions in the Legislature but I feel that it's the blue collar work of the Legislature and the state of Nebraska. We deal with everything from alcohol, gambling, to cemeteries. It's a wide range of different ideas and it's very exciting to talk about different things every day. I promise to be fair, try to get the bills out in a reasonable amount of time and in good shape to be heard on the floor. Again, I think some of the issues that we have can be very controversial. And I'm sure that that will happen with this new group of senators and the new dynamic of our group. But I do promise to do my best, be fair. And I haven't shied away from a fight here yet, so I'm sure that there will be some coming. And I would humbly ask for your support for General Affairs Chair. Thank you, Mr. President. []

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SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Karpisek. Are there other nominations for this position? Seeing none, the Chair declares that nominations cease. Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Karpisek. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. You've heard the motion. The question is, should the motion be adopted? All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Senator Karpisek, congratulations. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Those wishing to be nominated, Senator Avery, you are recognized. []

SENATOR AVERY: Mr. President and distinguished colleagues, it is a privilege to stand as candidate for Chair of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. And I ask for your vote. The committee deals with two very broad sets of issues--those relating to government process and issues involving the military and veterans affairs. These two areas are where my interests lie and where I have the most experience. I have spent most of my adult life teaching, researching, and writing about government as a member of the faculty at UNL. I served four years in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era. I have served the past two years on the committee and understand the issues that come before the committee. And I also know how the committee functions and I work well with the committee staff. Several times over the past two years I have been privileged to represent the committee at National Guard troop deployments abroad. And I have also represented the committee when those troops have returned. And I have been happy and proud to do that. During my time in this institution, I have sponsored several bills concerning constitutional issues and several others on governmental openness and accountability. This past summer and fall I chaired an interim committee that studied ways to protect Nebraska's military bases from closure and realignment, protecting a \$2.5 billion industry in this state. And each of you has received a copy of that report. Those of you who know me know that I am a hardworking, fair-minded, and pragmatic person who approaches every issue in a rational, thoughtful, and deliberative manner. You know that I am someone who listens and someone that you can work with on virtually all issues. Above all, I will be fair, open, and accessible. You also know that I am actively involved in all the activities of the company, what we do here. As a Lincoln senator, I could easily go home every night but I don't. Instead, I attend as many functions and events as I possibly can so that I can get to know my colleagues better. And I can tell you that among the things that I cherish most about these experiences are the lasting friendships that I have established with so many of you. I care deeply about this institution. I will do everything within my power to protect it and to strengthen it. If you think these attributes qualify me for this

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Chairmanship, then I ask that you vote for me to chair the Committee on Government, Military and Veterans Affairs. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Avery. Senator Rogert, you are recognized. []

SENATOR ROGERT: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, friends and colleagues. It is great to see my old friends back again. And it's also great to see our newly elected friends enjoying their first day in this magnificent building in our newly restored Chamber. I rise today to nominate myself for Chairman of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. We have much work to do in 90 days. We have a budget to pass amidst a world economic crisis. We have a health system looking to us for guidance and change in order to stem the tide of skyrocketing costs. We have a school system needing money for teacher pay and a record forecasted increase in state aid. Hundreds of bills will be introduced in the next ten days and sent to the various committees. Later today those committees will be formed. This morning, however, we are electing our peers to chair these committees. I'm asking for your vote for the Chair of the great Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, a committee I consider to be one of the most important in this body. Revenue raises the money, and Appropriations spends it. Judiciary shapes our court systems and Health looks out for our well-being, but Government is what this is all about. Government is how people select leaders and how citizens make their voices heard. Government is about elections, cities and counties, state agency operations, and boards and commissions. I believe in a strong but limited, fair and representative government. I believe everyone has the right to be heard, every idea is worthy of public debate. We should constantly strive to mold and shape our governmental process through debate, public input, and legislation. This is the committee where that is done. I've made myself familiar with every bill that has come through this committee in the last ten years. I read through a three-foot-high stack of bill summaries in order to see what the future holds for this committee, as the past always comes back around. Nearly 90 percent of the bills that come through this committee deal with government. But we must also pay special attention to our veterans and our military installations in this state. I've been working with several groups over the past few months to create legislation that will prompt our state to take better care of our veterans. I've also done some work on military-related legislation and attended events honoring our bravest citizens. I believe committee Chairs should be impartial and fair. I have no agenda to push and my views are moderate and my leadership style is one of efficiency and order. Much change has taken place in this body over the past couple of years. Thirty-six of the 49 of us here have less than three years' experience. Much of that institutional knowledge has left the building. In an effort to preserve as much of that knowledge as I can, I pledge to keep the top-notch staff that has served that committee for many years, and I have been working with them on several issues this past interim. When I first got placed on this committee, I was unsure of its mission or its jurisdiction. But over the past two years I've come to cherish everything it stands for. Its meaning is almost exactly why I ran for

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office a few years ago. In the face of change and uncertainty, government must hold the citizenship together. That's what this committee aims to do and that's what I intend to preserve if elected Chair. Thank you, Mr. President. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Rogert. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this position? Seeing none, the Chair declares that nominations cease. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will collect the ballots. The Chair hereby appoints Senators Carlson, White and Pahls as tellers to tabulate the vote. Would you all please come forward. The vote is Senator Avery, 28; Senator Rogert, 20. Congratulations, Senator Avery. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. All those wishing to be nominated please do so at this time. Senator Gay, you are recognized. []

SENATOR GAY: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues. I would like to humbly nominate myself as Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee. During the past two years I've had the opportunity to serve as Vice Chairman of this committee and gained valuable experience and insight into the many issues that have already been before the committee, as well as prepared myself to try to best understand many of the issues that will be facing us not only in this session but also for several years ahead. More recently over the interim I also served on the Beatrice State Development Committee, the Children in Crisis Task Force Committee, and as a member...Nebraska representative to the Council of State Governments as a Bowhay Leadership graduate, as well as attending all the Health and Human Services interim studies. It is no secret to anyone in this body that the Health and Human Services Committee, as all our committees, will have challenges ahead. For those of you that I have had the pleasure to serve with over the past two years, I hope I have displayed a fair and forward position in our dealings. To our new colleagues, my commitment is to maintain an open-door policy, to be available to answer questions and give straightforward answers based on the knowledge that is available to me. It is important to maintain the independence of the Legislature in our dealings with the other branches of government, including the executive branch, the judicial branch, and work together to find innovative ways to deliver services to those who are some of the state's most vulnerable citizens. Whether your interest is in Medicaid and long-term care, developmental disabilities, children and family services, behavioral health, veterans' issues or public health, I hope to work together with you to find the best possible way to deliver these services to Nebraska's citizens. I'd like to thank you for your consideration on this important position and humbly ask for your support. Thank you, Mr. President. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Gay. Are there others that wish to be nominated for the position of Chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

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SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Gay. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Gay. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Judiciary Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Ashford, you are recognized. []

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And congratulations to everyone that's here, including the new members. I'd like to place my name in nomination for the position of Chair of the Judiciary Committee. Over the interim I was asked basically two questions: What happened with the safe haven law? And secondarily, what's the Legislature going to be like and what's the Judiciary Committee going to be like without my friend, Senator Ernie Chambers? And certainly in the last week or so that question has been asked over and over again. My comment is this, that we will miss Senator Chambers greatly. He was a person who spent every day scouring every piece of legislation that came through the Judiciary Committee and that came to the floor of the Legislature. Without my friend, Senator Chambers, on the committee, it will give to us a huge responsibility because it is clear that every word, every sentence, every nuance that goes into a piece of legislation that comes out of the Legislature's Judiciary Committee impacts the daily lives of Nebraskans in a real and, in many cases, profound way. It is a high challenge and a massive responsibility. And I am truly honored, would be truly honored to fill the position of Chair in this body. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Ashford. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this position? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Ashford. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. You've heard the motion, members. The question is...all those in favor say aye. All those opposed say...well, let's start this over. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Ashford. The floor is now open. We are taking nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Louden, you are recognized. []

SENATOR LOUDEN: Mr. Speaker and members, having served as Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee for the past two years, I respectfully submit my name for nomination to continue as Chairman of the committee. I seek the position based on my six years of service on the committee and my firsthand experience with many of the issues that fall within the committee's jurisdiction, including water, electric power,

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recreation, forestry, mineral assets, and the interaction between agricultural and the natural resources. I've also served on the board of directors of the Panhandle Rural Electric Association, an experience that has given me a thorough understanding of electric power in Nebraska and its role in the twenty-first century technology. I live and ranch at Ellsworth in Sheridan County which, along with most of the state, lies above the Ogallala aquifer. My experience of ranching for over 50 years has given me the firsthand knowledge of the value of our natural resources. I've operated a successful ranching business by managing land, water, and wildlife carefully. Using practical and sustainable resources that provide my livelihood is a policy that translates to the entire state. I also recognize that alternative energy sources require a statewide perspective and should be included in Nebraska's energy policy. In addition to the benefits of clean energy, use of energy alternatives can provide significant economic development in our state. And I have worked with foresters and the logging industry to encourage sensible use of our forestry assets which also benefit the entire state. A very good example is the use of woodchips as a renewable fuel source that has been pioneered by Chadron State College. They have been using woodchips to heat and cool the campus for over 18 years. As technology has advanced, they now claim that Chadron State College saves \$360,000 a year. In other words, \$1,000 a day by using woodchips to heat and cool the institution. Nebraska has 1.2 million acres of forest, and it produces over 1 million tons of wood a year. The Legislature, through the Natural Resources Committee, needs to be made aware of the potential use of this renewable energy source to heat and cool state agency buildings. Another example of efficiency using natural resources is a process using vegetation to clean up contaminated ground water, called phytoremediation. Trees are planted in such a way as to force their roots to grow deep and pull up contaminated ground water and break down the contaminant. Phytoremediation removes harmful chemicals from the ground in a very organic way. At the present time, there is a project near Murdock, Nebraska, that is removing carbon tetrachloride from ground water. By allowing nature to decontaminate the water, the use of mechanical pumps can be at a minimum. It is these types of projects that utilize natural resources most efficiently and that the Legislature should be aware of and support. Mineral resources also benefit the entire state. In my experience with oil production, oil leasing, and oil well drilling has given me an understanding of the laws that control these minerals. In fact, Nebraska's only uranium mine, near Crawford, is in the district that I represent. Water policy will continue to require the committee's attention. I recognized the importance of water issues long before I came to the Legislature. Water issues that come to the committee are statewide from the North Platte Valley to the Missouri River which includes the Elkhorn River in northeast Nebraska and the Loup Rivers which begin in Sheridan County in western Nebraska. As a member of the Natural Resources Committee, I've worked effectively with Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Quality, and the state's natural resource districts. The Game and Parks Commission works on legislation that comes before the Natural Resources Committee. My service on the committee has allowed me to build a positive relationship with the commission which has a significant

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impact on the lives of many Nebraskans through its administration of laws governing fishing, hunting, recreation, park entry fees, and land acquisition. With an agricultural background and as a livestock producer, I understand livestock production both on ranch and feedlot operations and its value in Nebraska. I've witnessed firsthand our state's assets as well as our problems and have developed a balanced perspective on the challenge we face. My knowledge comes from not only the formal settings of public hearings where arguments pro and con are exchanged and considered, it comes also from firsthand experience where our fellow citizens use, enjoy, and manage our natural resources. I've walked the watersheds of our NRDs, lived with the effects of drought, and can even remember the wet years. My experience as a committee member has shown me the importance of leading members to create legislation that balances competing interests and protects Nebraska's natural resource wealth. As chairman, I have insight on how to conduct committee business effectively and fairly. With the help of experienced and competent staff, bills will be scheduled and heard with efficiency and my office will continue the custom of working with a door that is open to all. It would be an honor to continue to serve you as Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, and I ask for your vote and thank you for your consideration of my candidacy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Loudon. Senator Langemeier, you are recognized. []

SENATOR LANGEMEIER: Mr. President, members of the body, I respectfully nominate myself, Chris Langemeier, for Chair of Natural Resources Committee. And I ask for your vote. There's no question that Nebraska faces serious water issues, and I believe we must work towards a solution. We must, while recognizing the needs of water users, ag producers, municipalities across the state. As Nebraskans work to resolve compact issues with Kansas, it's important to develop responsible, long-term policies that benefit our state's interests into the future. At the same time we must also confront storm water issues and runoff issues that face our urban cities. The city of Omaha is facing a \$2 billion price tag alone. During our nation's energy crisis, there's no question that decisions made here in Lincoln by us on issues like renewable energy, wind power generation will define our service in the Legislature. There are but a few...these are just but a few of the issues your Natural Resources Committee will face in this One Hundred First Legislature. As a former NRD member, where I served for eight years, I have gained experience on the ground level where important local decisions are made. As chairman of the Projects Committee on the NRD, I worked with such things in our district as MUD's well field; Lincoln's city well field, ground water contaminates; the Mead Ordnance Plant, one of the biggest contaminate spots in the state of Nebraska; the continued development of irrigation within our district; and also Lake Wanahoo, one of the biggest and largest recreational restoration projects to come to Nebraska, and that's just to name a few. During the past four years, I've worked closely with the committee here in the Legislature helping to pass LB701 and LB1226 and other

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water-issue-related bills. I've traveled. I've listened to the NRDs. I've listened to our irrigators and our municipalities and players across the state and organizations. More than anything I want to be fair and consider everyone's input into the workings of the Natural Resources Committee. If elected your Chairperson, I pledge to have an open-door policy and leadership that welcomes new ideas and solutions. That's why I'm running for Natural Resources Chair. And I'd appreciate your support. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Langemeier. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this position? Seeing none, Senator...Mr. Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will collect the ballots. The question is, should Senator Louden or Senator Langemeier serve as Chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee of the Nebraska Legislature? Senators Fischer, Lathrop, and Stuthman are appointed as tellers to record the vote in this matter. Senator Langemeier is the winner. Congratulations, Senator Langemeier. The floor is now accepting nominations for the position of Chairperson of Nebraska Retirement Systems of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Pankonin, you are recognized. []

SENATOR PANKONIN: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. In November I told you of my intention to run for the Chairmanship of the Legislature's Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. I am now placing my name in nomination for this position. The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee is responsible for managing legislative proposals that affect public retirement systems that have been created by the state of Nebraska or its political subdivisions. My goal for the committee would be to protect the sustainability of the retirement plans in place while balancing the goal with limiting the future unfunded liabilities that could adversely affect the state of Nebraska and its taxpayers. My leadership strategies would include listening to, learning from, and collaborating with my fellow committee members and the committee staff, those who bring issues to be considered by the committee and members of the legislative body at large to achieve the best possible outcomes for all concerned. It would be an honor to serve as the Chair of the Legislature's Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. Thank you for your consideration. I ask for your support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Pankonin. Are there others that wish to be nominated? Seeing none, the Chair declares nominations cease. Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Pankonin. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. You've all heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Pankonin. The floor is now open and taking nominations for the position of Chairperson

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of the Revenue Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Cornett, you are recognized. []

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. I rise to nominate myself for the position of Chairman of Revenue. After a long and productive interim, I would like to say how good it is to see all of you back again, to work to do the business of the state of Nebraska. To my returning colleagues, thank you for your continued service. To my new colleagues, welcome. I look forward to working with you on a variety of issues, and you are always welcome in my office. Colleagues, it has been an honor to serve on the Revenue Committee under the leadership of Senator Landis and Senator Janssen since my start in the Legislature in 2004. In that time on that committee, we have given fair and thoughtful consideration to all bills before us. While we may not have always agreed 100 percent of the time, we have always worked together to bring sensible revenue and tax policies to the floor of this Legislature. I worked hard with other members of the committee on the Nebraska Advantage Act legislation which has and will give this state an edge in recruiting this country's top employers. And as our state works through the difficult economic period, I believe that the Revenue Committee and this body will need to continue working on new ideas to give our business and citizens a competitive edge without cutting our revenue potential. That is why I pledge as Chairperson of the Revenue Committee to further an atmosphere of hard work and cooperation. In addition to my work on the Revenue Committee, this body has honored me with the position in the past of Chair of Business and Labor Committee in 2007, during the One Hundredth Legislative Session (sic). The committee, with this body's support, worked on improving workers' compensation through LB588, a bill that was introduced to control the cost of inpatient hospital reimbursement for workers' compensation claims by establishing hospital fee schedules. We have also worked closely with the Department of Labor to ensure a more efficient department. As Chair of Business and Labor, I made a great effort to meet with all stakeholders and listened to all information so we, as a committee, could send good public policy to this forum. My service as Chair would also make this an easy transition to Chairman of the Revenue Committee. Thank you for your support. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Cornett. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this position? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Cornett. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Cornett. The floor is now accepting nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Fischer, you are recognized. []

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SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise this afternoon to place my name in nomination for Chair of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. It has been my privilege to have served this body in this position for the last two years. Our committee addresses a broad range of matters, and I believe we have met the challenges of several difficult issues. Our discussions have always been thoughtful, frank, and fair. During the last session, we advanced legislation that was always fully deliberated and always technically sound for floor debate. We have accomplished much over the last two years, but there is still much to do. Highway funding is a priority and a concern for many of you in this body. And I pledge to you that, as Chair of this committee, I will continue to offer long-term solutions to this major challenge that we face for discussion by this full body. I also pledge to you that I will continue to work hard, that I will work with all of you in openly discussing the issues that come before this committee. I thank you for your past support and I ask for your vote. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Are there others that wish to be nominated to this position? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Fischer. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Fischer. The floor is now open and accepting nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Urban Affairs Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Friend, you are recognized. []

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I respectfully rise to nominate myself to the position of Chairperson of the Committee on Urban Affairs. Tax increment financing, natural gas legislation, legislation relating to volunteer firefighters, those are all fun, interesting stuff. I think that what you have to remember about me, though, is it's all about garnering power. (Laughter) Pursuant to Article IV, Section 16...by the way, this is the shortest speech you'll ever hear me give (laughter)...pursuant to Article IV, Section 16 of the Constitution of Nebraska, and Nebraska Revised Statutes 84-120, the Chair of the Urban Affairs Committee would be 15th in the line of succession to the Governor, 15th. Members of the Legislature, the Lieutenant Governor; the Speaker; the Executive Board Chair; the Committee on Committee Chair; Judiciary; Government, Military, Veterans Affairs; Appropriations; Revenue; Education; Banking; Natural Resources; Ag; Health and Human Services; and General Affairs, members of the Legislature, I can impeach every one of them (laughter) and then I'm there. Okay? But there is a troubling aspect to this and that is that Russ Karpisek is ahead of me. (Laughter) Members of the Legislature, the General Affairs Chair is ahead of me. Like I said, it's all about garnering power. I've got a plan.

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Trust me, it'll work. (Laughter) All kidding aside, members, I've been honored for the past six years to serve on the Urban Affairs Committee. I'm serious about this. I've been...I have been honored to serve the Legislature on the Urban Affairs Committee. I have served for four years as the Chair and it has been a...especially right out of the gate, it was a roller coaster ride, it was fun, it was interesting for me. And I look forward to serving in that capacity again. I respectfully ask for your backing. Thank you, Mr. President. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Friend. Are there others that wish to be nominated to this position? Seeing none, Senator McGill, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Friend. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Friend. Members, before we proceed to the next item on the agenda, I would ask that the pages deliver a memo that I have drafted regarding the upcoming schedule beginning January 8 with dates on into the future. Please note that it is my intention to begin the first day of each workweek beginning at 10:00 a.m., unless otherwise announced. The remaining days of the week we will convene at 9:00 a.m. outside of the dates I've identified in this memo. Please take a moment to review this memo. For citizens watching this telecast today or those in the Capitol, not in the Chamber, you can go to the Unicameral's Web site, click on my Web page and a copy of this memo will be available for review under Speaker's Memo. Those interested in the future in receiving communications like these from the Speaker's Office are encouraged to sign up and subscribe to an RSS feed on that site. Thank you. Mr. Clerk. Senator Louden, you are recognized. []

SENATOR LOUDEN: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of the special and select committee Chairpersons by secret ballot. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Louden. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The ayes have it, motion is adopted. We now move to Intergovernmental Cooperation Chairperson of the Nebraska Legislature. The floor is now open. Nominations may be received. Senator Janssen, you are recognized. []

SENATOR JANSSEN: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I rise to nominate myself for the Chair of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee. I'm not sure what the succession line is but I am certain it's behind Senator Friend. (Laughter) That I do know. I'm running for this office or Chairmanship because I want to do this position. It's

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not something I defaulted into, it's something I want to do. With term limits upon us, I think it's important for us to spread the message of Nebraska and go to other states and see how they do it and to learn and to share the knowledge we have. And we need to do this as quickly as possible. I would be fair in dealing with this and, in fact, would probably encourage you to go out and do this. And I will be here, even in the intercession (sic). I'll be down here quite a bit. I live 52 miles away according to my travel sheet. I'll be...if there's questions, which there will be eventually, I will back you up, I will defend you and defend the fact that we need to get out there and to educate ourselves as continuing education. And I don't know that it has anything to do with the office, but I recently had cataract surgery and...well, that's not true. But it worked for Senator Wightman, so I thought I'd try it too. (Laughter) But I do sit right next to the Executive Chair and that may be helpful as well with my vision. So I'm asking for your vote for this Chairmanship. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Are there others that wish to be nominated for this position? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Janssen. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Janssen. It is now time to accept nominations for the position of Chairperson of the Rules Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Lautenbaugh, you are recognized. []

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues. I respectfully rise to submit my own name to be Chairman of the Rules Committee. The good news is this is not my speech. These are the rules I have here in my hand. My speech will be much shorter than that. Briefly, this is an important position. My plan is to hopefully be a custodian of the rules and observe the traditions of the Legislature while keeping an open mind and being open to changes some of you might have in mind. I don't come to this with an agenda or a preconceived list of rules that need to be changed. I just pledge to interpret the rules fairly, have an open mind. And I look forward to working with all of you. And I appreciate your support. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Lautenbaugh. Are there others that wish to be nominated to this position? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Lautenbaugh. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All

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those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Lautenbaugh. Nominations are now being received for the position of Chairperson of the Enrollment and Review Committee. Senator McGill, you are recognized. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, it is my sincere and deep pleasure to nominate the next E&R Chair. For those of you who are new, this role always goes to the new youngest member of the body. And that gentleman this year is Senator Jeremy Nordquist. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Senator Nordquist, you are recognized. []

SENATOR NORDQUIST: Thank you, Mr. President. As Chair of E&R, I promise to keep my hearings brief and probably won't use my two committee priority bills. And as another precedent has been set, I may end up running for Speaker in two years, so keep that in mind when you cast your vote. Thank you. (Laughter) []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Just wait four and you'll be fine. (Laughter) Are there any other nominations? Seeing none, Senator McGill for a motion. []

SENATOR MCGILL: Mr. President, I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Nordquist. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator McGill. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Nordquist. Senator Fischer, you're recognized. []

SENATOR FISCHER: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that a committee of three be appointed to escort the Secretary of State to the Chamber to deliver the election returns of the general election of November 2008. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Fischer. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Senator Lautenbaugh, Senator Janssen, and Senator Howard, you are appointed to escort the Secretary of State. The Sergeant at Arms is recognized. []

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. Speaker, your committee now escorting Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: (Gavel) The Nebraska Secretary of State, John Gale. []

SECRETARY GALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Clerk, I deliver to you the abstracts of the 2008 General Election from the 93 counties in Nebraska for canvass by the

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members of the One Hundred First Nebraska Legislature. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Committee members, please escort the Secretary of State out of the Chamber. Mr. Clerk, items for the record. []

CLERK: Mr. President, I have received from the Secretary of State a series of reports and communications regarding the general election conducted in November 2008, including a certificate indicating winners for seats on the Public Service Commission, for the Board of Regents, for the State Board of Education, the retention vote for judges on the Nebraska Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, as well as the Workers' Compensation Court. I also have received, Mr. President, from the Secretary of State the summary of the vote totals with respect to proposed constitutional amendments and initiatives as presented to the electorate. Those are all part of the report as filed with me by Mr. Gale as Secretary of State. (Legislative Journal pages 13-16.) []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Members, you may be seated. Senator Cornett, you're recognized for a motion. []

SENATOR CORNETT: Mr. Speaker, I move to approve the report of the Secretary of State and the candidates stated therein to be declared duly elected. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Cornett. Members, you have heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Christensen, you are recognized. []

SENATOR CHRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to arrange to hold the Inaugural Ceremonies for the newly elected state officials on Thursday, January 8, 2009, at 1:45 p.m. Thank you. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Senator Christensen. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The ayes have it, motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, you are...items for the record. []

CLERK: Mr. President, an announcement: Senator Hansen, as Chair of the Committee on Committees, announces the committee will meet...Committee on Committees will meet in Room 1524, Room 1524 at 2:30; Committee on Committees, Room 1524 at 2:30 this afternoon.

Mr. President, I have a priority motion. Senator McGill would move to adjourn the body until Thursday morning, January 8, at 10:00 a.m. []

SPEAKER FLOOD: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Members, you've heard the motion to adjourn until Thursday, January 8, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. All those in favor say aye. All those

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opposed say nay. We are adjourned. []