

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

Education Committee
March 01, 2016

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Education met at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1, 2016, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on confirmations for the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment and the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission. Senators present: Kate Sullivan, Chairperson; Rick Kolowski, Vice Chairperson; Roy Baker; Mike Groene; and David Schnoor. Senators absent: Bob Krist; Adam Morfeld; Patty Pansing Brooks.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome to the Education Committee. I'm Kate Sullivan of Cedar Rapids, representing District 41. We have two...for this public hearing today we have two appointments that we will be dealing with. One, a call-in, and one who is actually present. That call-in should be coming in momentarily, but as we await that, I would like the members of the committee who are here to introduce themselves, starting with the Vice Chair.

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Rick Kolowski, District 31 in southwest Omaha. Thank you.

SENATOR SCHNOOR: Dave Schnoor, District 15: Dodge County.

SENATOR BAKER: Roy Baker, District 30: Gage County, part of southern Lancaster County.

SENATOR GROENE: Mike Groene, Lincoln County.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senators. Judiciary is meeting right now in Executive Session from 1:00 to 1:30. We hope that the other three members of this committee will be here. So this is the call in that will be for the first hearing. Good afternoon, is this Mr. Goldschmidt on the line? [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: This is Pete Goldschmidt, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much for calling in, Mr. Goldschmidt. We have the committee members here--there are five of the eight of us here. And I understand that this is going to be an appointment to the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment. So for starters, if you could tell us, is this a reappointment or a new appointment for you?
[CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: This is a new appointment for me. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Well, can you tell us at this point what you know about what could be your potential responsibilities on this committee and also why you'd like to be a part of it? [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: (Exhibit 1) Certainly. I think I have worked with Nebraska many years ago, but this is a new appointment in this particular Technical Advisory Committee. And I think one of the unique things about Nebraska is its uniqueness in fact, in the way it has really been on the forefront in thinking about assessment and accountability, and really weaving in teachers and local control. So I think that makes it a very interesting challenge to maintain both rigor and the quality of education that we're striving for. And I think Nebraska really has done a very nice job thus far. I think my role as part of the Technical Advisory Committee is really to be in some sense a sounding board for the department and the state as they come up with interesting new ideas to meet the challenges that they intend to conquer. Members of the Technical Advisory Committee, you know, which I would be a part of, really can provide some more fine grain, "expertised" feedback that hopefully will bring in additional information that sometimes isn't available when we focus in more closely in those that are directly around us. But to bring in a little more national perspective on some of the ideas that you might have. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: You're based in California, is that correct? [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: That is correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: California is a lot different than Nebraska. Any comparisons or will there be some value from your being in California and for there for quite a long period of time in terms of your decision making on what happens in Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: Well, so I'd like to think that not only...so I am based in California, and I'm sure you've seen my resume, that I've also spent time in New Mexico and I also served on several other state technical advisory committees. I think one of the advantages...so one of the similarities between California and New Mexico for example are the challenges that these states face with performance gaps between various subgroups in the population. And I think that's an issue that, even though the performance in Nebraska for example overall is significantly better or higher than it would be in New Mexico for example, still there exist performance gaps. And I think that's something that the perspective of other states perhaps can be helpful as Nebraska begins to deal with that more and more. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Very good, thank you. Committee, are there questions for Mr. Goldschmidt? Well, I see no questions. I just heard the comment impressive, and I think they were looking at your resume. [CONFIRMATION]

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PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And it is quite impressive. And you bring a wealth of background and information, so I really do appreciate your willingness to serve. There is a question from Senator Groene. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: How...who contacted you and knew about you that they appointed you to this committee or this position? I'm just curious. [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: You know, honestly...so I have worked with Nebraska in the past. And I would assume that when names are recommended, my guess would be that your...the person that's running your TAC, Brian Gong, probably was the name. I wasn't privy to the background, the back story or how I got contacted. But my guess is that, as I've worked with Brian Gong on various other committees, that he likely thought, oh, this would be a good fit. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: All right, that's just...I just wondered how they knew about you. And it's you must have done good work in the past that somebody remembered you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Do you know, Mr. Goldschmidt, how many individuals serve on the committee, and a little broadbrush of where they all are from? [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: I do not. I admit that I have...so like I said, I've worked a little bit with Nebraska and I've looked at Nebraska's general web site in terms of their new assessment and accountability systems that are in place. But I haven't looked at the particulars of the Technical Advisory Committee. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, very good. Senator Groene. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: One more. I'm assuming you don't plan on attending meetings personally. [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: No, I would likely...so I do. I attend meetings in Louisiana, I attend meetings in Mississippi, Delaware, so I do travel around the country when I think it's best to be there in person. It is possible to do videoconferencing or be on the phone, but I would prefer to be there in person. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR GROENE: All right, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And how many times do you meet? [CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: I was told that usually they meet once or twice a year.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. All right, very good. Any other questions for Mr. Goldschmidt?
Thank you very much for calling in, and appreciate your willingness to serve.
[CONFIRMATION]

PETE GOLDSCHMIDT: Absolutely. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: All right, is there anyone wishing to speak to this appointment of Pete Goldschmidt to the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment? Seeing none, we'll close the hearing on that appointment and move on to the next one, which is the appointment of Randy Schmailzl to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Division. And Mr. Schmailzl is here. Welcome, Mr. Schmailzl. Appreciate you being here.
[CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: No problem. Thank you, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Good. And to begin with, is this a new appointment for you?
[CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: This is a new appointment, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, so tell us a little bit about your perceived role and why you'd like to be part of it. [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: (Exhibit 1) There is a place in the 11-member commission for a community college representative. And in the past, Dennis Baack has represented the community colleges and in conversation with Dennis we discussed my place on the commission. And I'm happy to say that Dennis supported that I would take his place, and he can't be replaced, but I'll do the best I can to represent all the community colleges in Nebraska with NET and what the commission works on. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Can you tell us a little bit about the role of NET in delivering education at community college setting? [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: We have a super relationship with NET as a user and a provider. We do a number of series annually with them, but you know, the community colleges overall it spans through all of our districts. And so the educational purposes of NET match up with our educational purposes of the community college. And you know, it can be anywhere from us doing student learning activities or...we actually did a cookbook show with NET that went across the whole state and interviewed people for their best family recipes ever. And it was a sensational thing for NET and a great thing for our culinary institute at the college, so I think there is a lot more that all of us can do in community colleges with NET, and that would be my hopes and the reason I'm interested. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Very good. Any other questions for Mr. Schmailzl? Senator Kolowski. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you very much. Randy, thank you for your candidacy and I look forward to seeing you serve in this capacity. It is a great opportunity. We have definite needs in the state with rural areas and trying to outreach, and this whole telecommunication possibilities with NET are limitless as far as what we might be able to do in the future to bring educational equity and opportunities to students at every level. [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Right. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Would you expand on that a little bit in your own thoughts? [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: You know, in the last five years I've served on the NITC Education Council, where we've brought connectivity to ESUs and school districts throughout the state, which is another problem area for our state. Having grown up in Hallam, Nebraska, and lived in Axtell, and Plainview, and Schuyler, and Lincoln over the years, the services that are necessary to exist in rural Nebraska are a little different than what they are in Omaha. So I believe from my roots in Nebraska that I'll be quite interested and able to help with the rest of the state in whatever needs exist. I'm not quite sure exactly, you know, when it comes to fiber across the state, how that works or doesn't work and I'm looking forward to learning more about that, because I'm really interested in that. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And increasing the opportunities even in our urban areas becomes another crucial part, depending on homebound students... [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Yep. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...and many other opportunities that you served so well at the metro. So thank you very much for your work. [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Baker. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you. Randy, does Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission have anything to do with Network Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: No, I don't believe so. It's separate. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR BAKER: Okay. All right, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Groene. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. So you see this as working with NTV, (sic) right? And bringing educational opportunities through their present TV system? [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Right. Through their noncommercial TV offerings. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: All right, that's what I...thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions for Mr. Schmailzl? All right, good luck in your appointment, and thank you for your service. [CONFIRMATION]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Is there anyone wishing to speak to this appointment? If not, this closes the hearing on this appointment and closes our public hearing for today. Thank you all for being in attendance. [CONFIRMATION]