

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
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Health and Human Services Committee
May 05, 2015

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2015, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Kathy Campbell, Chairperson; Sara Howard, Vice Chairperson; Roy Baker; Tanya Cook; Sue Crawford; Mark Kolterman; and Merv Riepe. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon and welcome to the hearings of the Health and Human Services Committee. Today we are dealing solely with the appointments to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. As is our practice in the Health and Human Services Committee, we will take a moment to introduce ourselves. I'm Kathy Campbell. I represent District 25 in Lincoln. And we'll start on my right, Senator.

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Hi. Good afternoon. Senator Sue Crawford and I represent District 45 which is eastern Sarpy County.

SENATOR HOWARD: Senator Sara Howard. I represent District 9 in midtown Omaha.

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: I'm Joselyn Luedtke, committee counsel.

SENATOR COOK: I'm Senator Tanya Cook. I represent District 13 in northeast Omaha and Douglas County.

SENATOR RIEPE: I'm Merv Riepe. I'm the district representative from number 12 which is Millard and Ralston.

BRENNEN MILLER: I'm Brennen Miller. I'm committee clerk.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And our page today?

BRANDON METZLER: Brandon from Omaha.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. All right. Our first nominee this afternoon is Mr. Frank Turk. So, Mr. Turk, we'd like you to come forward and sit at the table and...

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FRANK TURK: Sit here? [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK THROUGH INTERPRETER: Right here? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Absolutely, it's fine. And for the record--and you're going to have to turn the mike around because I would like the interpreter to identify herself for the record. There you go, and just your name is fine. [CONFIRMATION]

INTERPRETER: Okay. Connie Herndon, H-e-r-n-d-o-n. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Thank you, Connie. And so we'll start off for the record and have Mr. Turk spell his name for the record. [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK THROUGH INTERPRETER: (Exhibit 1) Frank R. Turk, T-u-r-k.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Turk, very much. This is a first appointment, I believe, for Mr. Turk on the commission. Is that correct? Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: Yes, it is. I've been here since June, doing it since June. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I'm sorry, Connie, could you repeat...I didn't hear that.
[CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: Since June. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Since June. That's when you got the appointment? Okay.
[CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Mr. Turk, we would like you to tell us a little bit about yourself.
[CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: I am retired. I am a retired administrator of deaf and hard of...for deaf and hard of hearing people. I spent 38 years as the dean of students at Gallaudet University in

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May 05, 2015

Washington, D.C.; two years as superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and eight years as the state director of North Carolina Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. That includes oversight of three residential schools for deaf students in Morganton, North Carolina; Greensboro; and also Wilson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: A very long and storied career, Mr. Turk. [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: Fifty-seven years, full-time administration. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Mr. Turk, you must have started when you were five. (Laughter)
[CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: Well, I lost my hearing at age five. And the next 80 years, I have been educated and developed and trained as a deaf person. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: An amazing story. How do you think education and training has changed for the deaf and hard of hearing over the years? [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: The biggest change that I have seen is in the last 15 or 20 years. It's the loss of a spirit of interdependency with others. That's an issue. Different organizations, they exist to serve the needs and the interests, the unique interests, of deafness and people with hearing loss. But they don't work together as they used to. Our new leadership here in Nebraska, Governor Ricketts, he has emphasized leadership with an attitude of interdependency, interdependency with others. And that gives me a lot of hope for my target group, the deaf and hard of hearing children in the state of Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We agree with you. We have talked about the spirit of enthusiasm and working together that is also coming from Ms. Phillips who is the head, the new CEO, at the Health and Human Services Department. So we concur with you...that positive signs ahead. What do you hope to achieve on your service on the commission? [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: I want to set a statewide model for intergenerational collaboration of partnerships and reciprocity. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. Do you have a sense that the commission has started on that path or needs to start? [CONFIRMATION]

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FRANK TURK: Oh, they've already started. They're already running well. And it's...there's wonderful leadership and there is a providing...Dr. John Wyvill is providing the service. He's here with us. He's guiding and leading that movement. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. Senators, any other questions from the senators? Mr. Turk, I think you have impressed all of them with your willingness to serve and your experience. Anything else that you would like to tell us that I didn't ask? [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: I thank you very, very much for being you, y-o-u, you, (laughter) caring people with a sense of responsibility for the best ability of all deaf and hard of hearing people in the state of Nebraska. Thumbs up to you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you for the compliment, sir, and we really want you to know how much we appreciate your public service...and willing to step forward and serve on the commission. If there is any time that you feel we should know something or have information, please, feel free to contact any member of this committee. [CONFIRMATION]

FRANK TURK: I will do that. Thank you so much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: (Exhibits 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) Thank you. Have a great day. Anyone else in the hearing room in...that would wish to comment on this appointment? Okay. Members, what we are going to do today is to include in the public hearing that we previously interviewed by the committee on March 23, Douglas Vander Broek, Travis Teetor, Shane Fleming, Russell Hopp, Kevin Borchert, Kevin Low for the State Board of Health. Is there anyone in the room who wishes to testify regarding those nominees? Thank you for coming. Dr. Broek is sitting in the back. Thank you for coming. Okay, members, if you are comfortable...I mean, usually we wait. But if you're comfortable, I would take a hearing...or I'd take a motion on Mr. Turk's confirmation. [CONFIRMATION]

BRENNEN MILLER: Excuse me, we need to move into an Exec Session... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Do we need to go into Exec? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, I'm sorry. [CONFIRMATION]

BRENNEN MILLER: ...and close this hearing. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: And close...we need to do all those things at once.
[CONFIRMATION]

BRENNEN MILLER: We need to do a lot of things. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. We will close the public hearing and entertain a motion to go into Executive Session. [CONFIRMATION]