

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Executive Board March 3, 2023

BRIESE: Thank you. We'll go ahead and get started here. Good afternoon and welcome to the Executive Board. My name is Tom Briese. I represent the 41st Legislative District. I serve as Chair of the Executive Board. We'll start off having members of the committee and committee staff do self-introductions, starting on my right.

SLAMA: Julie Slama, District 1.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Trevor Fitzgerald, committee legal counsel.

LOWE: John Lowe, District 37.

BRIESE: Also assisting the committee is our committee clerk, Sally Schultz, and we have one committee page with us here today. Would you like to introduce yourself?

FRANCIE HEEREN: I'm Francie Heeren. I'm a political science and sociology major.

BRIESE: Thank you very much, Francie. This afternoon we'll be hearing two bills and we'll be taking them in the order listed outside the room. On the tables near the entrance, you will find green testifier sheets. If you're planning on-- to testify today, please fill one out and hand it to Sally when you come up. This will help us keep an accurate record of the hearing. Please note that if you wish to have your position listed on the committee statement for a particular bill, you must testify in that position during that bill's hearing. If you do not wish to testify but would like to record your position on a bill, please fill out the white sheet near the entrance. Also, I would note the Legislature's policy that all letters for the record must be received via the online comments portal by the committee by noon the weekday prior to the hearing. Any handouts submitted by testifiers will also be included as part of the record as exhibits. We would ask, if you do have any handouts, that you please bring 12 copies and give them to the page. If you need additional copies, the-- copies, the page can help you make more. Testimony for each bill will begin with the introducer's opening statement. After the opening statement, we will hear from supporters of the bill, then from those in opposition, followed by those speaking in a neutral capacity. The introducer of the bill will then be given the opportunity to make closing statements if they wish to do so. We ask that you begin your testimony by giving us your first and last name. Please also spell them for the record. Because the Executive Board meets over the noon hour and members have other hearings beginning at 1:30, we'll be using a three-minute light

system today. When you begin your testimony, the light on the table will turn green. The yellow light is your one-minute warning. And when the red light comes on, we'll ask you to wrap up your final thoughts. I would remind everyone, including senators, to please turn off your cell-- cell phones or put them on vibrate. With that, we will begin today's hearing with LR5. Welcome, Senator Blood.

BLOOD: Thank you, Chair Briese, and good afternoon to the members of the Executive Board. My name is Senator Carol Blood; that is spelled C-a-r-o-l B-l-o-o-d, and I represent District 3, which is the western half of Bellevue and eastern Papillion, Nebraska. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to introduce LR5, also known as the ratification of the Child Labor Amendment. The Child Labor Amendment of 1924 is an amendment that is still waiting to be ratified by many states. Once ratified, it will become part of the Federal Constitution. The amendment allowed Congress to regulate and prohibit the labor of persons under the age of 18. Nebraska can send symbolic but powerful messages and fix this historic wrong. The Child Labor Amendment only needs ten more states until it becomes the 28th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Nebraska could become the first state in 83 years to ratify this amendment, becoming the new champion of the modern anti-child labor movement. It would send a message in our chaotic political time that protecting the human rights of children is the American way. Child labor is still practiced around the world, and even the U.S. is not immune to illegal-- illegal exploitation of children in the workforce. This resolution-- this resolution will ratify the amendment in the Nebraska Legislature. Nebraska can finish this formality and share the message that we are obligated to protect the rights of our children. The United States has several lines of defense to protect the rights of workers. For instance, the U.S. Department of Labor was set up in 1913 to promote the well-being of all job seekers, wage earners, and retirees. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, FLSA, established minimum wage and minimum-- minimum age for young workers. Our national child labor laws preserve educational opportunities and prohibit the employment of children in unsafe workplaces. We know that child labor continued as a common practice for decades, and if you look at the 1910 Census report, you'll find that 1.7 million children between the ages of five and ten were gainfully employed in our economy. It wasn't until Frank-- President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration that any meaningful change in laws pertaining to the exploitation of children came to be. That was the Fair Labor Standards Act that I previously mentioned. The FLSA allows minors 16 or older to perform any function on a farm, including operating hazardous farm equipment and to work

during school hours. Fourteen-year-olds can work outside of school hours; 12- or 13-year-olds can work with parental consent on farms if owned or operated by their parents; 12-year-olds are exempt from federal minimum wage provisions. Shockingly, the issue of child labor and exploitation has not simply disappeared with time, but has recently reared its ugly head again in this day. One of our handouts features a recent story of 50 children that were used illegally to clean Midwestern slaughterhouses-- slaughterhouses, some of whom were as young as 13. One of the slaughterhouses, found in Grand Island, Nebraska, was owned by JBS Foods. Homeland Security interviewed several of the children found working there and found some disturbing details. These children were vulnerable, unaccompanied minors working in extremely hazardous conditions. Some as young as 13 or 14 had chemical burns and were working on kill floors, which are slippery due to animal fat, soap, etcetera, and are dangerous. These children came from vulnerable immigrant communities and were acc-- unaccompanied by any adults. One wouldn't think to read a story like this in 2023, but ch-- child exploitation in hazardous workplaces occurs much like it did at the turn of the 20th century. So it is a forward-thinking-- so it is forward thinking that we introduced this resolution today and still relevant that we show the country that our state will not tolerate child exploitation in the workforce. The cases in your handouts are a warning, and it's a clear marker about how little our country often values children in the workforce. I'd add that there's usually no or little remorse when these children are taken advantage of as well. In the packers' case, they actually blamed the victims and released a statement to the media that said, while rogue individuals could, of course, seek to en-- engage in fraud or identity theft, we are confident in our company's strict compliance policies. Nationally, child labor and even trafficking unaccompanied minors for labor is becoming a widespread issue. One of our other handouts is from a recent article in The New York Times reporting on nearly 130 migrant children that entered the country last year. Many of these children have ended up working for big-name corporations in the United States, including J.Crew. Whole Foods, Ford, and General Motors, working sometimes 12-hour shifts in harsh con-- harsh conditions. These children are often under intense pressure to earn money to send back to their parents, often in impoverished Central America. Theoretically, they're supposed to be with sponsors or family members who enroll them into school, but The Times investigation found this is not happening and, instead, are unaccompanied. They do not enroll in school and instead are subject to essentially indentured servitude, not receiving an education or regulated benefits. Health and Human Services' jurisdiction includes tracking these children to make sure

they are enrolled in school and living with their sponsors, but over 85,000 have disappeared off the grid and cannot be reached. Essentially, experts believe they are sometimes being trafficked and providing false identification to work in hard labor industries across the country. The Labor Department has seen a 70 percent increase in child labor violations since 2018, with a total of 835 companies violating such laws. The current penalty, which the current administration admits is not enough to deter these violations, is \$15,138 per child. A total of 28 states have ratified the Child Labor Amendment, including our neighbors of Iowa, Kansas and Wyoming, and there's really no excuse Nebraska should not join them. We as a state have a chance to take a formal stand against child exploitation in the workforce and with recent events, this proposed resolution remains as relevant as ever. I would implore this committee to take an uncontroversial stand and move this resolution forward. Today, I used several examples that pertain to migrant children, but I'd also like to point out that there are a long list of violations across the United States, especially in the restaurant and fast food industry. From excessive hours to workplace safety, it's happening right in front of our faces. Child labor exploitation isn't just limited to industries, but fast food as well. Several McDonald's in the Pittsburgh area and nine locations in South Carolina were found to have violated federal child labor laws, illegally overworking 14- and 15-year-olds with excessive hours and also for working late shifts. One instance cited involved a 16-year-old operating a fryer without a device to automatically lower or raise the buckets. Subway, Popeyes and Burger King were also cited in South Carolina earlier in 2022. Experts widely agree teenagers working too many hours outside of school or working late shifts, it has a detrimental effect on their educational development and personal health. Now, I gotta be honest, LR5 is not going to stop these illegal and brutal practices, but it does offer a statement that Nebraska should abide by what is increasingly becoming a larger issue every year, and we as a state do not have to be a part of willful ignorance. We need to take concrete, policy-driven steps to prevent what happened in Grand Island, but we can take a public stand immediately ratifying the Child Labor Amendment. I want to be very clear. As I've read those-- some of those bizarrely opposing this resolution that existing federal child labor laws in regards to ag are not changed with this amendment, nor does it change a young person's ability to work an ag. I thank you for your time today and consideration for LR5. I'll stay for my closing and note that we do have individuals here today to offer testimony on this resolution. I'd also like to point out in your handouts that Nebraska Cattlemen, who had previously opposed this resolution, have sent you a

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letter asking that you please withdraw their opposition. It says, after further review, the legislative resolution regarding child labor in Nebraska-- child labor, Nebraska Cattlemen request that our letter of opposition be withdrawn from the record. As Senator Blood has explained, agricultural operations are protected from further regulations through the Fair Labor Standards Act. We thank Senator Blood for her willingness to always work with constituents and ask the Executive Board to kindly withdraw our letter from the committee records. Best regards, Jacy-- Jacy Schafer, vice president-- can't talk today-- vice president of government affairs.

BRIESE: OK. Thank you, Senator Blood. Any questions for the senator? Seeing none, thank you for your opening.

BLOOD: Thank you.

BRIESE: First proponent testifier. Welcome.

GARRET SWANSON: Thank you. I have to say, I've never gone first before, so bear with--

BRIESE: Pardon?

GARRET SWANSON: I've never gone first before, so--

BRIESE: You're fine.

GARRET SWANSON: Members of the Executive Committee, my name is Garret Swanson, G-a-r-r-e-t S-w-a-n-s-o-n, and I'm here on behalf of the Holland Children's Movement in support of LR5. Nebraska is one of 12 states have not taken action on the Child Labor Amendment, also known as the Keating-Owen Child Labor Amendment. Senators. It is long past time for that to change. America's history of child labor laws and child labor exploitation is long and extensive, but I don't-- don't want to get bogged down in the historical reasoning for why this amendment was never ratified. I also understand Nebraska already has some child labor laws on the books. With my time, I want to briefly discuss why giving the federal government the authority to further regulate child labor laws benefits children and, therefore, all of us. One, consistency: having consistent child labor laws across the country ensure-- ensures that children are protected equally regardless of where they live. This reduces confusion and helps ensure that employers are held to the same standards regardless of location. Two, protection of children: the federal government has a broader scope and more resources than individual states, allowing it to be-- to better protect the interests of the children. This can include

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setting minimum standards for child labor, investigating child labor violations, and enforcing penalties for noncompliance, among many other things. Interstate commerce: many industries involve interstate commerce, making it difficult for individual states to regulate child labor effectively. By having federal standards, the government can ensure that children are protected in these industries without creating a patchwork of different state laws that may be difficult to enforce. Four, international standards: the United States has signed on to several international labor standards that require the prohibition of child labor. By having federal standards, the country can ensure that it's meeting its obligations under these agreements and promoting fair labor practices globally. It should be noted that Nebraska ratifying this amendment would not enshrine it in the Constitution as Nebraska would only be the 29th state to ratify. There would still need to be taken action by several other states, and the federal government-- government would still need to certify. However, passing this LR does give Nebraska a unique opportunity to chart a better path for the rest of the country. Senators, let's set a great example for the rest of the country by passing a LR5. Thank you very much.

BRIESE: Thank you for that. Any questions for Mr. Swanson? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

GARRET SWANSON: Thank you.

BRIESE: Next proponent testifier, please. Welcome.

ANAHÍ SALAZAR: Hello. Thank you, Chairperson Briese and members of the Executive Board. My name is Anahí Salazar, A-n-a-h-i S-a-l-a-z-a-r, and I am representing Voices for Children in Nebraska. Children in Nebraska should grow up in settings that allow them to be kids, to learn and play. Voices for Children supports LR5, which ratifies the amendment to the U.S. Constitution, allowing Congress to regulate or prohibit child labor because it will allow additional protections to ensure that children can be kids and that young people who choose to work have safe and healthy working environments. Child labor violations have recently been on the rise after declining for years. In 2015, the Wage and Hour Division found 1,012 minors employed in violation of child labor laws. In 2002, that number has more than tripled to 3,876 minors employed in violation of child labor laws. Upon conducting investigations, the Wage and Hour Division is finding more minors working in hazardous conditions where children could get gravely hurt. Nebraska companies have recently undergone investigations for employing children as young as 13 to work with

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den-- dangerous chemicals in overnight shifts. These practices are unacceptable, and Nebraskans will not tolerate them. Child labor keeps children from normal well-being. It can affect physical, intellectual and emotional and psychosocial development. In a state where we take pride in our agriculture economic strain, we should be taking care of the most vulnerable so they can grow into healthy and strong members of our society and workforce. Agriculture's Hazardous Occupation-- Occupation Orders aren't as strict as nonagricultural industries. Minors as young as 12 can work long hours in agricultural jobs. We want to-- we want every protection to ensure that these jobs allow children to learn and thrive in them and not the reverse. Nebraska could become the first state in 83 years to ratify this amendment-- amendment, becoming the new champion of the modern anti-child labor movement. We want to thank Senator Blood for her leadership on this issue and the board for your time, attention, and commitment to every child in Nebraska. Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none, thanks for your testimony.

ANAHÍ SALAZAR: Thank you.

BRIESE: Next proponent testifier, please. Anyone wishing to testify, feel free to find a spot in the front row-- front row if you'd like. Welcome.

NICK GRANDGENETT: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Nick Grandgenett, spelled N-i-c-k G-r-a-n-d-g-e-n-e-t-t. I'm a staff attorney with Nebraska Appleseed testifying in support of LR5. So this past year, the federal wage and hour investigation determined that a third-party cleaning crew in Grand Island was employing minors between the ages of 13 and 17, both in Nebraska and throughout the United States. On February 16, just this past week, Packer Sanitation Services, PSSI, paid out \$1.5 million in penalties for violations that affected 102 minors. So 33 of those 102 minors were employed in Nebraska, and that is the largest amount of minors throughout the investigation, so Nebraska, in other words, had more violations than any other state. We accounted for about a third of those penalties. So the child labor violations that occurred in Grand Island and throughout the United States are problematic, particularly with respect to the meatpacking industry, because it continues to be a dangerous industry with a decade's track record of serious injuries, amputations, cuts and other lifelong injuries. If you look at the just publicly available OSHA data, you can see that in Nebraska, in 2020 alone, there are 2,726 work-related injuries and illnesses in the

state's meatpacking industry combined that caused about-- those injuries were serious enough to cause about 31,000 days of missed work. So that means about 10 percent of meatpacking workers were injured or suffered an illness in 2020. That's compared to about 2.7 percent of construction workers who similarly experience a work-related injury or illness. So I think that's why, you know, obviously, child labor law violations continue to be illegal under federal and state law. But what's important at this moment is to support LR5 and to advance it, because it clearly communicates that, you know, we as a state understand the scope of this problem, we understand the harm it has caused to children, communities, their families, and we are committed to taking next steps to prevent these types of violations from occurring in the future. So for all of those reasons, we urge the committee to advance LR5, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions for the testifier? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

NICK GRANDGENETT: Thank you.

BRIESE: Next proponent testifier. Any opponent-- opponent testifiers? Seeing none, anyone wishing to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Blood, you are welcome to close. And we have written position comments: ten proponents, three opponents, one of which may include the one that retract-- retracted their opposition that you mentioned earlier, Senator.

BLOOD: And we actually did reach out to the-- the two people who wrote the other two opposition to explain exactly what this bill does, this resolution does, so that may change as well. So forcing children into labor at an early age, it perpetuates the risks and impact of poverty. This resolution is not about preventing children from learning how to be responsible. It's not about disallowing Nebraska children to generate income. I'm not going after any particular sector here in Nebraska. It's about making sure that those who are working are protected, are seen, and given opportunities to rise, not stumble because they are lacking sleep. We want to give them the ability to get an appropriate education or making sure that their income isn't going elsewhere without their consent, and certainly not being forced to work or trafficked. We are only ratifying what is already in law in support of Nebraska children and making a statement that we missed an opportunity to do better when the states were ratifying this for the Constitution. And we are not the only state that is addressing this. It would be my anticipation that in the next year or two, the ten

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states needed to ratify this is going to happen. And so I ask that you consider moving this out of committee. We constantly talk about how what we do is for the children. We've heard our own Governor say that over and over again: it's about the children. Well, here's an opportunity for us to really show that it is truly about the children of Nebraska and that we have the expectation that we will always do better when it comes to protecting them.

BRIESE: OK. Thank you, Senator. Any questions for Senator Blood? Senator Riepe.

RIEPE: Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Senator Blood. I guess the one question I have is, is so we implement legislation that's been long in the process since, what, 1924? What will make the-- let's pick on the meatpackers. What will make them comply at this time when they haven't in the past?

BLOOD: So with respect, I think you're confusing ratification with legislation. So what this does is we-- we are righting the wrong of not becoming one of the states that ratified this. We just took no action. We didn't-- we weren't against it. We just chose not to take action at the time when this was happening. And so all this does is that it allows it to become part of the U.S. Constitution. So as I said in my opening, we-- we can't force anybody to do anything as a result of this ratification, but we can give a strong message that we see the victims and that it is our expectation that our children are protected.

RIEPE: OK. Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thank you for bringing this to us and joining us today.

BLOOD: It was my pleasure. Thank you.

BRIESE: And that will close the hearing on LR5. And with that, we will open the hearing on LR22CA. Welcome, Senator Dover.

DOVER: Thank you, Chairman Briece. And good afternoon, members of the Executive Board. My name is Robert Dover, R-o-b-e-r-t D-o-v-e-r, and I represent Legislative District 19, which consists of Madison County and part of Pierce County. I've introduced LR22CA to ensure that citizens of Nebraska are effectively represented in the Legislature by adding one term to the current term limit. Since being appointed in July of last year, I have been busy meeting with current and former senators, Capitol staff, organizations and lobbyists. In my

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conversations with them, the recurring theme is the damage to the institution that two terms have caused. By the time a senator finally feels somewhat comfortable, they are termed out. I'm in favor of term limits, but believe three terms provides a better, more effective representation for the people of Nebraska. The Unicameral confronts many complex issues in every session. The issues cover a broad range of topics that senators may not be familiar with before being elected to office. A new senator must spend a large portion of their time simply becoming familiar with the issues and their proposed solutions. However, the Unicameral is not a full-time governing body. Most senators continue to be employed at their-- at home in their district during their tenure. A common argument against extending term limits to three is that, quote, if a senator cannot get the job done in 8 years, why should we-- why should they be given 12? What most people do not realize that it is not 12 years, continuous service. The 12 years is really two-and-a-half years served in session due to the fact that we serve 90 days the first year and 60 days the second year of each session. This is far from being a career politician. In fact, before term limits, the average senator served 7.9 years. In other state legislatures with term limits, a representative spends eight years in one house and then will often spend another eight years in another house. However, Nebraska's the nation's only Unicameral Legislature; thus, a senator is not able to continue using their accumulated knowledge in another house. This makes the Nebraska Legislature very susceptible to institutional knowledge loss. This loss of institutional knowledge becomes a particular issue when considering the Legislature sets a policy that dictates operations of our state. The government of Nebraska is a multibillion-dollar operation that affects many aspects of taxes, business, agriculture, education, healthcare, insurance, natural resources, etcetera, within our state. The Legislature's policies can help or hinder these important aspects of Nebraska. Having knowledgeable and informed senators who know how to address these issues is of great benefit to the people of Nebraska. Most of our current senators see the benefit of adding one term while maintaining term limits. This is why LR22CA has 40 senators, including myself, signed on in support. By adding one term to the current term limit, we can allow senators to represent their constituents when they are the most knowledgeable and effective. This will be beneficial to the good people of Nebraska. I thank you for your time and would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

BRIESE: Thank you, Se-- thank you, Senator. Any questions for Senator Dover? Senator Vargas.

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VARGAS: Thank you, Senator Dover. You know, in the past, when we've had this issue, one of the questions that's always come up is that is there a coalition of people that might be working to, if there were-- if this were to pass, to educate the public, you know, a-- a campaign of some sorts? Do you have-- have you heard of a coalition or anybody that would be working on something like this?

DOVER: Not if you're talking about a large issue campaign with-- I'm sure you're aware of the amount of money that would take. No, but I have talked to people in basically business, the Chamber, the lobbyists. They would-- they're all willing to get together in a group and coordinate. I think the biggest thing, the biggest challenge to us is really, as I'm speaking to many seniors here and-- and more-- senators more experienced than I, the biggest challenge is just education. There-- I-- I mean, seriously, I spent my time-- I was appointed on July 22. I spent all my time just meeting people. I-- I wanted to try to, you know, as you all do, find the environment, find out what I don't know so I can be effective when I actually-- when the session does start. There was not one person, not one person that is actually involved in our business day to day, that said that the two-term limit didn't negatively affect our ability to be effective. And I would-- and I talked to some senators that have been-- that have left and had the ability to come back, and one of the main things that-- that I hear is that they lose that relationship that they had built with their fellow senators. And when they do come back after sitting out, it's-- it's they don't have that relationship and they have to try to rebuild that, but they've never been able to try to get back to where they were after spending two terms with those senators.

VARGAS: Thank you.

DOVER: Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Vargas. Thank you, Senator Vargas? Anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thank you for your opening.

DOVER: Thank you.

BRIESE: First proponent testifier. Welcome.

BARRY KENNEDY: Thank you. Senator Briese, members of the Executive Board, my name is Barry Kennedy, B-a-r-r-y K-e-n-n-e-d-y, and I'm here today testifying voluntarily on behalf of myself, but also on behalf of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. I'm sure

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you're familiar with the period that we're in right now. There was over 15 new senators, 16 or 17 this year. In 2024, there's a minimum of another 15, which means when you start the '25 session, it'll be well over three-fifths of the body who will have no more than two years' experience. I think that's extremely important from the institutional knowledge, not only of the issues but also of the rules and procedures. It takes the-- the learning curve must be extremely steep to come in and-- and try to grasp the rules, the procedures, and then have 700 bills introduced as well. A number of other states do have term limits, but no other state has term limits with a Unicameral, and I think that's a significant difference as well. Most states, a state senator is eligible to run for a seat in the house of representatives, a member of the house of representatives is eligible to run for a seat in the senate, and you maintain some of that institutional knowledge about not only issues, but also procedures. No well-run business, managing several billion dollars' worth of activity, as you do, arbitrarily dismissals its members or members of the management team or their board of directors after eight years. Typically, by then, you're doing everything you can to keep them employed. So I think-- I think it's extremely important that we do the same thing with the Nebraska Legislature. I also think it has affected or will affect even more, going forward, the balance of power. I agree-- well, as you all know, the judicial branch, most judges are appointed for life. In the executive branch, yes, the Governor does have term limited, but virtually all of the people in the various departments who answer to the Governor are not term limited. Many of them are-- have been there for-- for many years, and that's a good thing. Again, we need to keep those people who have that knowledge and experience in those positions. In the Legislature, eight years and you're out, and I think to-- to try to maintain that balance of power going forward, it's-- it's a-- a wise thing to extend the term. I don't have any illusions that term limits could be repealed right now. But I do think Senator Dover-- and I want to thank him for bringing this forward-- has come up with a very workable compromise in allowing at least one more term to the existing term limits. With that, I would try to answer any questions.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions? Senator Lowe.

LOWE: Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Kennedy, for being there-- here. Is the Nebraska Chamber reinstating you now? Is that-- you're-- you're bringing back term limits to the Chamber?

BARRY KENNEDY: No, I--

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LOWE: Is Bryan Sloane now gone and you're back?

BARRY KENNEDY: I've adapted very well to retirement and Bryan's a lot smarter than I am, so, no, I'm here as a volunteer. And I couldn't even get him to buy me lunch. No, not being reinstated in any way.

LOWE: OK.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Lowe. Senator Riepe.

RIEPE: Thank you, Chairman. Good to see you again.

BARRY KENNEDY: You too.

RIEPE: My question would be, is-- and you mentioned the-- the Governor's role or position. Do you think it's a bridge too far to expand this to include three terms for the Governor as well?

BARRY KENNEDY: You know, I-- I haven't even given that a thought. I--

RIEPE: We--

BARRY KENNEDY: I think that's a historical--

RIEPE: We [INAUDIBLE]

BARRY KENNEDY: I'd probably have to take a nap to think about it. I-- I don't-- it seems to have worked well. That's a totally different subject. And I-- I just-- I don't know.

RIEPE: OK. Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Anyone else? Senator Geist.

GEIST: Oh, it's good to see you, Barry. I'm curious what you see is the single biggest problem with term limits as they are now. I-- I know there are a lot.

BARRY KENNEDY: Yeah.

GEIST: But I wonder what you see as the single biggest.

BARRY KENNEDY: You know, I-- I-- that's a very good question. I-- I think it's a learning curve. And I-- I just-- I don't know how you do it, not just the issues but, as I mentioned before, the rules and the other procedures. I think the learning curve that you have to go through to be an effective legislator and represent your constituency,

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I think, is extremely steep, and-- and I think at least another term would help that. I also-- I'll go back to what I said earlier, though, along with that. I think the balance of power is very important. And I-- I-- I'm a-- I-- I have a--

GEIST: Would you explain that, like what do you mean?

BARRY KENNEDY: Well, I have the highest level of--

GEIST: Democrat or--

BARRY KENNEDY: I'm sorry?

GEIST: I-- well, explain what you mean by balance of power.

BARRY KENNEDY: OK.

GEIST: What do you mean?

BARRY KENNEDY: Well, I have the highest level of respect for the institution of the Unicameral, the Legislature. And like I-- like I kind of tried to explain, I think, with such a short term, you put people coming in, the new members, in a position where they might feel more comfortable going outside of the Legislature to get information on their issues. I-- I've never had a senator, I've worked in this arena for over 30 years, never had a senator tell me they knew everything about everything. Now they all wanted to learn and they all wanted to have credible information when they made a decision as to whether to press that green light or the red light, and they would work hard to do that. If-- if-- with-- with senators that have been here and maybe perhaps chaired a committee-- take any issue you'd like, take an environmental issue-- new senators coming in, if-- if they knew one of their colleagues had chaired the committee that deals with those issues for the last two or four years and then one of those issues comes up and they don't feel like they're real knowledgeable on it, they probably would go to that senator to get more information. I-- I think now there's some that go outside of the legislative arena to seek that information because they do still want to do the right thing--

GEIST: Right.

BARRY KENNEDY: --for their constituents and for the state of Nebraska. And so I-- I think that tends to weaken that balance of power that-- that I would like to see stay here within the body.

GEIST: Yeah, agreed. Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Geist. Anyone else? When you speak of balance of power, are you speaking about the lobby or speaking about the executive branch?

BARRY KENNEDY: Executive branch.

BRIESE: OK.

BARRY KENNEDY: The only thing it's done to the lobby is give it a lot more work.

BRIESE: OK.

BARRY KENNEDY: Senator Dover mentioned meeting people. You know, lobbying is-- is built on relationships and-- and trust and-- and you-- you can't go to a senator anymore and say, hey, don't you remember this issue, it came up about four or five years ago, and and this is what was discussed and this is what-- because they weren't here four or five years ago. So you start from ground zero on every issue with every new senator, and I-- I think it's more toward the executive branch and-- and all of the departments that work under the executive branch.

BRIESE: The longer a senator is here, does that make the lobby's job easier?

BARRY KENNEDY: Well, you have longer time to-- to develop relationships and-- and come to understand each other and-- and where they've been on issues in the past. And-- and you-- you can follow that and-- and kind of have an idea when-- when a new bill is introduced, you can kind of probably have an idea, a little better idea as to where they might be on-- on that issue.

BRIESE: Fair to infer that relationships equate to influence, some extent?

BARRY KENNEDY: I-- I don't think so. You know, I think-- you see, I have the highest level respect for state senators and the institution. And-- and I still believe they want to have-- senators, I believe, want to have the most credible information that they can get when they make a decision on how they're going to vote for an issue. And once they have that information, and-- and as a lobbyist, you might be part of one entity that gives that information to them, and then I think they're going to make their own decision on how they finally vote.

BRIESE: OK. OK. Thank you very much. Any-- anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thanks for your testimony here today. Next proponent testifier. Welcome.

AL DAVIS: Good afternoon, Senator Briese and members of the Executive Board. I am registered lobbyist Al Davis, A-l D-a-v-i-s, registered lobbyist for the Nebraska Chapter of the Sierra Club, also representing the Nebraska Farmers Union, here today, since Mr. Hansen's away on business, in support of LR22CA. We want to thank Senator Dover for introducing the important bill, which I think is one of the most important bills introduced this session, if it's passed and if the voters support it in 2024. When I looked at the bill, I was struck by the large number of senators from both sides of the political spectrum who cosigned this bill. This broad support indicates to the public that every one of you recognizes the need for change. Term limits was imposed in Nebraska partly as a punitive measure against one senator, but also from negative feelings about government in general. These feelings are amplified when senators belittle the process or attack decisions made by the body with which they do not agree. All across Nebraska, there was a general feeling that elected senators were out of touch with the masses, but that was never true. Nebraska's state government is an incredibly complex organism with multiple moving parts. There are hundreds of cash funds, hundreds of commissions and committees, countless federal rules and regulations which require some understanding, thousands of local governments depending on decisions that you make in this body, and arcane and mysterious rules and regulations. Senators need to learn how to read the statutes or how formulas work, and we all hear that TEEOSA requires a Ph.D. to understand it, right? So I think there are just so many reasons why this is an important piece of legislation and-- and-- and I can just speak from my own experience that the first several years were-- the first coup-- year and a half, I would say, you're just overwhelmed with the amount of information. Mr. Kennedy referenced that. So did the senator introducing the bill. So one way to repair that problem is to pass this bill, take it to the voters, let the voters make a decision. I think, to your point, Senator Vargas, that there are a number of people who would step up to try to help, you know, convince the public that we need to make a change. So I hope you will consider putting this forward and-- and I look forward to helping you with that if we get there. Thank you.

BRIESE: Any questions? Senator Vargas.

VARGAS: Thank you very much for being here, Senator Davis, or Al. It's-- it is encouraging that there will be people that will step up

to the plate. And the reason why I asked the question was because I think that there can be a liability with if-- we don't have the education at the state level, if something were to fail, it makes it a lot harder to make that case in the future. And that's the reason why I was asking that question. I just would hate to set up a, you know, something that we know is going to require education and not have the successes needed. And, you know, whoever's listening, whoever's watching, this needs education so people understand. You know, we have very, very new staff when it comes to even within our Fiscal Office, within our general staff, in our-- in our own offices in terms of turnover, people that don't-- are-- are-- the average years of experience we have within the legislative staff in general has gone down on average. And I think, you know, unlike many other-- unlike the executive branch that has a lot more, I think, consistency in terms of the departments and agencies, we just don't have that, and I just want to make sure we're doing our due diligence if this should move forward.

AL DAVIS: One of the things that I have noticed, when I was here, there are a lot of old staff, LAs that worked for different senators, and they would move from senator to senator. So one of the things that I've seen change is that those people aren't here anymore and people are bringing in campaign staff, so that's a different element to people that have worked here for 25 years--

VARGAS: Yeah.

AL DAVIS: --have sort of a respect for the institution, and the other people just are new and they don't understand, and I think you all understand that.

BRIESE: Thank you. Very good. Thank you, Senator Vargas. Senator Lowe.

LOWE: Thank you. And thank you, Senator, for being here and speaking. As I look around the table here and see very few of us that wouldn't be here if it wasn't for term limits and it-- it just is odd that we're moving from two to three. I think it-- I-- I never agreed with term limits in the beginning. I-- I thought that everything was good, but I think term limits has worked well for us in replacing those that have gone before us. But you're absolutely right. We do lose institutional knowledge through the staff, eventually, whether they just decide to leave or-- or whatever else, but I appreciate you being here and speaking on this.

AL DAVIS: Tha-- thank you. You know, one thing I'm looking back to Senator Jerry Warner, who was here for so many years and-- and took us forward, and Warner went through highs economically and lows economically. And so when I was here, we didn't have any money. Now you've got a lot of money and it's not always that same way, so.

BRIESE: Anyone else?

AL DAVIS: Thank you.

BRIESE: If we would take steps-- or we're talking about taking steps to help with staff retention. Steps like that reduce the need for proposals like this, in your opinion, is-- it would seem. Staff long--

AL DAVIS: What I've seen-- what I've seen from some of the old staff is they feel that there's job insecurity that they didn't have before, so, you know, if you-- if you spend 20 years and then things reshuffle and-- and somebody brings in their campaign manager to be the LA, then people are losing jobs, so they're stepping out and moving to somewhere else. Definitely, I think it would help, though, Senator.

BRIESE: OK. OK, thank you. Anyone else? No other questions. Thank you for your testimony.

AL DAVIS: Thank you.

BRIESE: Welcome.

JAY FERRIS: Well, good afternoon, Chairman Briese and members of the Executive Board. My name is Jay Ferris; that's J-a-y F-e-r-r-i-s. I'm the director of political engagement and state policy for Nebraska Farm Bureau. I'm testifying today in support of LR22CA on behalf of the memberships of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, the Nebraska Farm Bureau, the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, and the Nebraska Soybean Association. Increasing the term limits for state senators from two consecutive terms to three consecutive terms would help stabilize the turnover of leadership, experience, and institutional knowledge in our Unicameral. It takes time to develop those relationships and trust to be an effective policymaker. Since 2006, when the current system of two consecutive terms was implemented, we've automatically kicked out very effective state senators every two years. No matter their knowledge or effectiveness, term limits ensured that his or her talents would run-- run up against a strict time limit. In what other profession, I ask, do we force out our best employees, force them into retirement with no consideration as to their abilities that they have to do their job? Reducing the time in

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which lawmakers have to gain the knowledge they need to dive deep into policy details is not in the best public's interest. LR22CA will not remove term limits. It just simply allows the voters of Nebraska an opportunity to extend the terms of our legislature-- legislators to three consecutive terms for 12 years. For these reasons, the groups I am representing encourage this committee to advance LR22CA to General File. We thank Senator Dover for introducing this legislation and I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions? Senator Riepe.

RIEPE: Thank you, Chairman. How would-- how might the Farm Bureau be able to help educate the public in general?

JAY FERRIS: Yeah. We have our PAC committee that would be very much welcome to talking to other organizations to help with an education efforts. Obviously, running a statewide campaign is very expensive and it takes an eff-- lot of coordinated effort to get that done, and we'd be welcome to-- to visit with any other organizations wanting to support the cause.

RIEPE: How many members do you have in the Nebraska Farm Bureau?

JAY FERRIS: We have right around 55,000 members statewide.

RIEPE: So just in your newsletters alone, you could at least--

JAY FERRIS: Absolutely.

RIEPE: --start the discussion.

JAY FERRIS: Yep.

RIEPE: OK. Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thanks for your testimony.

JAY FERRIS: Thank you.

BRIESE: Any other proponent testifiers? Welcome.

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: Thank you. I'm Cindy Maxwell-Ostdiek; that's C-i-n-d-y M-a-x-w-e-l-l; my last name is, hyphen, O-s-t-d-i-e-k. And I want to thank you, Senator Briese and members of the Executive Board, for keeping this hearing open for all who come to testify today. That's not happened at all the hearings in the session this year, and

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I do appreciate that. It's so important that the members of the second house can be heard. And I apologize I'm out of breath. I just got here and wanted to testify today on this important bill. And I apologize. I don't have my remarks prepared. I am a mom and a small business owner and I'm a taxpayer and I'm someone who recently ran for Legislature in District 4, which is west Omaha, and this is a topic that has been on my mind for many years. I have never actually philosophically agreed with term limits, even though I didn't always necessarily agree with who was on my ballot. So I understand there are tradeoffs, but it is something when we took this to a vote here in Nebraska, I know there were many of us that were concerned these very issues would happen that have happened. And I'm a student of the Legislature. I've been following the Unicameral for years, and it's been very disappointing to see some of the effects that term limits have had on the legislators as well as the legislative policies that you've put forward. I want to thank Senator Dover for bringing this. I know it probably is very difficult to bring a bill like this when you're a new senator seeking potentially another term or two after this particular term. But I do appreciate it, and I really hope that you'll consider advancing it, and that we could take it to the floor and pass it so that the Nebraskans can actually vote on it again. I think that the results have been very telling.

BRIESE: OK. Thank you.

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions? Senator Lowe.

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: Sorry.

LOWE: Thank you. Take a breath.

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: Yes, thanks. I'm-- I'm too out of shape.

LOWE: Thank you, Ms. Maxwell-Ostdiek. But didn't term limits give you the opportunity to run?

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: I know it's a kind of conflict in a way, but I just believe that we should be able to vote for who would be the best person to represent us, no matter how many terms they've already fulfilled. And so if I had someone that I would have wanted to represent me and their term was up, then that is something that disenfranchises me or anybody else in that particular district. And I just think it's important that we can vote for who we think would best represent our family and our businesses.

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LOWE: But the term limit, you could have an open seat every eight years instead of waiting--

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: Yes.

LOWE: --a full 12 and-- for-- for an open seat. So I'm just saying that there's more opportunities for people with a two-term limit, isn't it?

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: And especially in the Legislature, where it's open, a nonpartisan Legislature, nonpartisan elections, especially for someone like me that is an actual independent or registered nonpartisan, my recent run for District 4 was only possible to the extent that I performed like I did because Senator Hilkemann was term limited. I recognize that, especially being someone who's not a member of one of the major parties, but I still believe that we should have the opportunity to vote for who we think would best represent us, no matter how many terms they've filled.

LOWE: All right. Thank you very much.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Lowe. Anyone else? So you don't believe in term limits at all?

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: I don't, not--

BRIESE: OK, very good. Thank you.

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: --not philosophically.

BRIESE: Thank you. Anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thank you for your testimony.

CINDY MAXWELL-OSTDIEK: Thank you.

BRIESE: Any other proponents? Seeing none, any opponent testifiers? Seeing none, anyone wishing to testify in the neutral capacity? Welcome. You're testifying in the neutral? Welcome.

BILL HAWKINS: Yes. Senator Briese, members of the Executive Committee, I appreciate you being here over your lunch hour on a Friday. My name is Bill Hawkins, B-i-l-l H-a-w-k-i-n-s, and I'm a li-- I'm a lifelong Nebraska citizen. And ten years ago, I came into this hallowed, whatever, tower we have on the Plains and started learning the process. And so I've observed the turnover of senators. I remember back when it was a-- vaguely not paying attention when it was an

issue, when term limits were installed. And so in a neutral capacity, it gives me a chance to listen to both sides and it gives me a chance to really understand both sides of the issue. And from listening, I see that there is one issue that really needs to be emphasized, is that this issue is to put it in front of the voters, the citizens of the state, to let them decide. And I-- I just want the committee to really take that into perspective, is that the people need to decide. And-- and so it is critical, Senator Vargas, Senator Lowe, that we educate the citizens on this issue so that they are very educated on the values of term limits and pros or cons. So that is critical to make this happen, is that there is some type of education. Now whether it's through the county fairs, State Fair, you already have a lot of lobby organizations that are ready to help educate it. And-- and that would be my second point, is that in observing this, it makes the lobby firms-- a lot easier for them because they already know where the senator likes to go to lunch, what his favorite topics are, and it is very influential so they are not having to every two years build up new influential perks, but-- and so I see that as a big issue. But it's something that I think the citizens need to make a decision of. And to Senator Lowe's question, every election is an open election because the citizens still have-- whether it's an incumbent or not, they still have the ability to choose. Every election, it's a term limit question. And so I would just like to remind the committee that it is the citizen that is watching, so thank you very much for your time.

BRIESE: You bet. Very good. Any questions? Senator Lowe.

BILL HAWKINS: Yes.

LOWE: Thanks, Bill, for being here.

BILL HAWKINS: Yes.

LOWE: But doesn't it also make it tough on the lobbyists because we've already heard all their bills before and we may not like hearing them, or the new-- or the new senators haven't heard them yet?

BILL HAWKINS: You know, that's-- that is an issue and-- and, you know, it-- it's-- the lobby issue is-- is an interesting one when you learn about politics-- I will say that-- but the citizens need to know. In term limiting, it's that knowing the system and how it works and pros or cons. Your-- your staff is turning over. You need to really look at those issues because they're-- you're losing people who really know how the system works. This building is full of dedicated people who

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make this state run and you folks just get to represent them, and so, again, the citizens are watching. So thank you.

BRIESE: Very good. Thank you.

BILL HAWKINS: And-- and have a good weekend, folks.

BRIESE: You bet. You as well. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

BILL HAWKINS: All right. Thank you very much.

BRIESE: Any other neutral testifiers? Welcome.

MERLYN BARTELS: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senators. I'm here in a neutral position, I guess, as I was sitting back there listening to the different testimony there and the different senators talking here, and I guess I believe three years would be a good--

BRIESE: Could we have your name--

MERLYN BARTELS: Sorry.

BRIESE: --spelled, please?

MERLYN BARTELS: Merlyn Bartels, M-e-r-l-y-n B-a-r-t-e-e-l-s.

BRIESE: Thank you.

MERLYN BARTELS: So.

BRIESE: Go ahead.

MERLYN BARTELS: And as the senator said that some of you wouldn't be here because of the term limits, I have nothing against raising it to the third term there. And in fact, I would like to see term limits put on all elected officials clear through the state, clear down to the school boards, office holders like your treasurers, your assessors, your clerks. The reason I say this is I'm from a rural community, moved here to Lincoln, but in a rural community it's harder to run against an incumbent. People just look at them and they go, you know, I'd like to run for that position, but it's just hard to run against an incumbent because, nine times out of ten, even if somebody does run against them, they'll get elected, even though they may not be the best choice for that office. And I think as you talked here, this is going to be an education process for the state to get the voters to agree with this and all the points you guys brought up here, being

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here those extra four years is all valid. But to get people out in the rural areas to agree with this, because there's a lot of people out there who are just tired of school boards, city councils, and on down the line, is what's been happening out there the last couple years. So I don't think we're as-- as disgruntled with the Legislature, thankfully, as what they are with the local. So education's going to be the key to get the people to vote for this, and I would urge you to move it on. I-- I-- I think it's a legitimate bill that needs to be moved on. Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions?

MERLYN BARTELS: Thank you.

BRIESE: Seeing none, thank you--

MERLYN BARTELS: Thank you.

BRIESE: --for your testimony. Any other neutral testifiers? Seeing none, Senator Dover, you are welcome to close. And we have various written position comments, five proponent comments, six opponent comments, and one in the neutral capacity. Welcome back, Senator Dover.

DOVER: Thank you. And I just jotted down, you know, a few notes. I'll be as-- as brief as I can. One thing, lobbyists, to a great degree, is where I get my information from and get educated. And we all-- and I'm-- I'm speaking-- I'm looking at these seniors thinking, like, I wish you guys weren't going, right, and ladies, and I wish you weren't going because you have so much knowledge that we're going to lose. And really, you all are the-- the ones that are elected. You-- you are the representatives of the people. Nobody-- I mean, there are the other branches that are-- have the representation responsibility that you all have. But, you know, I feel like, talking to the seniors here, I feel like, who am I to-- to say these things? I've talked to-- I'm-- my-- it's my first year, right? I talked to people when they're coming up with a bill that's coming out the next day. And I said, I see that's coming out, you-- you're gonna do that, can you explain to me, just give me kind of the quick version of it, do you know how many senators that are new that I talked to couldn't explain their bills? Scary. And so I understand that part about, you know, isn't it easier for lobbyists? You know, it might be easier for lobbyists to know our names and things and gain relationships and, they said, know where we want to eat. But I-- I-- I think that we suffer much more when we're new, getting information from lobbyists. And I'll say this. When the

Speaker-- with Senator Arch I was discussing a bill I was going to carry because we met up in Senator Moser's office, and I [INAUDIBLE] kind of feeling me out, thinking, what am I going to do, what are my priorities and stuff. And I said this, and-- and he looks at me, he says, no. And I said, what? He says-- I won't say what he said. And I said, oh. And you know what happened? I heard-- I heard "ding," and, oh, wow, I had no idea. That makes so much sense now that I know it, right? And so I just think we lose a lot by having, you know, new senators to turn over that we do have. If I could just briefly talk to some of the discussions that were here where Senator Riepe talked about should there be-- should we extend the term of the Governor? I'll say this, is, if you all-- I mean, again, you all know a lot of what I'm saying. You may or may not agree with it, but the Governor has looked at the resources that the-- that the executive branch has. I mean, look how long some of those people have-- have worked there. Look at the number of people that the executive branch employs. How anyone can even compare our situation-- when I hired, I asked, what's the starting wage for an AA? You know what they told me? Fifteen dollars, and an LA starts around \$17. And we-- and we're supposed to understand the complexities of state government and defend the people and make wise decisions. Well, guess what? We are new. Of course we know where we came from and I'm, of course, real estate and those things. But there is so much more that-- that we don't know. But how can we effectively do our job? And so I think the question about the Governor, I don't know, but they just have so much more resources than we do. I think they can accelerate so quickly and, again, the staff stays in place. Hopefully, some of the bills that will deal with AA and LA inco-- or, excuse me, payroll will increase. But to Senator Briese, I think I covered that basically about the lobbyists, but they're supplying the information. And then, Senator Lowe, to-- to-- to your concerns, the average term when there were term limits was 7.9 years. So while there may be some senators who serve longer, the average is 7.9, so, I mean, some serve less, some serve more. And I really feel as though term limits are really, in a way, direct where we're-- we know we're directed toward one senator. And I'll say, to John Cavanaugh's comments on the floor, be careful what you do, because it's going to come-- you know, it can come around and bite you. And I think-- why this is a compromise. I think the people should decide if they want to extend the term, have a senator up again. So I don't know that the turnover is good, but I think there is a lot of turnover. I guess I would ultimately end. And again, the people term-- the people decide who they want to-- to-- to represent them. They term-- they decide if they want to have that person represent them for three terms or not. And I'll be quite truthful. In ending, I'll say

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this, is Jim Scheer, Mike Flood would represent-- Mike, my District 19, better than I can, better than I can. And-- and if they were-- and if they were in my place right now, I would step down because they would do a better job than I would. So thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you. Any questions?

DOVER: Oh, sorry.

BRIESE: Senator Clements [INAUDIBLE]

_____ : Wait, wait.

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Senator Dover, same, Mr. Chairman. When we spoke about this, I talked about possibly making three terms a lifetime limit raa-- and I see that you still have a four-year layout that could go another 12 years. What's your position about that but possibly just making it a lifetime limit of 12 years?

DOVER: Yes, I would be in favor of that or I-- I-- I'm-- I would be in favor of that. I think after 12-- 12 years, you know, to Senator Lowe's comments, it probably could be time to get someone else. The question then is it-- should the people be able to decide or not? But I would-- I could support 12 and out.

CLEMENTS: Thank you.

DOVER: And-- and I knew that would-- obviously, it decides on how everybody would vote on the floor, but I would like to hear that discussion.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Clements. Senator Slama.

SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Senator Dover. I-- I feel obliged, due to my friendship and our mutual friendship with Speaker Scheer, to note, for the record, I think he was perfectly happy at the end of eight years to be done with us. [LAUGHTER]

BRIESE: Senator-- thank you, Senator Slama. Senator Lowe.

LOWE: Thank you, Chairman. Thanks, Senator Dover, for bringing the bill. Haven't we always had term limits? It was just the ballot box that created those?

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DOVER: I agree. I mean, ultimately, I think that when we instituted term limits, we did a disservice to the people of Nebraska for-- to term limit one senator, and I think that was wrong.

LOWE: OK. Thank you.

DOVER: Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Lowe. Senator Riepe.

RIEPE: Two things, one is a-- a-- a comment in the sense it's-- says-- first of all, I would have a concern with a lifetime of 12 years. Someone that's very young might come in and then come back when they get more gray hair, and so I-- I don't like-- that-- that seems to me like too re-- restrictive. The other one that I would have, and it's the question oftentimes on these types of bills. They're projected out so that the people-- it doesn't look self-serving for the sitting senators. Do you have that in mind? It would say-- it would start in 2028 or whatever. You pick a number.

DOVER: No, I don't.

RIEPE: Oh.

DOVER: I think-- I-- I personally believe that if a senator wants to run again, I think it's-- they can run again. Obviously, those that would be running in 2024 would not have that opportunity to run for an additional term.

RIEPE: But you would make it effective immediately?

DOVER: Yes.

RIEPE: Oh.

DOVER: Yes. I don't-- I-- if it's-- I'm thinking this. If it's a good idea, why-- why would we want to wait? And I don't think that it's going to-- I-- I mean, because I'm guess-- I wouldn't think it would affect a lot of senators, but--

RIEPE: OK.

DOVER: --thank you.

RIEPE: Thank you.

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BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Senator Slama, did you have your hand up? That's all right if you-- if not, that's--

SLAMA: Oh, yeah, no, just a quick comment. Senator Riepe is one of the-- I think maybe, in addition to Senator Vargas, I might be speaking for you here too. Don't put that evil on us. [LAUGH]

RIEPE: I was just thinking, are you going to run again?

VARGAS: He's allowed to run for 12 terms if it's--if it's 12-- three terms.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Slama. Senator Arch.

RIEPE: I might be applied to the lifetime term, you know.

ARCH: Senator Dover, I apologize I missed your opening, but I think one of the more intriguing things about the possibility of three four-year is-- is simply-- is simply spreading out the number of new senators. I mean, obviously, not every senator is going to run. I mean, we had senators run for four and step down this year, and there will be those who run for eight and step down and-- and, you know, so not every senator, even with the opportunity to run for three terms, will do so.

DOVER: Right.

ARCH: But if some do, then it reduces that number. So the-- the 14, 15, 16 new senators that come in every two years could be-- could be significantly reduced. And I do see that as a benefit and allow that to smooth out just a little bit with-- without so many. I don't know if you mentioned that in your opening or not but--

DOVER: No, but I'm writing it down.

ARCH: Yeah, I-- I think that that could be an advantage. And-- and with reference to our conversation earlier, I think I said I would advise you not to versus no.

DOVER: Right. I--

ARCH: But that's OK. That's the way I remember it.

DOVER: Yeah, but probably what you said and I heard no.

BRIESE: Thank you, Speaker Arch. Senator Bostar.

BOSTAR: Thank you, Chairman Briese. And thank you, Senator Dover, for being here and bringing this. I'm not sure which of these I'm supposed to use. Now I'm covered. Are you familiar with the mailers that went out to the districts across the state, to several senators who co-sponsored this?

DOVER: Yes, and that's why I addressed the-- why we give-- why give them 12 years when they have 8? And it's far from eight years, we all know that, and also the-- was career politicians, which I think all of you know, I don't-- I'm sure most of you actually have a job besides this one. And I know some senators-- actually, to be specific, Senator Moser drives home because he may have to work at his music store and do something to the trumpet or whatever. So I don't think-- I-- I'm just af-- if I just look at the challenge of educating the public and, you know, I mean, you all-- I'm-- I-- you can tell them-- you could actually do better-- you would do better because you have more seniority to sit here and discuss this than I-- than I do.

BOSTAR: Well, Senator, actually, a couple more questions on the--

DOVER: OK. Yeah, sorry.

BOSTAR: --front though.

DOVER: I apologize.

BOSTAR: No need. Were you-- I mean, do you feel-- that there were factual inaccuracies in the material that was sent out to the districts across the state?

DOVER: Yes, and I-- and to be quite truthful, I question whether they're-- and I'm sure they were, because they probably have a lot of money. They're very intelligent. We did a little check-in, the libertarian group. I would-- I would still wonder if they knew we have a Unicameral and the effect of term limits in the Unicameral. I don't think that most people across the country would ever think of that, as was discussed earlier.

BOSTAR: Do you think that part of the reason they may have made so many factual inaccuracies is because, well, their group is so far away from Nebraska?

DOVER: I would say-- I would say the inaccuracies probably are due to the fact that they want some specific event to take place or not take place and it's campaign and therefore--

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BOSTAR: So they're intentionally being inaccurate.

DOVER: Correct.

BOSTAR: Understood. Are you surprised that an organization that is clearly spending a significant amount of money to influence our decisions on your resolution, LR22CA, did not send a representative to come and sit before us in person today?

DOVER: I'm surprised that the mailer went out so soon, because for those-- I'm sure most of you are aware that that was not an inexpensive mailer. I mean, the-- the-- the piece and the number, I mean-- but then I-- but then I'm not surprised in a way because, I mean, for those that remember Curt Bromm when Curt Bromm ran, I mean, Club for Growth and, you know, those organizations that come in from the outside, far, far from our state, and try to influence politics here, you know, I just am not surprised in a way. I don't--

BOSTAR: So-- so you're actually not surprised that they didn't send anyone?

DOVER: No, no, I'm surprised they went so early.

BOSTAR: Do you think-- do you think they didn't send anyone to sit here and answer questions in front of us and represent their opinions because-- are they scared? Are they cowards or what-- what do you think it is?

DOVER: I think they don't want to answer the questions yet and see how things go. I don't think they want. I don't think-- I think they would be on the defensive among-- in front of you because you know this-- you know what we're talking about here.

BOSTAR: You-- Senator, I think you're right, and I thank you for your thoughts on that.

DOVER: Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, Senator Bostar. Anyone else? Seeing no other questions, thank you for joining us here today and bringing this to us.

DOVER: Thank you, Senator Briese and committee.

BRIESE: That will end the hearing on LR22CA.

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