

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 30, 2024

KELLY: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the eighteenth day of the One Hundred Eighth Legislature, Second Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator DeBoer. Please rise.

DeBOER: O Holy One, grant us grace-- your grace for us, and the power to grant grace to those around us. Help us to seek first to understand, and only then to be understood. Thank you for all who labor in this building, for the Legisla-- for the Leg-- this Legislature and all of our staff, for the men and women working to renovate and renew this beautiful building, for those who clean it, for those who serve in the cafe, for those who work in the Bill Room, the Drafters, the Clerk, Research, and Finance Divisions, for all who work here. We give you thanks. Use their collective efforts for their various labors as an example of harmony for us in this Legislature. And be with our family and friends, those who are sick, who are hungry, and all those who need. In your name we pray. Amen.

KELLY: I recognize Senator Jacobson for the Pledge of Allegiance.

JACOBSON: Please join me in the pledge. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

KELLY: Thank you. I call to order the eighteenth day of the One Hundred Eighth Legislature, Second Session. Senators, please record your presence. Roll call. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: There's a quorum present, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you. Are there any corrections for the Journal?

CLERK: I have no corrections this morning.

KELLY: Are there any messages, reports, or announcements?

CLERK: There are, Mr. President. Communication from the Governor: Dear Mr. President, Speaker Arch, members of Legislature, contingent upon your approval, the following individuals are being reappointed as members of the Commission on Problem Gambling-- Dr. Claudia Moore, Cameron Arch, and Kelly Lambert. Signed, Jim Pillen, Governor. Additionally, notice of committee hearing from the Education as well as the Natural Resources Committee. In addition, the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee submits two notices of committee hearing. And a committee priority bill designation. The

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Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee has designated LB287 as their committee priority, one of their two committee priorities for the session. Finally, Mr. President, an announcement: Speaker Arch has announced that the Government Committee will conduct its hearing on Wednesday, January 31 in room 1525; and the Natural Resources Committee will conduct its hearing in 1507, both at 1:30 p.m. That's all I have at this time, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Hughes would like to recognize the doctor of the day: Dr. Pat Hotovy of York. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Senator Aguilar, you're recognized for an announcement.

AGUILAR: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, on your desk this morning, you'll find a copy of the new publication from the Legislative Research Office, the Legislative Districts "At-A-Glance" report. The report features separate profiles for each of Nebraska's 49 legislative districts. Included in each legislative district profile is data related to population, education, health, income and poverty, housing, employment, and infrastructure. The profile also includes detailed maps of the district and its place among other legislative draw-- drawn boundaries. The report also includes 31 ranking pages highlighting district comparisons across a wide variety of topics, as well as list of the counties, municipalities, and schools in each district. The Legislative District "At-A-Glance" report is a fine example of the quality research materials provided by the staff in our Legislative Research Office. Should you have any questions related to the report, please contact Dillon Cornett in the Legislative Research Office. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Aguilar. Speaker Arch, you're recognized for an announcement.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. Just an announcement that, around 11:50 today, we're going to take up a motion by Senator Murman to suspend the rules to allow for the scheduling of a public hearing next Monday. With yesterday being a recess day, a hearing for Monday, February 5 needed to be scheduled by last Friday to meet the seven days public notice requirement. By suspending the rule requiring seven days notice, the Education Committee will be able to provide a six-day notice and schedule their hearing for next Monday. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Speaker Arch. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the agenda.

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CLERK: Mr. President, Select File. First bill on the agenda: LB461. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB461 be adopted.

KELLY: Members, you have heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed, nay. The E&R amendments are adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Wayne would move to amend with AM2245.

KELLY: Senator Wayne, you're recognized to open on the amendment.

WAYNE: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, this is-- I think Senator Arch has done-- or, Speaker Arch has done a wonderful job trying to delicately walk a fine line between-- on, on our procurement. The reason why I say that is, about four years ago, I think I introduced a bill on procurement. And then three years ago, at the time, Senator Kolterman introduced a bill too trying to figure out how to make sure that we, we hold people accountable but, at the same time, makes sure our process is clear, efficient, and, and makes sure the taxpayers get their bang for their buck. During this hearing and other hearings about procurement, there has been a couple clear, clear examples of failures when we awarded grants or contracts to individuals who could not perform, costing the states billions. Most states, unlike Nebraska, have what they call a disgruntled bidder law. This bill does not go that far. But what it does-- and particularly in Missouri, they didn't even have a law. They just decided the-- the Supreme Court said there's a due process violation and that any bidder has a liberty interest in the bid or the contract itself. Therefore, they have standing. Therefore, they can file a lawsuit. What Senator-- Speaker Arch has focused on is government's responsibility to govern themselves. And I 100% agree with the underlying bill. What my amendment does is very, very narrowly focused on guidance documents. And the question I'm going to ask everybody here is, when is it ever OK for government to mislead the public? And if you think it's OK for government to mislead the public, then don't vote for my amendment. But if you think an agency who puts out a guidance document saying, here's the, the rules that we're going to follow for whether it's a grant, whether it's a bid, whether it's a procurement, a RFP, RFQ. But here are the guidance documents that we're going to produce. Under our statute, guidance documents are binding. But we have a little phrase in there that says

"this does not establish a legal right." So what that means in the court of law is, essentially, a agency, even though it's binding, can decide to do something completely different than their own guidance documents. And the public has no recourse. This would allow the public to have a contested hearing underneath the APA, which all department agencies fall under right now, but it would give them the opportunity to go in there underneath a guidance document. And it only applies when that-- said agency doesn't follow their own rules. So if the Department of Agriculture puts out grants or a, a loan program and says, here are the things you must do. And then a farmer says, well, I can't-- I don't meet those qualifications. But then the neighbor next to him somehow gets the grant or the loan. But they just disregarded their own guidance documents. That person who had a chance to bid, that person who felt, hey, I, I didn't qualify. I was trying to follow the rules, now has some kind of recourse through the APA, which is already in all of our agencies, but relying specifically on their guidance documents. That's all this amendment does. It says if the agency puts out a guidance document, it is binding. That's the current law. But it says if you don't follow it, the public can't contest that. So again, I ask a very, very simple question: when is it OK for government to put out what they're going to do in a document and then disregard it and not even tell the public that they're disregarding it? See, if the, if the agency comes out and says, Senator DeKay, in order to get this loan or this program, you have to be this, this, and this. And Senator DeKay doesn't meet those guidelines, but Senator McKinney-- doesn't meet those guidelines, but Senator McKinney applies anyway and gets it. Senator DeKay says, that's wrong. But under our current statutes, there's nothing Senator DeKay can do. And I'm not giving them a legal right to just go file a lawsuit. I'm giving them a right to go to the agency and say, this is wrong. You need to correct this. And we need to set it for a hearing under which your rules already allow so I can present some evidence and the agency can present some evidence and go from there. But right now, under our law, an agency can put out a guidance document-- even though it's binding-- decide not to follow it, and there's no recourse. I think that is fundamentally wrong. That, at a minimum, government should say what it's going to do and follow its own rules. That is literally all this amendment does. People can ask me questions. I look forward to having a, a little bit of a debate on it. But I think it's important that when government puts out a, a document saying here are the rules that we're going to follow in order for you to apply or meet the minimum standard, we at a minimum should follow that. And if-- at a bare, bare minimum, hold

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the agency responsible if they don't change their guidance document.
Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Wayne. Senator Day would like to announce that her son, Noah, is under the north balcony. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Senator Ibach announces that her granddaughter from Bennington, Quinn, is here un-- in the south balcony. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. And in both balconies are members from the Nebraska Physical Therapy Association, with 175 students from Creighton, UMC, SCC, and Northeast Community College, Clarkson, College of St. Mary's, and Methodist. Please stand and be recognized. Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I rise in support of LB461 and appreciate Senat-- Speaker Arch's leadership in bringing this measure forward-- which is long overdue-- to update, modernize, and strengthen our procurement policies in regards to recent and ongoing misdeeds and serious questions about how taxpayer funds are being utilized and have been utilized. I'm just getting up to speed and eager to hear the debate in regards to Senator Wayne's amendment, which he has filed. But as I'm digesting that and listening to his opening comments, I think it's very interesting and important. We have seen an evisceration of taxpayers' standing in our practice, in our courts, that provides a much needed avenue for stakeholders and citizens and taxpayers to hold big government accountable for waste, fraud, abuse, and other misdeeds. We've also seen a rise in terms of more legal protection for government when they engage in wrongdoing under the veil of sovereign immunity. We've seen an evisceration of oversight, as evidenced by the lack of access our Attorney General's and Ombudsman's Office have enjoyed-- well, in the Ombudsman's case, for over 50 years; and about over a decade for our Inspector General's due to the Attorney General's misguided political opinion in regards to legislative oversight. We have seen an evisceration of oversight when it comes to school boards, state agencies, and others playing games with our strong public records laws. And we've seen no action, even upon request from senators in this body to the Attorney General, to conduct an investigation when contracts go awry and taxpayers and vulnerable Nebraskans are hurt, as evidenced in the Saint Francis debacle. Thus, I think it's important that we explore seriously and open up robustly additional avenues for transparency, oversight, accountability, and justice basically under the guise of a longstanding, well-established theory for private Attorney Generals to allow for stakeholders and citizens to move forward when those who sit in those offices fail to act. I

think that Senator Wayne is on to something here. It is something that we have discussed at length in the Government Committee, as evidenced by our Government Committee package, LB43, whose anchor bill-- introduced by Senator Sanders and cosponsored by myself-- addresses, updates, and strengthens our administrative practice to ensure we don't continue to tip the scales in favor of unelected government bureaucrats and government lawyers and lobbyists, and return the appropriate focus to individual personal liberty and freedom. I have additional bills that will be heard in the Judiciary Committee this week in regards to opening up pathways to justice, opening up the courts to everyday citizens and aggrieved stakeholders when it comes to modernizing and strengthening our practice under the Declaratory Judgment Act, or broadening--

KELLY: One minute.

CONRAD: --taxpayers' standing, standing-- thank you, Mr. President-- to where it once was. So I am eager to hear more about Senator Wayne's amendment and pull it up in and, and look at it in detail. But I think that he is on to something very, very important here that spans across a host of important issues before the Legislature. I hope it is a hallmark of this session that we work together to empower the people against big government bureaucracy. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Conrad. Senator Wayne, you're recognized to speak.

WAYNE: Thank you, Mr. President. And colleagues, I'll tell you where this came from. It's no secret we announced that we are giving a, a lot of grants away in north and south Omaha. And you'll recall a couple months ago I sent to this Legislature a group in Omaha, Habitat for Humanity-- the largest north Omaha affordable housing developer-- was disqualified for even applying for grants. And they were disqualified because it said that if you receive money, affordable housing underneath the Qualified Census Tract Housing Program-- which was the separate \$20 million that we set aside for Omaha, \$10 million for Lincoln, and \$10 million for rural-- if you received any grant funding from that program, you are disqualified. Well, the announcement came on Friday that, yes, Youth Emergency Family Services also received an additional \$2 million grant, but they also received money from the Qualified Census Housing Program. So they shouldn't even have been able to apply. So you have one people, like Habitat, who are actually building affordable single-family homes, closing the wealth gap, closing the income gap,

doing financial literacy, helping individuals in my district who followed the rules and did not apply. And others who didn't follow the rules-- and I don't actually blame Youth Emergency Services. In fact, I told Habitat and everybody who thought they were disqualified to apply anyway because I had a feeling the agency wasn't going to follow its own rules. And Lord and behold, they didn't. This is a problem. I've seen this happen over and over-- not just with grants, but with actual loan programs. They put out guidance documents, our tax incentives. They put out guidance documents. Department of Revenue before put out guidance documents. And we didn't follow them. HHS does it all the time. They put out a guidance document and their caseworkers don't follow it. And we have no recourse. None. So as another senator just told me, if government is going to pick winners and losers, the least they can do is be consistent in their own rules. At least follow their own rules. And I don't think anybody disagrees with that. The problem we're having is people think this might be just Justin upset. It's not. I've introduced bills before all this stuff on this issue. And when I was looking over the weekend-- literally, Sunday and Monday-- what bill had a com-- a hearing that touched on this issue that was talked about. So nobody can say we didn't have a hearing on it. And this was one of the bills that came up. It was talked about a lot in the hearing-- discrepancies, not following their own guidelines, not following their own rules, not-- making sure we are holding everyone accountable, including the departments. So it is an amendment. I would say, on any other day, it'll probably be a friendly amendment. Today, it's probably not-- which, Mr. Lieutenant Governor, I will withdraw AM2245 because there is another bill that I'm going to attach this to. And this is primarily because I actually respect the individual senators who work on issues for two or three years. And this is a issue that Sena-- Speaker Arch has worked on for three years. And I wouldn't hijack something that somebody put in a lot of time, chaired a committee, did a lot of work, worked with a lot of agencies to get a bill here. And I know this amendment would upset the applecart even though it's the right thing to do. And out of deference for the work of any individual senator, I withdraw this amendment.

KELLY: Without objection, AM-- the amendment is withdrawn.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

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BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB461 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: That is a debatable motion. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. I will be brief. I was in the queue as Senator Wayne was withdrawing his amendment. And I just wanted to echo some of the sentiments that I really appreciate this amendment. I look forward to having further conversation about this procurement issue. I also appreciate it being withdrawn because of the enormous amount of work that has gone into LB461 to date, but we do still have much more work to do on our procurement process. And I believe, with Senator Wayne's amendment, that potentially we would never have had the contract happen with Saint Francis Ministries, but perhaps we would have. But there's still much more work to be done. And I thank both Speaker Arch and Senator Wayne for their diligence on this issue. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB461 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed, nay. It is advanced. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, next item: LB16, introduced by Senator Conrad. First of all, Senator, I have E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB16 be adopted.

KELLY: You've heard the motion to adopt in ER43. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed, nay. It is adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Brewer would move to amend with AM2229.

KELLY: Senator Brewer, you're recognized to open on the amendment.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to start by thanking Senator Conrad for allowing me to slow down her bill a little with my amendment. When Senator Briese originally introduced LB16, he knew that it was going to be a pretty heavy lift. It touches on many different professions and becomes very complicated. He and his staff did a lot of great work on LB16. The Platte Institute, ACLU, labor unions, representatives from many different professional organizations all came and spent time and effort to get LB16 through. I was grateful to see that Senator Conrad spent time and effort and,

and took on this burden when Senator Briese left to the executive branch. Well, what I'm doing now is taking that orphan bill that she took and adding another orphan to it in AM2229. This is a bill that is adapted from Senator Geist's LB471. Her bill is about letting interior designers do their job in Nebraska. Now, if you're scratching your head and wondering why an airborne ranger is talking interior design, I don't blame you. Let me see if I can help you better understand it. I ended up taking on this bill about interior design because I've been a part of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee since my freshman year. And six of those years, I've been the Chair. And LB471, it is the third attempt to get this bill through. We heard LB1068 in 2020 by Senator Hunt. We heard LB250 in 2021 by Senator Hunt and Senator Geist. And now we have LB471, introduced in 2023 by Senator Geist and then picked up by myself. Every time the interior designers showed up, they were well-prepared for their hearings, provided great information, thoughtful answers to our questions, and were forthright in making sure that we understand all these issues. But then we would hear from the engineers and the architects, and they raised a lot of concerns about the bill. They want to make sure members of the public are safe. They want to make sure that the professionals in their particular areas are not disrupted in what they do. This is a back-and-forth that went for this entire period, and we never could figure out a middle ground. And because of that, as the Chair of the Government Committee, I adopted a, an LR, LR221. We had a meeting in September, and it was what we had hoped in bringing the parties together to discuss options. In that meeting, I was very vocal in letting them know that my patience had run out, that it was time to come to a solution. And if they didn't, then we would push forward with what we thought was the best solution. Now, the outcome of that was that we had dozens of folks that spent hours working with my legal counsel, a number of different meetings last fall. They met over at the Bar Association. And as a result of that, we have the amendment that's now before you in AM2229. I believe the language will accomplish the important things that we need it to in this bill. It will allow the interior designers who meet certain educational and experience requirements to register with the state. This reg-- the registered designers will have, will have been tested on technical skills. And they will then go into a registry that will be in the law and regulation. The registered designers will then be allowed to practice more independently than they are now. Their professional practices will include planning spaces, egress plans, selecting finishes, textures, preparing documents and technical submission for interior construction. But let me be clear. These designs-- designers

will not be allowed to be architects or engineers. They will not be allowed to mess with any of the structural or load-bearing elements. They will not be allowed to do any of the outer envelopment of the building, including the exits. These-- this would be-- this would not be allowed because of some of the requirements and design with technical issues, mechanical, plumbing, HVAC, electrical, elevator, and fire systems. These would be left to the engineers and architects for a number of reasons, but primarily over safety issues. The designers who chose to register would be allowed to work in these environments and have this certification. The amendment tells interior designers that-- what they may be allowed to do if they are registered. But it does not mean that every designer will choose to go through this process and these extra steps. If a designer is working in Nebraska and wants to keep what they have been doing, this proposal does not change anything for them. And just like before, if anyone who is not an engineer or architect tries to practice this profession, the Board of Engineers and Architects can intervene. This amendment is a safe, proven proposal. Many other states have gone before us and have shown this approach can work. Just to give you some examples: Iowa, Minnesota, Texas, Florida, Georgia, Wisconsin, Illinois, Virginia, North Carolina, and Connecticut. We do not see issues, whether it be buildings falling down or people, people dying in fires as a result of any of these changes they made in other states. We do not see insurance premiums skyrocketing as a result of it. The danger to the public simply is not there. These designers have a lot of education and a lot of experience. They know how to do their jobs well. We need to keep their talent here in Nebraska. That means we have to give them the tools to do their job. So I'm asking for your green vote on AM2229 and on LB16. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, good morning, colleagues. I rise in continued support of LB16, which is a measure that I cosponsored originally with Senator Briesse and then took over stewardship thereof after his departure from this august body as he ascended to become the, the State Treasurer. I want to just remind and reaffirm to the full body what LB16 is. This is a-- about a umbrella approach, a comprehensive approach to occupational licensure reform. This addresses some key areas in public policy, which all stakeholders have come together to agree, among Nebraska's top challenges are workforce development. So the more red tape that we can remove, the more bureaucracy that we can remove, that helps more Nebraskans enter the workforce in a productive manner. We have taken

steps in this regard together over the years when it comes to professional compacts, reciprocity agreements, making changes in specific occupations for military spouses and families and otherwise. And this is really building upon that approach in a much more comprehensive way. Today, over one in four jobs in Nebraska, or over 200 different occupations, require some form of state licensure. And our job licensure requirements are more burdensome compared to our sister states. This reform idea and effort has drawn incredible support on the national level, in our sister states, and here in Nebraska. This is an area where you saw leadership from the Obama White House, from the Trump White House, continued in the Biden White House. You've seen myself and Senator Briese and a host of diverse cosponsors step forward in regards to LB16. Over 20 of our sister states have passed some form of broad, universal recognition, and it is time for Nebraska to join their ranks. Additionally, this measure has very important components when it comes to much needed reform and removal of barriers for second-chance employment. We know that we have a mass incarceration problem in this state. We know that many of those that are system-impacted will return to our communities. And we know that a good job is one of the best anti-recidivism tools that we have available. Again, I'd like to thank my cosponsors. I'd like to thank the Government Committee for their strong support and all the stakeholders who've worked for years on this measure. Additionally, when it comes to Senator Brewer's amendment that he has introduced, I, I rise in support of that as well. This issue, in regards to the licensure for interior designers, engineers, and architects has languished in the body despite valiant attempts and solid leadership from Senators Geist, Senator Brewer, and my friend, Senator Hunt, as well, who I think is, is in the queue and, and carried this measure for many years. At the Government Committee level, we have held specific interim study hearings on these topics. We have had robust engagement from the public on both sides. And there's a lot of passion in regards to how we resolve this issue. And friends, that's not a bad thing. I think we should not shy away--

KELLY: One minute.

CONRAD: --but rather lean in-- thank you, Mr. President-- when we see that level of engagement and passion because Nebraskans really care about how we resolve these issues and take so much pride in their work and care deeply about consumer safety, which is at the heart-- allegedly, supposedly-- of all occupational licensure. So we've seen our sister states also address this specific issue when it comes to architects, engineers, and interior designers. I think everybody

here's probably a little bit happy, a little bit unhappy when it comes to how we resolve this, but that's usually a, a pretty good indicator we're headed in the right direction. So I'd like to thank Senator Brewer for his hard work and his staff, and encourage your support of this amendment and the underlying bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Conrad. Senator Hunt, you're recognized to speak.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. It's another beautiful day in my favorite place: the Nebraska Legislature. I rise in support of LB16. This is an important measure that has been worked on in our Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. Since my time here, I know that Senator McCollister did a lot of work on it before it was picked up by Senator Briese, who's now our State Treasurer. And I'm grateful to my colleague and friend, Senator Conrad, for taking over the helm and, you know, ushering this onto a place on the floor where it can be successful. The bill contained within AM2229 is-- has been a labor of love for me for the last four years. And I'm so grateful to other stakeholders and other people who took the time to understand the issue and had compassion and understanding for the economic development and growth that that's going to bring to our state for interior designers, for the construction fields, and that entire trade and industry by bringing Nebraska up to a level where we can be more competitive with other states. It fits perfectly with LB16 to attract our workforce and retain our talent and makes sure that when people come to Nebraska, they see it as a place where they can really put down roots and not just start a family, get a great education, have a great home, but have a great job. And that's something I know is a goal all of us really share. Senator Geist, when she was here, worked on this quite a bit. Senator Brewer and members of the committee were able to get it done. And the bill contained within this amendment is a long overdue piece of legislation for the design and construction industry in Nebraska. I'm really excited about this bill because it's going to bring more choice to consumers. It's going to bring more economic mobility and opportunity for the many, many small business owners and interior designers across the state. Most of these firms, of course, are women-owned. And-- let's see. I, I'm sure that this number isn't right anymore, but at the time when I was doing my research on this bill, most recently last year, there were 313 interior design firms across the state. And 300 of them, 96%, are solo practitioners or they have fewer than five employees. And nearly 90% of interior designers in Nebraska are women. So these are

entrepreneurs who are running small businesses who are really going to benefit from this amendment. And it's going to keep them in our state. We heard consistently in testimony on this bill over the last four years that we have interior designers who are getting a world-class education at the University of Nebraska, who are going through the program in Lincoln, and who then find themselves working basically as second-class citizens in their own field that they have, you know, a world-class education and experience around. And they have to end up going to another state to fully practice in their field. They are not second-class professionals. They should not be forced through these bureaucratic, unnecessary hoops. And the current system that we have doesn't work to anyone's advantage. When I talk about interior design, this is not the profession that you might see portrayed on TV. It's not what you see on HGTV necessarily or whatever, where it's just paint and pillows and esthetics and things like that. What we're talking about with this amendment, as Senator Brewer-- as Chairman Brewer explained during his introduction of this amendment, these are tested, qualified building scientists who are trained to design the work that this amendment describes. And they have to qualify for all of these exams. They have to take these exams. It's, like, a 11-hour, nationally recognized comprehensive exam. We know the education that they're getting to receive these credentials in Nebraska is--

KELLY: One minute.

HUNT: --world-class. Thank you, Mr. President. And, you know, also as Senator Brewer alluded to in his introduction of the amendment, I think everybody's eager to have come to a place of compromise. This has a lot of bipartisan support. And I'm excited to move on and make sure that the interior designers in Nebraska are able to get the qualifications and able to get the authority that they need to do their job just as they can do in any other state. And in doing that, we can grow our workforce here. We can grow Nebraska. We can support independent, small business owners, especially women and mothers. And that's something that, you know, is music to my ears and really speaks to my heart. So I urge your green vote on everything up on the board. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hunt. Senator Vargas, you're recognized to speak.

VARGAS: Thank you very much, colleagues. I stand in support of LB16 for many different reasons that have been shared on the floor today. One, we have a workforce shortage in Nebraska. And this workforce

shortage is going to be-- one way of helping to address it is doing this type of licensing reform. This isn't something that was done overnight, so a big thank-you to Senators Briese-- or, former Senator Briese-- and Senator Conrad for picking this up, and all of the other individuals that have worked on this for years. I say that because this is a recognition of workforce experience. This is a recognition that sometimes there are burdensome licensing requirements and it's not always a one-size-fits-all. It is our responsibility to make sure to review these different types of parameters and legislation regarding occupational licensing. We've obviously had some different measures in, in reviews and boards. But it's measures like this that have been worked on for a couple years now that provide a pathway for actually doing some more meaningful, substantive licensing reform. And for those in the public, when we're talking about licensing reform, my experience in this has been sometimes you've worked on reform for-- and this is outside of the scope of, of just this. I've worked in bills that have to do with teacher licensing reform, making sure we are removing barriers for high-quality educators to be able to work and live and be able to immediately get into the classroom without lowering the standards of what we expect, but also not allow-- not just expecting them to jump through hoops just because. I've worked on legislation that has done this and successfully passed legislation in this arena, but what I found is that it's not just contained to simply the education world. This is in many different worlds. And in particular for this bill, this is an opportunity for us to look at license registration across the country and do it in a more comprehensive fashion. It wasn't something that was easy. It's not something that was done overnight. And so I rise in support of L6-- LB16 because of that. Because if you're looking right now across the state, in different sectors, we still have a workforce shortage in many different areas. There's at least 30,000, 40,000 jobs right now across the state of Nebraska that the salaries are somewhere in the 50s or 60s in terms of \$60,000 a year. We cannot fill some of these professions. And some of them are as a result of not having a, a pathway for people to necessarily get into the field and, and also creating some redundant requirements that make it harder for them to be in that field. So I think this is what the crux of this is, is about. LB16 is about making sure that we're addressing the reform efforts in that area and is a-- and is a, is a bill that's been worked on for years. As far as the amendment, you know, part of the reason I support the amendment is it's been through the committee process. It's something that has been negotiated. This came out as a separate, alone bill. I appreciate that-- I see Senator Brewer is introducing this amendment because the work that not only has been

done by Senator Hunt and many others is, is in support of small businesses. It's in support of some level of compromise. These issues regarding sort of, like, scope, scope of work and procedures, sometimes they're very, very difficult to work on and practice. And so this is a really good example of actually trying to get something done in the right direction. And so I, I support the amendment because of that, and thank Senator Brewer for his work in that. And also support the underlying bill, LB16, because it is our opportunity to do some-- step in the right direction for licensing reform that also will make sure that we are addressing our workforce issues across the state.

KELLY: One minute.

VARGAS: Thank you, colleagues, for your work on this issue. It's nice to see it hit the finish line, especially in my last year in the Legislature. And thank you again to Senator Conrad for all of her collective work on this. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Vargas. Senator Bostelman, you're recognized to speak.

BOSTELMAN: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, Nebraska. I'll stand up in support of LB16. I will support LB2229 [SIC]. I do-- I want to just underscore a couple things of what's happened with the bill and with this amendment now that-- we need to make sure it's clear-- and, and Senator Brewer mentioned that when he opened on it, is the safety portion of it-- that we make sure that it is clear to the individuals receiving the services of the interior designer that, if statutory language exists that an architect or an engineer must sign the document and that they cannot cross over into structural portions of a building, those things, that it's made clear to the, the recipient-- whoever you're doing the work for-- that, that they still need to go and, and receive those license stamped. The, the safety portion of this is, is a requirement that-- sometimes in our smaller communities, they don't realize that. But hopefully through the process-- the education process on this is that it's made clear-- that those who are on the registry that do provide this information, that they make it clear that they-- that whoever the structure is, whoever the owners are, that they still need to make sure they're complying with state architect and engineer statutory language. With that, I will support AM2229 and the underlying bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Senator von Gillern, you're recognized to speak.

VON GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of LB16 and likely opposed to the amendment, AM2229. I'm still working through some of the language on this and trying to make sure I understand this completely. I've had conversations with the folks from the AIA and the ACEC, who worked their way towards a position of neutrality on this. The, the area that concerns me is-- and again, I have no issue with the-- what the interior designers want to do and expanding what they can do and the licensure and all those kinds of things. I think that's fantastic. The, the parts that concern me is when it gets to what they're not allowed to do, gets into areas that, unless you're educated to know a lot about those things, you won't know whether you're doing something wrong. That might sound kind of confusing, but I'm-- as I'm looking at this, it says you can't do things that require changes in eg-- egress and exits and live load and dead load on buildings and those kinds of things. And again, if you're not educated in how to understand those things and, and architects and engineers are educated to understand those kinds of things, I think it may be a challenge for some to, to make sure that they know whether they're in violation of that or not. So again, I'm, I'm still having conversations on the floor regarding some of the language on this to make sure I understand it completely. But those areas in particular concern me. And if there's language in here that provides protections for that, I'm happy to, to talk to others on the floor to better understand that. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator von Gillern. Senator Lowe, you're recognized to speak.

LOWE: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. I rise in support of LB16 and I'm still questionable on AM2229. The-- this has been brought to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee for I think the whole time that I've been here. And I've been against it in the past. And part of that is just that they just didn't ever seem to, to get along and, and go together. They were too far apart. And now I understand they're coming closer, but I'm not sure if they're quite there yet. I want to make sure that-- you know, what's the price tag on this? What's it going to cost? Who's going to benefit from this and why? You know, as an architect and engineer, they've, they've had extra education. They know the structure of the buildings and everything else. And I just want to make sure that something bad doesn't happen because we pass this. And is this just a marketing tool? Is it a tool that, that the interior designers are going to

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say, yes. We have been green-stamped for this type of procedure. Let's go ahead with this. I think we need to think on this and maybe take another year before we pass this and maybe let them come a little closer together. Thank you, Lieutenant Governor.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Lowe. Seeing no one else in the queue. Senator Brewer-- Senator Vargas is now in the queue and recognized to speak.

VARGAS: Thank you very much. I stand in support of AM2229. And again-- you know, I'm hearing some things from Senator Lowe and wanted to make sure that if anybody else was going to debate this. But in particular, this amendment I think is a good amendment. Came out of committee. Is generally supportive. And I just wanted to stand in support of AM2229 and the underlying bill, LB16. So I appreciate you and all of your time and efforts on this, and will yield the remainder of my time.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Vargas. Senator Brewer, you are recognized to close on the amendment.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, I guess I'm a little surprised at some that have stood in opposition. This, this six-year process has taken six years because of a lack of movement on one particular group's part. And now that we've finally boxed them into a corner like we did this summer when we had our interim study, it forced the discussion that, that brought us to where we're at now. And the idea of just folding this up and putting it on the shelf and waiting for another year is ridiculous because the folks that have worked it all these years are here, and they're the ones that have helped to negotiate this deal. So I will tell you that this is simply giving interior designers an opportunity to have a certification to use in their work. We're not asking them to do any work that risks any safety. So if you vote against this, it's just because you don't want to see a solution. Because we have one now. So I would ask for your support in AM2229 and on LB16. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Members, the question is the adoption of AM2229. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 1 nay, Mr. President, on, on adoption of the Brewer amendment.

KELLY: AM2229 is adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Dungan, you're recognized to speak.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, good morning. I do rise today in support of LB16. Just to talk a little bit more about the bill, I just want to talk about a couple of things that I do appreciate about it. And just for full candor, I am trying to speak so that way a colleague of mine can maybe work on finishing up an amendment that they are bringing, I believe, on this bill. So I don't want people to think that I'm just talking to talk. But there are some important things I think to highlight here that maybe I think sometimes get glossed over in a conversation about LB16. One of the major things in this bill that I think brought me to the table and got me on as a cosigner is the opportunity for second chances. And one of the things that it particularly does is it ensures that individuals with convictions of crimes that don't necessarily relate to the underlying job they're applying for have an opportunity to get a job and be in a career. Throughout this interim session, I've had an opportunity to speak with a number of individuals who work in the criminal justice field. I sat down and talked with the director of the Department of Correctional Services. I've spoken with our parole board. Trying to really hammer out what we can do as a state to ensure that we're decreasing the population of our prisons but also doing so in a way that provides people with a real opportunity at rehabilitation and a real chance to get back into the community and succeed while simultaneously ensuring that we have safe communities. Time and time and time again, what I'm told is the number one way that we can keep people out of custody and then keep them in, in the community doing a good job is make sure they have housing and make sure they have a job. If you can solve those two problems-- I'm not going to say it's a silver bullet, necessarily, but you increase the likelihood of success for people who are getting out of custody, reintegrating or reentering into society, exponentially. And while you still are increasing their success, you're creating an environment that's much safer community because people have that job, they have that, that, that housing, and it puts them in a place where they can really be successful and contributing members of society. So what I believe this bill seeks to do is try to have a very targeted approach at ensuring that we provide those second chances to individuals who have maybe a, a conviction but something that doesn't directly relate to the underlying job they're applying for. So nonviolent offenses, people who have gone through rehabilitation, people who have essentially, you know, served their time and, and shown that they want to rehabilitate and do better would have the

opportunity under this bill to get a job and to actually apply for more jobs than right now they'd be able to. Licensing requirements are important, right? We want to make sure that individuals who are providing services in the state are trained. We want to make sure that they are doing things in a safe way. We want to make sure there is some regulation out there purely from a consumer protection point of view. But what we don't want are unwieldy hoops that people have to jump through just to get these licenses if they don't actually relate to the underlying public good of ensuring that people are doing their job well and doing their job safely. And so I think that this bill, as Senator Brewer said, was a six-year effort. It's, it's taken a long time to get here. I know Senator Briese introduced it originally, and then my colleague, Senator Conrad, picked it up because it's something that is a nonpartisan issue that I think a lot of us agree on. It seeks to get rid of the bureaucratic hoops and the red tape that people have to jump through if they don't serve any actual purpose. And in particular, the second chances portion of this I think does a public good for Nebraska. So I would urge my colleagues to support LB16. I think that it clearly had a lot of cooks in the kitchen getting this done, but that means there was a lot of input from a lot of different agencies and a lot of different individuals. And I think we've reached a really good compromise, where we are balancing the safety of the consumer with ensuring that we're getting rid of unnecessary regulations. So, colleagues, again, encourage your green vote on LB16-- or, I guess, your voice yea vote--

KELLY: One minute.

DUNGAN: --given that we're moving onto Final Reading. And I'm happy to have any conversations or questions with folks off the mic about the second chances portion. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Dungan. Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. I also rise in support of LB16 and would echo a lot of Senator Dungan's comments about second chances. You know, when we-- we've had a lot of conversations in my three and a bit years here about, you know, how we can decrease recidivism and how we can solve prison crowding and the-- you know, things like this need to be viewed as part of a comprehensive criminal justice reform, where we're making sure that folks who have served their time do have the opportunity to have, have meaningful employment and save for their future and build a life. So I think

that's a really important part of LB16. I actually wanted to just point out-- I know Senator Aguilar told everybody about the Legislative Districts "At-A-Glance." You all have them on your desk. I wanted to make sure you all could see in the back-- it's about page 132. We have Employment: Labor Force Participation rates for everybody's district. So you can go and see who has-- you know, how many people in your district. So percentage of population ages 16-plus who are employed. And highest employment district? Senator Day, LD 49: 79.1% of the population is employed. And that's kind of rel-- I'm pointing that particular point out because this bill is about making sure that everybody who is in that range-- age 16-plus who are not in the armed services, or maybe are in the reserves-- have the opportunity to have meaningful employment. So that 21% in Senator Day's district, maybe a few of those folks will be able to get into employment as a result of this bill. Senator Wayne's district is down at last place, 61.6%. And again, maybe we can increase the labor force participation. After we pass this bill, we'll see these numbers climb, is the hope of LB16. And then there's Legislative District Ranking-- Employment: Labor Force Parti-- Pop-- Participation by Population. Number one: Senator Hunt's district. 25,127 folks are working in Senator Hunt's district-- or, that live in Senator Hunt's district are working. So I would encourage your, well, yes vote, oral vote on this, and a green vote when we get to Final Reading on this bill. And I won't take up any-- too much more time because I know we all want to get to Czech license plates, so thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Senator Vargas, you're recognized to speak.

VARGAS: Thank you, colleagues. Again, I stand in support of LB16, not only in the recognition of second chances. But specifically when we're trying to fully recognize all occupations and make sure that we are thinking about what kind of workforce we need, that's the reason why I think this is an important bill. It was mentioned before: I have a technical amendment that is trying to clarify the authorization of a fee waiver process. And so it showed up in a couple of different places. And so I'm trying to do that. I spoke to Senator Conrad and the supporters of the bill. And the Speaker has been flagged. So that's what I'm trying to do rather than do a floor amendment. So I sent this up about 45 minutes ago. So we're trying to work on that. That's the reason why people were talking and trying to make sure we have some time on this friendly amendment. It's making sure that we clarify the fee waiver process that's already in the bill. Fee waiver process would make sure that individuals who have

less than 300% federal poverty level can apply for a fee waiver. And this is clarifying that in a couple of different places in the statute to make sure that we are actually allowing the fee waiver process to be successful and putting the guidelines in place. That is all that this change is doing. It's a friendly amendment. And I appreciate Senator Conrad for helping with that. But this bill in general-- again, 22 states have passed some form of broad universal recognition. A few have broadly recognized occupations of veterans and military spouses. And all of the neighboring states have enacted some level of broad recognition. So these licensing requirements sometimes have an inconsistency. But what we're trying to do is make sure that we are streamlining many of them, and some of them in some way, shape, or form. And so I think that is one of the reasons why this is a good bill and something that we can all agree. And many of Nebraska's initial job licensing requirements sometimes are burdensome compared to other states. Worker families whose jobs require state licensing sometimes are looking at this as a reason to not stay in the district or to potentially move. And so we're faced with a workforce shortage that the only way that we can address it is by not only trying to incentivize or trying to create new jobs or trying to make sure that we are doing everything we possibly can to make sure more people stay, but removing and reducing the barriers for people to actually have the right jobs. That's what this is ultimately about. And so that's the reason why I support this underlying bill. And that's the reason why this is a good second-chance effort for making sure that we are recognizing that we're not losing workers across state lines and we're not losing workers to then leave us to go to other states. The other thing is many of these licensing boards will, will specify the history relative to the occupation. And sometimes it's entirely too narrow rather than being permissive and allowing people to, to do what is actually needed. And so that is the issue with this bill in terms of the positive things that it brings. And I appreciate all the work that has been done in this arena. Because if we can't get work like this done, then we're going to have an ultimate issue with our workforce shortage because nearly one in four jobs of nearly 200 occupations across the state of Nebraska require some state licensure. That is 25% of our jobs. And almost 200 different occupations require some state licensure that are affected by this type of workforce licensing reform. And so I just want to make sure that colleagues know how important this underlying bill is. It will pass. It's got the support. Just trying to make sure to clarify something if we're able to get it back in time. And if not, we'll figure out another way to address it in the future. But this is a

good bill. Appreciate the 41 people that testified-- I'm sorry-- that actually voted in support of this bill in General File and all the individuals that are going to support it this next time around. And I know there were some opponents to it over the years in, in some different types of form that have-- we've worked on--

KELLY: One minute.

VARGAS: --the legislation. But this is another effort that shows and demonstrates what it looks like to do the reform over the course of years. This is not something that's done easily, not done once. These types of bills, you work on them, and over time-- and when you're working on them, it enables you to actually figure out what compromise actually looks like. And with that compromise in a bill like this, it has a significant amount of impact on the different types of licensing-- licenses we have. But again, we're not going to be done with this. This licensing reform is going to take beyond this, making sure we're reviewing it continuously to make sure we're competitive with the other states because other states are also looking at their licensing to make sure whether or not they are or are not attracting and retaining the kind of individuals into the different workforce. So it is incumbent upon those beyond me and whether or not they can actually carry on, watch this legislation, watch the different licensing that is happening through this reform and whether or not we're still competitive. Because if we're not competitive--

KELLY: That's your time, Senator.

VARGAS: Thank you very much.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Vargas. Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB16 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB16 to E&R for engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, next bill: LB78. Senator, I have nothing on the bill.

KELLY: Senator Ballard for a motion.

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BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB78 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say-- say aye. All those opposed say-- all those opposed say nay. LB78 is advanced for E&R Engrossing.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB308. First of all, Senator, I have E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB308 be adopted.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adopt the E&R amendments. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. They are adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, next item on the bill. Senator John Cavanaugh, I have AM2140 with a note he wishes to withdraw. In that case, Mr. President, Senator John Cavanaugh would offer AM2190.

KELLY: Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to open on the amendment.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. I'll try and be quick, colleagues, because I know we want to get on to some really important stuff, like Czech license plates. So this amendment is just a technical amendment I worked on with Senator Bostar. And I appreciate him listening to my constructive criticism and helping me make this a stronger bill. The first section just takes out some periods and turns them into commas and then adds a semicolon. So it's got something for both Senator DeBoer and something for Senator Clements. And adds in an "and," and then just clarifies definition of a legal process as a court order. And then makes sure that the penalty that's asser-- assessed so it doesn't change where the money goes for the person's damages or the court costs. But it-- any penalty as a con-- per the constitution is required to go into the education fund. So it just clarifies a few points and then makes a technical change that the E&R Office asked us for, which I think might be relevant to the conversation we had on rules where I was saying we might need to amend E&R in more substantive ways sometimes. But I encourage your green vote on this amendment. It just sort of clarifies and makes the bill a little bit better. And again, this is a good bill that I support. And I encourage your green vote. And I thank Senator Bostar for his help on this. Thank you.

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KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Senator Bostar, you're recognized to speak.

BOSTAR: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, colleagues, for the opportunity to have this bill advance from Select File. The amendment is a friendly amendment, as Senator Cavanaugh stated. It incorporates just some clarifying language. Nothing is functionally changing in the policy of the bill, as well as sort of corrective language that was given to us from E&R. And so with that, I would appreciate your green vote on AM2190 and LB308. Thank you very much.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Bostar. Seeing no one else in the queue, you're recognized to close on the amendment. Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to close on the amendment. And waive. Members, the question is the adoption of AM2190. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 32 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the amendment.

KELLY: The amendment is adopted.

CLERK: Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB308 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB308 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB664. Senator, I have nothing on the bill.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB664 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB664 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB600. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

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BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB600 be adopted.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adopt the E&R amendments. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed, nay. They are adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB600 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB600 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB51. I have nothing in order on the bill, Mr. President.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB51 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB51 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB252. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB252 be adopted.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adopt the E&R amendments. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. They are adopted.

CLERK: Senator Brewer would move to amend the-- LB252 with AM2061.

KELLY: Senator Brewer, you're recognized to open on the amendment.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. President. All right. This is going to make more sense to you guys now. Let's just get caught up a little bit on

LB252. I introduced it last year on behalf of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. Purpose of the bill was to update statutes related to the Department of Veterans' Affairs and their facilities. This bill is nine pages, but it is with some very minor changes. Let me give you some examples here. It updates the duties of the director of the department. It allows the director to use a director's designee for certain purposes. It removes an old requirement that the department be located in the Capitol. It changes the facility name of the former Grand Island Veterans' Home to Central Nebraska Veterans' Home. Some very simple changes with that, LB252. Would you like me to go ahead and move to AM2061?

KELLY: Yes, Senator.

BREWER: Again, AM2061 is a small committee amendment that creates a cash fund for the department-- Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. If the department receives any gifts, grants, bequests, contributions, or donations, they need a cash fund established to properly account for the distribution of these funds. Distribution from the fund shall be used by the department for the purposes of supporting veterans services, carrying out duties and functions of the department, paying administrative costs of the department, and for simply-- for the simple purposes, again, of designated-- designating and accepting any gifts, grants, bequests, contributions, or donations. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Seeing no one else in the queue. You're recognized to close on AM2061. And waive. Members, the question is the adoption of AM2061. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the amendment, Mr. President.

KELLY: AM2061 is adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion. Senator Kinney-- McKinney, you're recognized for a motion. Excuse me. Somebody in the queue now. Senator DeKay, you're recognized to speak.

But you.

What the. If you want to punch with you.

DeKAY: [INAUDIBLE].

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KELLY: Thank you, Senator DeKay. Senator McKinney, you're recognized for a motion.

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to advance LB252 to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB252 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President--

KELLY: Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, next item: LB140. First of all-- excuse me. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Brandt would move to amend with FA206.

KELLY: Senator Brandt, you're recognized to open on the floor amendment.

BRANDT: Thank you, Mr. President. Yes, this is the fabled Czech license plate bill. The floor amendment simply changes the operating date from January 1 of '24 to January 1 of '25. That's all it does. I would encourage your green vote on FA206.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Brandt. Senator Erdman, you're recognized to speak.

ERDMAN: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate that. So last week when we had this bill up, I made a comment about our current license plate. I have received several-- in fact, many-- that agree with my statement about how ugly our current plate is. And some of those I ask, do you remember what we had before? And they said, no. And I said, do you know what this plate stands for now? And they said, no. Please tell me what it is. So I would tell them, and they say, oh. OK. So what I said before I still mean, is that those of you that are going to be back in '25, draft a bill or do a let-- a let-- a, an LR this summer, put out a request to those who design things to send in a plate that is designed to represent Nebraska. And bring that as a bill next year. And take the authority away from whomever makes that decision now to make a permanent plate for the state of Nebraska, one that reflects who Nebraska and what Nebraska is. And we don't want to put on there "Nebraska is not for everybody." OK? That's not one of the suggestions. All right? So we do everything we can to make ourself unrecognizable to anybody else in the country. So

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let's fix this. So I am still convinced that we can do better than we currently have. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Seeing no one else in the queue. Senator Brandt, you're recognized to close on the floor amendment. And waive. Members, the question is the adoption of FA206. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of the amendment.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The-- the floor amendment is adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB144-- LB140 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, the question is the advancement for E&R Engrossing of LB140. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB140A. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB140A be adopted.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adopt the E&R amendments. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. They are adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're rec-- excuse me. Senator Erdman, you're in the queue and recognized to speak.

ERDMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I wonder if Senator Brandt would yield to a question.

KELLY: Senator Brandt, would you yield to a question?

BRANDT: Yes, I would.

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ERDMAN: Senator Brandt, was this your idea?

BRANDT: This is from the district that has a very high percentage of Czech people in it.

ERDMAN: OK.

BRANDT: So this, this came from constituents in my district.

ERDMAN: Very good. I appreciate that. Thank you. So can you guess how many license plates there may-- purchased?

BRANDT: When we introduced this last year, the threshold was 250. And in the committee, we raised it to 500. I have no doubt it will be over 1,000.

ERDMAN: OK. All right. Very good. I was just curious because we have very few, if any, Czech people where we live. So thank you for answering. Appreciate it.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Erdman and Senator Brandt. Senator Slama, you're recognized to speak.

SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. President. And given today's conversation, I do have to give my esteemed colleague, Senator Brandt, a shout-out. My ancestors are from his district. The name "Slama" is Czech for "straw." It's basically the "Smith" for Czech farmers. Nebraska has a very, very large Czech population. Not so much once you get towards the western part of the state. But if you do go to Czech, Czech Republic-- they call it Czechia now-- you'll notice that it has a very similar landscape to that of eastern Nebraska, and it lends itself to the same farming practices our ancestors used back in the day. So I have no doubt that interest in these Czech heritage license plates will be very high. I'm actually decently sure my dad plans to get one, and I also plan to get one. So thank you very much, Senator Brandt, for bringing the one license plate bill that I actually like this session.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Slama. Senator Ballard for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB140A be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB14A [SIC-- LB140A] to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced. Mr. Clerk.

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CLERK: Mr. President, next bill: LB247. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you are recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move the E&R amendments to LB247 be advanced--
be adopted.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adopt the E&R amendments. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. They are adopted.

CLERK: I have nothing further on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB247 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB247 for E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB299. I have no E&R amendments. Senator Linehan, I have AM2031 with a note to withdraw. In that case, Mr. President: Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you are recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB299 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Members, you have heard the motion to advance LB299 for E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President: LB146. I have nothing on the bill, Senator.

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you are recognized--

BALLARD: Mr. President--

KELLY: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a motion.

BALLARD: Mr. President, I move that LB146 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

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KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to advance LB146 to E&R Engrossing. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. It is advanced. Mr. Clerk, items for the record.

CLERK: Mr. President, your committee on Government, Military and Veterans affairs, chaired by Senator Brewer, reports LB287 to General File with committee amendments. Additionally, your committee on Transportation and Telecommunications, chaired by Senator Moser, reports LB31 to General File with committee amendments. New LR: LR290 from Senator Lowe. That will be laid over. Additionally, new A bill: Senator Lippincott, LB600A. It's a bill for an act relating to appropriations; appropriates funds to aid in the carrying out the provisions of LB600; and declares an emergency. That'll be placed on General File. Notice of committee hearing from the Executive Board. That's all I have at this time, Mr. President.

KELLY: Next item on the agenda, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, next item: LB143, introduced by Senator Conrad. It's a bill for an act relating to time; amends Sections 49-1301, 13-- 49-1302, and 81-1323, 32-908, 81-1328; provides a year-round daylight savings time as prescribed; harmonize provisions; repeals the original section. When the Legislature left the bill, pending was an amendment from Senator Erdman to amend LB143 to adopt Mountain and Central Standard as Nebraska's year-round time.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Conrad, would you like to refresh on LB143?

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Friends, LB143 is the measure that again I picked up from then-Senator Tom Briesse after he was appointed State Treasurer. Senator Briesse has worked on this issue for many years during his time in the Legislature, and I was an enthusiastic supporter thereof during the interim period for my service when I was outside of the Legislature and then quickly became a proud cosponsor of this measure when I rejoined this august body. LB143 was advanced from our committee. It has very strong support, I think, in each of our districts and amongst colleagues on the floor. And what LB143 does, colleagues, is it puts into place a framework for a gradual decision to be made to ensure that we can stop changing our clocks twice a year. So under existing federal law, the proposal in LB143 would allow us to select permanent daylight savings time, stop making the change twice a year--

KELLY: That's your time on the refresh, Senator.

CONRAD: I, I didn't think it was time-limited.

KELLY: The, the refresh was a two-minute refresh, Senator.

CONRAD: OK. I'll hit my light and I'll continue then. Thank you.

KELLY: Senator Erdman, you are recognized to speak.

ERDMAN: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate that. Senator Conrad, sorry you got cut off there. We'll give you a chance again, I think. So over the last three or four days, I have received several emails and-- some are in support of daylight savings time permanent. Some are very much in support of standard time. I received a document that I think is important that was-- I was to have it to distribute. I'm sorry I didn't get that to you. But all of the opposition that I've received is from people who like golfing late at night or late afternoon or evening activities. They don't take into consideration the ramifications to people's health. And so it's quite obvious that the study proves and has proven that permanent daylight savings time is the worst option that we could choose. It also shows that changing the clock twice a year is detrimental to your health. And so the situation is this: either we stay on one time or the other. And if you're going to choose, it has to be standard time, which is the best for your health and well-being. There is a chart-- and I was hoping to have that presented to you, but let me just explain what it is. And it shows the state of Nebraska. And across the state, it shows that if we went to standard time year-round, there would be-- the, the, the sun would come up. The latest it would come up would be 8:10. If we go to daylight savings time, it's 9:10. It also shows that the center part of the state would have 140 days-- they'd have 140 days when the sun comes up after 8:00. The eastern part of the state would have 120 days when the sun came up after 8:00. That is a detriment to people going-- young people going to school and also for those people who have to do outside things in the morning. And it's quite obvious our biological clocks work best. And I think the reason they work best on standard time is that's what God created. So when God created man, he figured out what's the best time to have men live by, and their biological clock is standard time. So daylight savings time ends up causing more depression, more sleep deprivation, and other issues that affect one's well-being. And it's kind of amazing. Back in 1974, a Nebraska Senator introduced to Congress against permanent daylight savings time. So this is an issue we've been talking about for 40, 50 years. So if you're going to make

a decision that you don't like to change your clock, standard time is the choice. And some say, OK. The other states have adopted daylight savings time when Congress approves it. South Dakota just rejected that notion recently. The only states that have actually adopted daylight savings time is Wyoming and Colorado. And I'll just give you this information because it's important. Wyoming is now going to resend their vote to go light-- daylight savings time permanently. So when people tell you in their email they send that we'll be different than the other states, that's not exactly the case. But whatever works for their argument is what they use. And so I have several articles that show young people being injured in the morning when it's dark going to school because the bus driver can't see them or other motorists can't see them either because of the darkness. And so as we gin-- we begin to think about what is best for society, what will solve the issue that we always hear from people about daylight savings time and changing the clock, this is the answer. This is the one.

KELLY: One minute.

ERDMAN: Thank you. So what I suggest is let's advance this to Select. Give me an opportunity to distribute this information so you can read it for yourself. And let's make a decision based on facts and not on what someone wants to do for their leisure time. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you so much, Mr. President. Thank you to Senator Erdman for his comments this morning in regards to this measure. I said it last week when we had this measure up and have said the same off the mic and to constituents, that I want to be very transparent in regards to my position. I do not see Senator Erdman's amendment as a hostile amendment. My primary goal in moving this forward is that we stop changing our clocks twice a year, which I think is a goal that many of us support and many of our constituents support and many Americans support, as evidenced by public opinion poll. Then the, the question becomes, if we agree on that goal, how do we do it? LB143 recognizes a gradual process under federal law wherein states can select to stay on standard-- to stay on permanent daylight saving time or they can immediately decide to move to standard time, as our neighboring-- as our-- as Arizona and Hawaii do, other states in this regard. If we choose the gradinal-- gradual approach allowed under federal law and as evidenced in LB143 as introduced and advanced-- it would require that three adjacent states to us make this selection as

well. And Senator Erdman's exactly right. Colorado and Wyoming have already done so. Perhaps there may be additional movement in those states as we are in deliberations ourselves. But that is the, the current legal landscape. And then it would also require federal approval. So it is a more regional approach. It is contingent upon actions in our sister states, our adjacent states, and it is contingent upon federal approval. So to be very clear: I think we're all aware of the partisan dysfunction that has crippled our nation's capitol. And I am deeply concerned about waiting around to make the change. That being-- that's why I like the approach Senator Erdman has brought forward as an alternative idea to stop moving our clocks twice a year, which I think definitely has negative impacts for health, safety, conservation, parenting, energy, economic and otherwise. So that being said, it's the-- I'm not sure 100% if Senator Erdman is going to withdraw this at this measure so-- at this stage of debate so that we can move forward and keep working on it or if he wanted to take a vote on FA207 at this stage of the debate. But I will enjoy working with him and others in the process regardless of his decision on this amendment today. Additionally, colleagues-- I'm going to probably run out of time-- but I, I have two additional pieces that I want to make sure to be clear about. Senator Dorn asked me in initial debate, and others have asked off the mic, what's the significance of changing the dates as evidenced on the committee statement? And I may have muddled the water here in the first go-around. We are simply updating outdated dates that are, are in our statute books. There would be no change to our existing seamless practice wherein we all-- all states that recognize this time change make our time change simultaneously twice a year. So in regards to that component, there is no change in practice. It is simply about adjusting the dates to mirror federal law that are outdated in regards to our statute book. So I, I wanted to be clear about that point. Finally, I know that--

KELLY: One minute.

CONRAD: --each of you-- thank you, Mr. President-- have received legitimate and important concerns from stakeholders in the golf industry and perhaps even the broadcasting industry that do bring forward important considerations in our deliberations. Those were subject to the public hearing process. And those leaders worked very closely with the Government Committee to advance the measure. I think that they are very concerned about making Nebraska, quote unquote, an outlier or an island if we were to elect to adopt Senator Erdman's amendment because they would see it as potential impact on broadcasting services and recreation services that Nebraskans may not

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be thinking of as we would implement this change. So I will make sure to give a fuller and more complete voice to some of those--

KELLY: That's your time, Senator.

CONRAD: --concerns so everybody is aware of them. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Conrad. Senator Erdman, you're recognized to speak.

ERDMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. You know, it's kind, kind of ironic when we mention that we don't want to be an outlier. We're already that way. We're the only state with a unicameral. So those arguments don't hold a lot of water. But as I said, use whatever argument you can when people don't agree with you. So the American Academy of Sleep Medicine has stated the following: End the switch and support permanent standard time. Every year, we make a switch between standard time and daylight savings time when we "fall back" in November and we "spring forward" in March. This annual switch is quite simply not good for our health. The data clearly shows that the abrupt, abrupt change to standard time and daylight savings time to March is associated with significant public health and safety risks, including increased risk of adverse cardiovascular events, mood disorders, and motor, motor vehicle accidents and crashes. But we don't want to listen to the medical experts. We want to listen to the media or the golfers or whoever else is going to be infringed upon about changing the time. I think we should be concerned about the health of our citizens. It goes on to say: It is critical that we enact legislation to get rid of the switch between standard and daylight savings time. The other issue that we need to consider is we could switch to standard time at any time and make it permanent without approval from Congress. But we will need, and other states will need, approval from Congress to make that switch. Congress had daylight savings time enacted back in 1973 as standard-- as year, year-round daylight savings time and repealed it in 1974. So if you think at any time in the near future that Congress is going to get you approval to go light saving-- go to daylight savings time, I think you are mistaken. It says: However, permanent daylight saving time is not the answer. Instead, we should move to permanent standard time. Current evidence supports the adoption of year-round standard time, which aligns best with the human biologic-- biologically and provides distinct benefits for public health and safety. This position is shared by more than 20 medical, scientific, and civic organizations, including the Academic-- the American Aca-- Academy of

Sleep Medicine, American Academy of Neurology, American College of Chest Physicians, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, National PTA, National Safety Council, Society for Research of Biological Rhythms, and the World Sleep Society. And it goes on to talk about other associations that are opposed to daylight savings time. And so I ask you today, give us a green vote on FA27 to get it to Select so that you yourself can review those things that I just described to you and do the research yourself to figure out that what we're doing is better for the well-being of our citizens. So we are so concerned about being-- having it be light after we get off work. If that's the case, open your business or go to work at 7:00 and get off at 4:00. But what we're doing now is dangerous to our health by changing the clock twice a year. So what I'm asking is let's fix it once and for all on something we can do today and not have to wait for years and years and years of Congress to make a decision. It's very simple. Do you want to make it more healthy for the citizens that we represent or not? If you do, then you need to vote for AM-- F-- FA207. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Mr. Clerk for an item.

CLERK: Mr. President, pursuant to the Speaker's agenda, the Legislature will take up Senator Murman's motion to suspend Rule 3, Section 14 to permit scheduling of a public hearing on February 5, 2024 by the Education Committee.

KELLY: Senator Erman-- Murman, you're recognized to speak.

MURMAN: Colleagues, I'm asking you to support my motion to, to suspend Rule 3, Section 14. This rule requires seven days notice for a scheduling of a public hearing. On Friday, my staff was busy preparing for our hearings this week, and we adjourned as they were printing the hearing notice for February 5. By suspending this rule, the Education Committee will be able to give notice for a public hearing next Monday with six days notice and we will not have to up our hearings needed per day to 13 in the Education Committee from the 10 we have now. I ask for your support of this motion.

KELLY: Members, the question is the adoption of the rule suspension to permit a public hearing. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. This will take 30 votes. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 35 ayes, 0 nays on the rule suspension, Mr. President.

KELLY: The motion is adopted.

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CLERK: Mr. President, pursuant to that rule suspension, the Education Committee gives notice of public hearing. Mr. President, items for the record. Name adds: Senator Erdman to LB1035; Senator Murman, LB1084; and Senator Conrad, LB1263. And a priority motion: Senator Kauth would move to adjourn the body until Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adjourn for the day. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. We are adjourned.