

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office

Floor Debate February 4, 2026

Rough Draft

IBACH: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the twentieth day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Murman. Please rise.

MURMAN: I'm bringing a prayer today from my son-in-law who is Southeast Regional Director for Christian Medical Dental Association. I think it's the second time I've used it, or the third time I used this, so let us pray. Lord God, creator of all things, we give you-- we thank you for this privilege to speak to the true and living God. This morning we confess that you are real and that you hear our prayer, not because we are important, but because Jesus Christ has opened the way to God by his sacrificial death. We speak to you this morning because you can do wonderful things, which we cannot. We ask your blessing and protection on these leaders who venture out into an often hostile public square in order to help their fellow man and to defend those who can't defend themselves. Thank you for each person here who is working hard to give others a better life, a life more closely aligned with your design for us. You are the true source of light, and you alone give wisdom. From your mouth come knowledge and understanding. We ask that you graciously let a ray of your light penetrate the darkness of our understanding. Left to ourselves, we are so easily confused and misguided. We ask for your courage for them to stand up for what is honorable, true, and just, despite the many evil forces at work in this world. You are the only great and awesome God and we love you and serve you. May we go forth in your name, in your love, and in your power. In Jesus' name, Amen.

IBACH: I recognize Senator Clouse for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CLOUSE: Colleagues, please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. 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.

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

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

IBACH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Are there any corrections for the Journal?

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CLERK: I have no corrections this morning, ma'am.

IBACH: Thank you. Are there any messages, reports, or announcements?

CLERK: There are, Madam President, amendment to be printed from Senator Spivey to LB441. That's all I have at this time.

IBACH: Thank you. Senator Fredrickson would like to recognize the doctor of the day, Dr. Steve Williams from Omaha. Please stand and be recognized. Now we will proceed to the first item on the agenda. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Madam President, first item on the agenda, LB669, introduced by Senator Storer. It's a bill for an act relating to abortion; it restates legislative intent; eliminates defined terms; changes requirements for voluntary and informed consent; changes requirements relating to civil actions; harmonize provisions; repeals the original section. The bill was read for the first time on January 22 of 2025 and referred to the Judiciary Committee, that committee placed the bill on General File. When the Legislature left the bill, Madam President, pending was the bill itself as well as a motion from Senator Hunt to bracket the bill.

IBACH: Senator Hunt, you're recognized for a 1-minute refresh on your bracket.

HUNT: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. To refresh on the opposition to LB669, I have concerns that we are opening up abortion statute in a post-Roe America, and that I'm not convinced that we have a pressing enough reason to do so. A big part of the controversy of this bill is that it puts OB-GYNs into abortion statute for the first time. And with this bill being introduced without the consultation of the Nebraska Medical Association, without consultation with the physicians that this bill affects, I think that we need to pass over this bill until we have the opportunity to have an amendment that satisfies the concerns of physicians who are affected by this bill. All of us in this body share the goal of LB669 on its face, which is making sure that people in Nebraska are safe.

IBACH: Time, Senator.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President-- Madam President.

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IBACH: Thank you, Senator Hunt. Senator Storer, you're recognized for a 1-minute refresh on LB669.

STORER: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning. I just want to go back and clarify what LB669 does and what it does not do. Excuse me. LB669 requires screening for coercion, abuse, and trafficking, which research has shown women who seek abortions are often experiencing. It ensures that a pregnant woman who visits an abortion clinic seeking an abortion be given the number of the-- for the domestic violence and human trafficking hotline and an opportunity to make a confidential phone call. Some have tried to make this into something it's not. This is a human trafficking and domestic violence bill. It does not create a barrier between a woman and her doctor. Instead, it places a safeguard between a woman and her abuser. This bill should be a bipartisan solution to providing women in crisis a safe way out and an opportunity to find freedom--

IBACH: That's your time, Senator.

STORER: --and healing.

IBACH: Turning to the queue, Senator Fredrickson, you're recognized to speak.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. So this is actually my first time speaking on this measure. I haven't had the chance to get up on the mic yet, but I have been listening to debate closely and considering the proposed measure I think Senator Storer has a thoughtful approach here, I think certainly we have a shared goal around the general idea behind the bill. But I've also been spending the last couple of days consulting with physicians in physician groups and providers and the folks that are actually going to be directly impacted by, by this legislation. And, as of last night, I spoke with some of the stakeholders in the physician groups and, as of last night, there was still opposition to this bill. For those reasons, I find myself having a hard time supporting that, and I want to talk a little bit about, you know, I think this bill has become a little of a, I don't know, it feels like it's sort of an arms race in here a little bit, and and I think that there has been some discussion in here about what it looks like to negotiate in good faith and what the amendment process looks like, and I think that there's been some, how do I say, like, I guess concern that, that might not be happening, whether that's on the proponent side, whether that's on opposition side, I've, I've heard it

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spoken to, to both ends. And, you know, one thing that has been a little frustrating to me is that, you know, this is our third day debating this measure and we're talking a lot about collegiality in how to build trust with our colleagues through a process of making better legislation and, yet, we have the question being called repeatedly. I'm pretty confident the next speaker in the queue will probably call the question on this. And, again, that is something that I will just say, this is the third day debating this bill and I have been trying to speak on this bill, especially from my experience on HHS and consulting with NMA, other physician groups, related to their concerns. And from my conversations with them, they believe there could be a path forward with an amendment, they just haven't been engaged in that way. So that's the side of the story that we're not really hearing and that's the side of the story I think is, is a bit concerning here. I also want to say that, again, the effort here is noble, but to say that this is not a partisan bill, I think we need to be very clear, we are living in 2026 in America. We are living in a post-Roe America right now. Any time you touch abortion statute, it becomes political, period. There is no trust around that statute because there is no safeguards in place for the country behind that. And so that's something that we all need to think about in here when we bring legislation that touches that statute and specifically legislation that hasn't consulted physicians. The physicians are the ones that are going to be impacted by this. And I fear what's happening right now is that everyone's kind of dug in, everyone's in their corners here, and it's becoming less about what's the best policy, how do we actually protect women in these situations, and how do ensure that we can come to a solution that engages all stakeholders that moves forward in a way that's productive and, and, and actually, you know, accomplishes the goal of the, of the legislation. And instead it's becoming more about well we just have to pass something, let's just get something passed. Doesn't matter, let's just pass it, pass it, pass it, pass it, pass it. There's no award for passing the most bills. Traditional conservative mindset might say passing more bills is not actually the best thing in the world. That makes bigger government. So let's be thoughtful and ensure that the bills that we are passing are taking into consideration the key stakeholders, that they're actually accomplishing the goals that they want to accomplish. And that just because it's on the agenda, doesn't mean we still can't pass this. But we can take a pause and get the language that accurately accomplishes the goals. We can work in good faith and we can come to a solution. I would like to see something like LB669 pass in a way that is agreeable to all the stakeholders. And I believe the

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introducer probably wants that too. But I think that we're a little blinded right now.

IBACH: That's your time, Senator.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Thank you, Senator Fredrickson. Senator Bosn, you're--

BOSN: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. I rise not to call the question, but to affirm my strong support for LB669 and Senator Storer's genuine efforts to try to pass meaningful legislation. Yesterday, there were a lot of things being said, none of which were true, so I'd like everyone to pull out LB669 and look at it in its introduced form by Senator Storer. She had seven cosponsors on this bill, four of which are on the committee, one of which is Senator Rountree, who has now changed his vote and is no longer supporting this legislation. So to say that there are disingenuous things being done by calling the question while you are actively preventing her from getting to an amendment that she mistakenly thought might secure additional votes is the absolute definition of gaslighting. Colleagues, page 9 of this bill is where it really talks about the meat of what this bill does. It ensures the privacy of the pregnant person. No, her abuser will not be sitting in the room while she's asked these very intimate and personal questions, and everyone who has two co-functioning brain cells knows that. The question that she will be asked is, have you been the victim of interpersonal or domestic violence? Something everyone in here claims to care about. Have you been the victim of human trafficking, including sex trafficking? Something everyone in here claims to care about. It then goes on that if she answers either of those questions, very personal and difficult questions, that she will be provided the opportunity and a phone number to make a phone call to the hotline to seek that help. There is nothing in here that prevents her from seeking an abortion or from, ultimately, making the decisions that she chooses to make. This is a lifeline for some of these women, and it is absolutely disappointing, and I'm very sorry for Senator Storer that she is unfortunately today going to learn that her amendment isn't going to get up, she's not going to have the votes, I anticipate, and I certainly want her to know that I support LB669 in its original form because I was a cosponsor and I support it as I stand here today. Thank you, Madam President. I would yield the remainder of my time to Senator Storer.

IBACH: Senator Storer, you're yielded 2 minutes, 42 seconds.

STORER: Thank you, Chair Bosn. I appreciate the fact yesterday something was said on this mic claiming that this bill didn't give women even the ability to be in a room away from their abuser. And I appreciate good debates. I can understand when we agree to disagree. I don't appreciate lying. It's a red line issue for me, quite honestly. Because page 9, line 5 specifically says, "in a place and manner that ensures the privacy of the pregnant woman." And I will tell you that's language that I specifically, intentionally asked to be in this bill for that very reason. No woman is going to answer yes to any of those questions if she is in the room with her trafficker or her abuser. So we have made a very clear, specific provision that she not be. Be very-- and, again, I'm going to, I'm going to say it, I'm going to keep saying it, but this is a bipartisan bill. And any one of the 49 of us that choose to vote no or present, not voting, which we would all agree is a no, you're voting to prevent a woman from getting help at a juncture that she most needs it. You're voting against that young woman who potentially is in a traffic situation, and this may be her one shot. Somebody's daughter, maybe somebody's wife, somebody's sister. And if you don't think this is happening in Nebraska, then you have your head buried in the sand. Human trafficking is on the rise. Domestic violence is on rise. Almost every week, we see another headline of some tragedy as a result of human trafficking. And there was a comment made, I think, by another individual yesterday that this is just too, this is just too downstream. As if there's any point that we think it's too late to help a woman. There is no point that it's too late to help a woman.

IBACH: That's your time, Senator. Thank you, Senator Bosn and Senator Storer. Senator Spivey, you're recognized to speak.

SPIVEY: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning, colleagues and Nebraskans that are joining us. I wanted to kind of-- to reframe and, again, appreciate the dialogue that we've had over the last couple of days on this bill. And I, I do agree that the issue in front of us around sex trafficking is bipartisan. It does not matter your political affiliation, where you live. I think that everyone wants to try to address the complex nature and the epidemic that we see around intimate partner violence and sex trafficking. Yes, that is a nonpartisan issue. The question in front of us and where the debate intention is sitting is around how do we get there? What is the right set of policies in order to address this issue? And for me that's where my comments in the debate is happening. I appreciate Senator Storer on bringing this bill. We have had conversations off the mic around amendments, a number of things. That doesn't mean that we'll

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always agree to get there, but we have had that discourse and good faith and I think that's what's continuing to happen, at least from my purview. So I just want to make sure I kind of reframe that the question is around the policy, not the intent of how do we support victims of sex trafficking and domestic violence. As it relates to this bill, the, the content and crux of how we are talking about sex trafficking and domestic violence is in reproductive coercion. That's what this bill is about and wanting to address. And so, again, I want to go back to the definition from the leading national experts that define reproductive coercion and abuse are behaviors intended to maintain power and control in a relationship by dominating a partner's reproductive and sexual health. So reproductive and sexual health is a spectrum of care. That includes access to birth control, that includes access to testing, whether it's your OB appointments because now you are pregnant, how you get pregnant, what does that look like? Your reproductive health are a number of things. And this bill is only focused on a specific part of reproductive health, which is access to abortion care, which specifically the experts in this research that I uplifted said that groundbreaking research into the effects of people turned away from abortion care showed women who terminated pregnancies caused by violent partners were more likely to get free of the abusive relationship. They go on to say in this research how important access to abortion care is for that person navigating that abuse, whether it's sex trafficking or intimate partner violence. And so the concern is around this bill that it's not looking at reproductive coercion in totality and that doctors and providers are already doing this. There was an email yesterday that I would uplift again from Dr. Kinyoun, who I have the opportunity to work with in my professional setting around maternal and child health, who is also the chair of Nebraska ACOG. And she specifically uplifted that it is problematic that we are putting OBs into abortion statutes. So that is, again, one technical concern about the bill and where this lives. And there is no amendment that I have seen that changes that by any means. And it also talks about that there are a number of providers that are offering support within the reproductive care spectrum that are not listed. And that they are already screening for these types of instances. Specifically, she goes on to say in the letter that Senator Hunt passed out yesterday to folks that finally in practice, we also see people being coerced to continue pregnancies and not have an abortion too. So, again, the bill does not touch on people that want to end that and terminate that pregnancy, that they're being forced to. It only focuses on the abortion side, which our experts and our doctors have said are problematic. And so, again, I just want to uplift that this is not

personal. I appreciate Senator Storer's intention. I agree with the intention. I am not there on the process of the bill. I think where we are in the statutes for where it sits, I think the language and amendments that have been offered and discussed and compromised off the mic in good faith are not there yet and do not answer the concerns of the people that are responsible and on the front lines. And I think this debate and the structure of that is using our rules in this space to do and have this conversation. We saw this on a number of bills already in the body this year, and so--

IBACH: That's your time, Senator.

SPIVEY: Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Thank you, Senator Spivey. Senator Andersen, you're recognized to speak.

ANDERSEN: Thank you, Madam President. I rise in opposition to the bracket motion, in full support of LB669, and yield the remainder of my time to Senator Storer, if she wants it.

IBACH: Thank you, Senator Andersen. Senator Storer, you have 4 minutes, 45 seconds.

STORER: Thank you, Senator Andersen. Thank you, Madam President. I just have to decide what, what part of the discussion to really address here. When we talk about-- I'm going to take you back to the history of this bill in committee. The conversations at that time, the concerns of my colleagues in Judiciary, Senator Rountree and Senator DeBoer, had to do very specifically with whether or not this screening would-- why the bill did not include this screening for women at their first obstetric appointment. I worked with Senator DeBoer, we had very good dialogue with that, and at that time she told me she didn't know if there was a path to make that work that the NMA would agree to. And that's where that conversation ended. When this bill got scheduled, I spoke with Senator Spivey. I listened to Senator Hunt. Their concerns were the same. This provision didn't apply. The bill didn't include a provision for women to be screened at their first obstetric appointment. I said I'm open to that. I agree that women, women can also be abused and controlled through pregnancy. And if we're here to protect women, let's do that. There was also concern-- the second concern brought to my attention had to do with the intent language, that perhaps it was not statistically accurate. I agreed to that. My amendment takes that language out. That was the last concern that was

brought to me. And from that point forward, I've heard colleagues say that somebody's working on an amendment. My amendment's up. It's, it's-- you can read it. I filed it in direct response to those concerns. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh has an amendment that she's not spoken to me about. To my knowledge, there is no other amendments being worked on. So that's all somehow this flash and whatever. Just-- nobody has come back with a counter offer. So there comes a time where it's very disappointing. I operate in good faith with people. I'm reasonable. And I have done that, I don't feel like I've been treated the same. This is-- has the opportunity. This should be a bipartisan bill, and I just want to make, make that really clear. Last year, we had one, two, three, four bills that had to do with sex trafficking and abuse: one introduced by Senator Eliot Bostar that passed, one introduced by Senator Bob Hallstrom that passed, one introduced by Senator Wendy DeBoer that passed, one introduced by Senator Carolyn Bosn. 50-50. This year, we have more bills to do with domestic violence: Senator Bosn, Senator Bostar, Senator Hallstrom, myself, Senator Prokop, and Senator Spivey. This is one of those bills. This changes nothing about how a woman accesses an abortion or services that she may want. It changes nothing about that. This puts a provision in that we provide a screening at that juncture to ask if she is being abused, trafficked, or coerced. This bill is an anti-human trafficking, domestic violence, coercion bill. This bill is no different than these others. It's just that some people don't like the statute that we're putting it in.

IBACH: That's your time, Senator. Thank you, Senators Andersen and Storer. Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you so much, Madam President, and good morning, colleagues. I am glad I'm in this position in the queue because I want to contextualize where we're at. And if you look at what Nebraska has done, in many instances, on a leading edge in an absolutely bipartisan way to identify, combat, and reduce the scourge of human trafficking, you can see a considerable legislative history and a considerable bipartisan effort to accomplish [INAUDIBLE], starting back in 2006, then in 2012, in 2015, in 2020, in 2021, in 2024, in 2025, go back and look at that legislation, go back and look that framework, those efforts were bipartisan. They were supported by DV groups, they were supported by law enforcement, they were supported by faith groups, they were supported by civil rights groups. Go back and look at the context. Look at the existing statutory framework and look at the committee statements on that legislation. Then, friends, compare that to the committee statement for the measure before us, LB669. There is

not a diverse chorus of voices from law enforcement, from domestic violence groups, from civil rights groups. What we see on the proponent list, and to be clear, each of these proponents has the right to petition their government for change as they see fit, and I support that right. But the committee statement is an admission. This is a lineup of local and national anti-choice groups, period: Catholic Conference, Family Alliance, Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, Nebraska Right to Life, Innocence Freed, Guiding Grace Motherhood Support Network. That's it. You don't see the same support as you typically do on bipartisan efforts to combat trafficking which exist and are strong and can and should be continually improved. But that stands in sharp contrast to proponents' narrative and the legislative history on other domestic violence issues and this issue as well. Additionally, when you look at the report that the Attorney General's Office puts out annually detailing resources available to address human trafficking, best practices, tips, trainings, and resources to get information into the hands of more people in law enforcement, in the legal system, community advocates, service providers, and specifically including, therein, medical and mental health professionals across the state taking a coordinated, multidisciplinary, and highly trained approach to human trafficking. You can see in the 2025 report, the Attorney General specifically lifts up medical response to human trafficking. Specifically lifts up individuals trained including medical professionals across the state. You can also see, when you look further into the report on 2025, the Attorney General's report lifts up specific legislation they believe that would be beneficial to continuing this multidisciplinary, bipartisan approach to addressing human trafficking and domestic violence and therein-- and the intersections therein. They specifically identify LB172 from Senator Hardin, LB383, LB78 from Senator Bostar, and there's no mention of this bill. That's from the Attorney General's task force on human trafficking in relation to specific pending legislation that's critical to continuing our strong bipartisan work, which we've done in this Legislature since 2006 on human trafficking, on domestic violence, on ensuring Nebraska remains at the cutting edge of doing all we can to address this scourge in society. And that deep work, that multidisciplinary work, means that we want to address this and we want to give survivors more than a poster with a phone number on it. We want to have a victim-centered approach that doesn't target reproductive health providers, that doesn't lean into junk science put forward at the committee hearing by these ideologically focused groups. That's what a bipartisan effort looks like.

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IBACH: That's your time, Senator.

CONRAD: That's what a victim-centered approach looks like. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Madam President. Well, I rise in support of the bracket motion and opposed to LB669. I appreciate everything Senator Conrad was just talking about, and, and I agree. And I, and I do, you know, hear the folks who feel very strongly about pursuing a bill like this, and I think that there are, you know, people who are-- truly want to do something about the plight of people who are being sex trafficked. And that we should be providing effective services. And I think Senator Conrad really hit the nail on the head there is that there are advocates who are dedicated to doing this work and they have lots of suggestions and bills that they have brought in that vein and that would actually provide a meaningful relief to folks who are being trafficked. And so I think there is an honest effort to try to solve the problem. And the, the issue with this bill is that it, it doesn't do that. And I, and I talked about this a few other times on other bills, is that I think we too often get ideas that we think look good and that we, we are directed at a problem and, in the end, that they are sort of window dressing. We say we've done something about this issue and now we can move on to the next thing, you know, and I think that that's my-- that's the problem with this bill. That was the conversation we had about the other sex trafficking bill as well. And in the conversation about that bill, we were able to constructively find a way to improve that bill and make it have a little bit more teeth in it and ensure that folks are taking more action and being proactive and responsible about actually providing protections and relief to victims of sex trafficking. And so there's, obviously, when you get into the area of reproductive health care, it is very fraught and political. And so you have to have a very-- you have to navigate it. And you do need to work with people who have subject-matter expertise. As I think-- it looks like Senator Hunt circulated yesterday, this letter from Dr. Mary Kinyoun from the Nebraska Association-- Nebraska American College of Obstetricians, OB-GYNs, and is practicing, and the letter expresses the doctor's concerns about what this bill does. And I won't go back into that letter because I think others have read it already, but what's an indication is that the people who are actually providing this service, the people who are actually standing up for these folks and bringing ideas are not in support of this bill, and so that's a red flag in terms of what the

actual-- this bill is going to accomplish or what it's intended to do. So I support the idea of giving meaningful relief and protections to victims of sex trafficking, but I also support not injecting ourselves into legitimate medical decisions and conversations between women and their doctors, and I think we should rely upon the expertise of these medical professionals, which is why I think we should talk to those folks before making these decisions. How much time do I have, Madam President?

IBACH: 1:29.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK, 1:29. I did want to just quickly touch on the analogy I used yesterday I didn't quite get to flesh out, so I've heard a lot of people pointing to statistics as justification for, like, how these interactions go, and it did jump out at me that, like, you can massage statistics, you can obfuscate and direct them in a certain way, and so I use this example that, that I'm fond of, that I've recently discovered that there's, you know, one Pope in the whole world. And so that's a clear statistic. And you could say there's one world and there's one Pope. But when you put it on a scale of the Vatican City is 0.1-- 0.2 miles, and if you say how many Popes per square mile in Vatican City, there's five Popes per square mile in Vatican City. So you can adjust the perspective of the statistics to give you a different answer than what is the true answer if you reflect that statistic. So I'm just saying using that as an example of be very careful when you're citing general statistics and what it actually tells you and relying upon those. So in the interest of comedy being the, you know, the fellow feeling of the place, I'm going to yield the remainder of my time to Senator Bosn and if she would like it.

IBACH: Thank you, Senator. Senator Bosn, you have 19 seconds.

BOSN: Thank you, Madam President. I'll be very brief. I owe Senator Rountree an apology. I misspoke. He did cosponsor and then take his name off immediately, and he came and told me that information. So I think the only right thing to do is to correct my wrong and make sure that everyone is aware that I am sorry, Senator Rountree, and I am sincere in my apology. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: That's your time. Senator Dungan, you're recognized to speak.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. I do rise today in favor of the bracket motion and still opposed to LB669.

I appreciate Senator Bosn also making that comment. I think we can all be cordial with each other, obviously. And I certainly know I've said things on the mic that are unintentionally incorrect, and I appreciate it when we correct ourselves. So I think that this conversation today continues to be good. I've been impressed, I guess, over the last couple of weeks that the majority of conversations we've had in this body have been productive. We've been able to have debates. We've been able to have conversations about bills that we do or don't support and come to some consensus when it is possible around an amendment and around language. But when it's not possible we continue to debate and push back on bills and the votes sort of fall where they are. I mentioned this yesterday, but I'll mention it again, the first filibuster that we had this year was one against, really, Senator Wordekemper's bill, which was seeking to provide that cancer or the workers' comp to firefighters with cancer. And there was pushback on that. I supported Senator Wordekemper's bill. I still support Senator Wordekemper's bill. But the opposition to that was unyielding. My understanding is that bill was passed over in an effort to continue to work on it. I haven't heard where we are on that, obviously, we have a lot of things going on all at once. But the opposition to that bill continued to push back and was saying they were going to take it the full 8 hours at that point in time unless something changed. That's how this works. And so, certainly, I have heard things on this floor that have frustrated me. Certainly, I've heard things on this floor that I have found personally offensive over my time in the Legislature. But I try very hard to keep an even keel because I think it's important that we do that and I think that it's very important to the folks of Nebraska that we continue to debate the issues and I try personally very hard to debate what's on the board and to talk about the issues. I understand that what we're talking about here, obviously, is a very heated topic and a lot of what we do talk about in the Legislature touches very personal parts of lives and, certainly, I think everybody in this Legislature cares about survivors of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking and want to do everything we can to support them. And so where we often differ is in our approaches. And where we often differ is in whether or not the bills that are before us actually seek to achieve the goal of, of supporting those folks. And so a reference was made yesterday to a bill that we had last week that pertained to liability shields or a portion of the bill pertained liability shields for hotels or other entities that negligently allowed human trafficking within their four walls. I was adamantly opposed to that. I was adamantly opposed that provision. There was, ultimately, some work that was done in an

amendment to, I think, massage or change some of that language in such a way that it would, ultimately, help some of those survivors. But at the end of the day we had a very long conversation on that bill about whether or not we were actually supporting survivors. And I think what frustrates some folks, and I've heard this from constituents, is when we as a Legislature do something that we say helps people, but it doesn't actually help them, that performative aspect of trying to lend a hand. And, and it's across the political spectrum. This is not a left or a right issue. But in politics, in general, the public gets angry when they see us as elected officials saying we are helping and not actually following through with what it is that we're helping about. And so I think LB669 is well-intentioned. As has been mentioned multiple times, I think Senator Storer has worked on this bill in earnest. I do not think that it is a Trojan horse for anything. I don't think that it is seeking to, to necessarily undermine our current laws in a way that might be nefarious. But I do think that the bill is problematic. And so I stand opposed to the bill out of a belief that if we're going to be addressing the issues of human trafficking and domestic violence, that there are ways that we can do that to prevent that and to continue to help the survivors that does not open up medical professionals to the possibility of additional liability. That we can help those individuals in ways that prevents the problem. And, yes, we can continue to help those individuals, even as has been pointed out, downstream and upstream. It's about all of the help across the board. I just am concerned that LB669 is doing it in a way that is problematic. I'm concerned that it opens up these abortion statutes, and I think that addressing human trafficking and domestic violence is vital. I just think there are better ways to do it. One of the things I know that's difficult this session is the budget. We have a \$471 million budget deficit, and that makes it hard for colleagues of mine to pass bills that are important.

IBACH: That's your time, Senator.

DUNGAN: And I still think we should be able to help out. Thank you, Ms. President-- Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Clements, you're recognized to speak.

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Madam President. I stand in strong support of LB669 and in opposition to the bracket motion. I was looking at testimony for the hearing for LB669 and I'd like to read a paragraph which I think summarizes this bill. It says that LB669 ensures that women who are in an abusive situation are offered a way to safely

receive help to get free from coercion, abuse, and especially trafficking. It ensures that the pregnant woman is given phone numbers for the domestic violence and human trafficking hotlines and the opportunity to make a confidential phone call. This is a commonsense bill which is not a burden to the providers but can be a great help to women in crisis. And I thank Senator Storer for bringing this. I would yield the rest of my time to Senator Storer.

ARCH: Senator Storer, 3 minutes, 50 seconds.

STORER: Thank you, Senator Clements. There was a discussion about who testified at the hearing and that there was, there was no one there that had worked with, with survivors and just want to make a correction to that. Actually, there was. Julie Shrader with Innocence Freed provided testimony in support of LB669. And I just want to share a little bit of her testimony. She said: I'm here to speak on-- in, in support of LB669. And her name, again, is Julie, with Innocence Freed, founder of Restored Wings, and Executive Director of Innocence Freed. For over 13 years, I've worked alongside survivors of human trafficking, exploitation, and abuse. Today, I am here before, this is Julie's words, here before you, not only as a survivor or an advocate, but as someone who's walked alongside these survivors, women and girls who have been silenced, manipulated, and stripped of their choices. I have sat with survivors that have told me that they were forced or pressured into an abortion by traffickers, abusers, or even their family members who were trafficking them. Many were never given full information about the procedure or the risks. They were not even given another option, nor were they asked if they could be. A no vote or a PNV on this bill is a no vote to those women. We are not changing a thing about how a woman accesses an abortion. And, and this idea that this is adding a chore to a doctor, doctors take a Hippocratic Oath to care for patients. So I, I find it insulting that the idea that they would ask a woman if she needs help is considered a chore. These women are not a box to check. These are lives. These are women who need help. This shouldn't be a hot topic. This is not an anti-abortion bill. This is a pro-women bill. This is an anti-domestic violence bill. This is an anti-human trafficking bill. And a no vote or a PNV is voting against an anti-human trafficking, domestic violence bill, don't call it anything different, because that's what this bill is. So I ask for your green votes for cloture, which we're coming up against here, and I ask your green vote for LB669. Thank you.

ARCH: Senator Storm, you're recognized to speak.

STORM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is, this is not a complicated bill. Anybody that's got up and said that this is complicated, it's not. This is very simple, commonsense bill. If a woman goes to an abortion clinic, she could be screened to see whether or not she's being sex trafficked and given an opportunity to call a hotline number. That's all this is. Any physician that's against that, I would not go to that physician. I can't believe for a second that anybody would say we can't do that. We're going to oppose that. And anybody who's going to vote against this, I would take notice because in 5 minutes we're going to vote, we're going to vote for this and you're going to all get to see who's going to vote for and who doesn't. I think all of you should take notice of that. I know there was some pressure on Senator Storer to pass over this bill. We weren't going to pass over it. We're going to see who is going to vote for this and all of you can sit there and watch. This is very much a pro-women bill. So if you are not going to vote for this bill, what's that saying? And I want everybody that watches this on TV and everybody in this room to look at that. This is the Unicameral. Everyone says we all work together. You're going to see how partisan this is right here on this vote. And in about 4 minutes, we will, we will find that all out. And I just-- you know, when I came down here last year as a freshman senator, they said you'll sit here and you'll watch-- you'll sit on the floor and you'll see bills and you will see what you're up against. And a lot of it's nonsense, a lot of it is very frustrating, and this is one of those times. And this is completely a pro-women bill. And that's all I can say, but I'm going to yield the rest of my time to Senator Storer here if she'll do that. Thank you.

ARCH: Senator Storer, 3 minutes, 10 seconds.

STORER: Thank you, Senator Storm. I don't think it's any surprise where I stand on, on the issue of protecting women. I have another bill that is creating higher penalties, very similar to Senator Prokop's bill, to help prosecute people that commit violence against women appropriately. So that's downstream, I don't know, this is, this is upstream. I will work at every juncture to work to protect women and to put an end to human trafficking. This bill, again, does not create any barrier between a woman and her doctor. But if you vote no, you're agreeing to put a safeguard between a woman to put-- not put the barrier-- let me rephrase that-- between a woman and her abuser. LB669 puts a safeguard between a woman and her abuser. Voting no is voting against her. You're voting for the trafficker. You're voting for the abuser to make it easier. That may sound harsh, and I'm not, I'm not trying to be disrespectful, but, but I do believe in being

honest. And I believe in calling things what they are and what they're not. And so I am prayerfully hoping that everybody takes a deep look into your conscience when you press that button because there's women out there today. Somebody said, I think it was said by Senator Conrad, well, we just don't need to put up a poster. You're right, Senator Conrad, because women that are in these situations are very unlikely to initiate the action to get help. Statistics show that they need someone to initiate asking them if they need help, and that's what LB669 does. It's not a poster, there's nothing in the bill that says poster. They are asked by their doctor in a private place away from their abuser if they are in a domestic violent situation, being trafficked or coerced, and if they say yes they are given a private space to make a phone call to the hotline, and I am more than willing to continue to work on ways to strengthen the services that are offered to her at that point. I am 100% open to that because I agree we, we need to keep doing more. The argument is, does it do enough? Is the, is the, is the juice worth the squeeze? Come on, we're talking about lives. We're never going to get to perfect, but be careful you don't pass up good for perfect.

ARCH: Time, Senator. Mr. Clerk, you have a motion on the desk.

CLERK: I do, Mr. President. Senator Storer would move to invoke closure pursuant to Rule 7, Section 10.

ARCH: Senator Storer, for what purpose do you rise?

STORER: I would like a call of the house and roll call vote.

ARCH: There has been a request to place the house under call. The question is, shall the house go under call? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays to place the house under call.

ARCH: The house is under call. Senators, please record your presence. Those unexcused senators outside the Chamber, please return to the Chamber and record your presence. All unauthorized personnel, please leave the floor. The house is under call. Senators Hallstrom and Andersen, please return to the Chamber. The house is under call. Senator Andersen, please return to the Chamber. The house is under call. Senator Andersen, please return to the Chamber. The house is under call. All members are now present. Members, the first vote is

the motion to invoke cloture. There has been a request for a roll call vote. Mr. Clerk, please call the roll.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Senator Andersen voting yes. Senator Arch voting yes. Senator Armendariz voting yes. Senator Ballard voting yes. Senator Bosn voting yes. Senator Bostar voting no. Senator Brandt voting yes. Senator John Cavanaugh voting no. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh voting no. Senator Clements voting yes. Senator Clouse voting yes. Senator Conrad voting no. Senator DeBoer voting no. Senator DeKay voting yes. Senator Dorn voting yes. Senator Dover voting yes. Senator Dungan voting no. Senator Fredrickson not voting. Senator Guereca voting no. Senator Hallstrom voting yes. Senator Hansen voting yes. Senator Hardin voting yes. Senator Holdcroft voting yes. Senator Hughes voting yes. Senator Hunt voting no. Senator Ibach not voting. Senator Jacobson voting yes. Senator Juarez voting no. Senator Kauth voting yes. Senator Lippincott voting yes. Senator Lonowski voting yes. Senator McKinney voting no. Senator Fred Meyer voting yes. Senator Glen Meyer voting yes. Senator Moser voting yes. Senator Murman voting yes. Senator Prokop voting no. Senator Quick not voting. Senator Raybould voting no. Senator Riepe voting no. Senator Rountree voting no. Senator Sanders voting yes. Senator Sorrentino voting yes. Senator Spivey voting no. Senator Storer voting yes. Senator Storm voting yes. Senator Strommen voting yes. Senator von Gillern voting yes. Senator Wordekemper voting yes. 31 ayes, 15 nays on the motion, Mr. President.

ARCH: The motion to invoke cloture fails. I raise the call. Mr. Clerk, for items.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Reference report from the Referencing Committee concerning approved references of a gubernatorial appointment. Additionally, new A bill, LB365A, introduced by Senator Quick. It's a bill for not relating to appropriations; appropriates funds to aid in the carrying of the provisions of LB365. That's all I have at this time.

ARCH: Senator Guereca would like to recognize some guests. They are a group from Nebraskans for the Arts who are attending the Arts and Culture Day and they are located in the north balcony. Please rise and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do hereby sign LR333 and LR334. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, General File, LB807, issued by Senator Ibach. It's a bill for an act relating to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment; it changes the administration of Noxious Weed Control Act from the Department Agriculture to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment; redefines the term; requires the administration of a grant program, restates legislative intent, and changes provisions relating to the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force under the Noxious Weed Control Act; prohibits the payment of administrative expenses and salaries for state agencies from the Water Resources Cash Fund; eliminates obsolete provisions relating to the Noxious Weed Cash Fund; harmonize provisions; repeals the original section. The bill was read for the first time on January 7 of this year and referred to the Agriculture Committee. That committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Ibach, you're recognized to open on LB807.

IBACH: Mr. President, good morning. Today, I'm here to ask for your support for LB807 and AM1828, a white copy amendment which will become the bill. Because of that, I will limit my comments to the amendment which has been a collaborative effort between the Department of Agriculture, the Department for Water, Energy, and Environment and my office. For background on this issue, in 2007 the Nebraska Legislature adopted LB701, which appropriated \$5 million in general funds to help control invasive vegetation in Nebraska's waterways. Plants such as knotweed and phragmites spread like wildfire in our waterways and out compete other plants for water and nutrients while restricting water flows, thereby placing our own water use in our state's water compacts at risk. For example, years ago the Republican River was clogged by phragmites. At one point, it was so clogged, it only allowed 300 cubic feet per second of water. After the adoption of LB701 and mitigation efforts, the river now handles around 1,100 cubic feet per second. While this was a success, phragmites and other invasive weeds remain in our waterways, and while we will never be free of them, our mitigation efforts are working and any interruption in those efforts can prove damaging. Due to the lean budget years, funding for this program has waned with only \$353,000 in grants being appropriated last year. Over time, funding has been reduced while the program's usages have been expanded. AM1828 seeks to address this issue. With the adoption of AM1828, we will be expanding eligible uses for the Water Resources Cash Fund to allow the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment to provide grants to weed management entities. This will help provide consistent funding in these efforts without a General Fund appropriation. While grants could be provided to mitigate-- in

mitigation of other species that are primarily land based, such as salt cedar and leafy spurge, priority on who will receive these grants will be given to applicants that are subject to an interstate compact or decree, like the the Republican River and Platte River. AM1828 also keeps the underlying Noxious Weed Control Act under the administration of the Department of Agriculture. With the adoption of AM1828, the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture are both in support of LB807. I believe this change will address the long-- the issue long term as proponents of this program will no longer have to ask for General Fund appropriations. And I fully trust the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment to be good stewards of the Water Resources Cash Fund to ensure its viability going forward even with this expansion because to Nebraska water is life. I would also like to note with the adoption of AM1828, the underlying fiscal note will disappear since we are not appropriating funds with this amendment and we are not asking for a transfer from the Water Resources Cash Fund to fund this program, but we are simply expanding the uses it can be used for. With that, I thank you for your time and I ask you for your support of AM1828 to LB807. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: As the Clerk indicated, there is a committee amendment. Senator DeKay, you're recognized to open.

DeKAY: Thank you, Mr. President and fellow colleagues. Excuse me. The Agriculture Committee amendment is a white copy that strikes the original sections and becomes the bill. The amendment narrows the purposes of the bill to transfer only the riparian vegetation management program to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment. The amendment in effect retains administration of the remainder of the Noxious Weed Act with the Department of Agriculture. AM1282 [SIC] strikes a provision of Section 2-958.02 which creates the Noxious Weed and Invasive Plant Species Assistance Fund within the Noxious Weed Act to authorize grant assistance for projects to address weed issues. Subsection (4) currently creates a subcategory of grants exclusively for projects that address invasive and congestive riparian vegetation that impair the efficient conveyance of the stream flow and contribute to nonbeneficial consumptive losses. The amendment strikes this provision from the Noxious Weed Act, but inserts a similar authority to assist riparian vegetation management projects through the Water Resources Cash Fund administered by the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment. Section 4 specifically provides that projects for riparian vegetation removal that improve stream flow conveyance and acquisition of equipment needed for that purpose are eligible for

grant assistance from that fund. Eligible sponsors of such projects include natural resource districts, county weed control authorities, and other weed management entities. The amendment provides that priority for grant awards is for projects within streams subject to interstate compact or decree. The amendment outright repeals two sections of the Noxious Weed Act that create the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force and assign its duties. The purpose of the administrative support of the task force by the Department of Agriculture was closely tied to the department's implementation of the riparian grant program. LB807 was heard on January 27. Representatives of the Natural Resources District, weed control authorities, and weed management areas, NACO and the Riparian Task Force and the Farmers Union appeared in support of the bill with the committee amendment. There was no opposition testimony. I appreciate Senator Ibach's leadership on this topic. I also appreciate Director Vinton of the Department of Agriculture, and Jesse Bradley, Director of the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment on their assistance in drafting this amendment. Both directors have indicated their support for LB807 with this amendment. The committee advanced LB807 as amended unanimously. I would move to adopt the adoption of AM1828 in advance of LB807 as amended. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Turning to the queue, Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I want to thank my friend Senator Ibach for bringing forward this measure and I-- generally, I think supportive of where she's headed with strengthening this important program, but I want to make sure that we don't lose some of the history and some of the additional issues that are intertwined with these issues. So a, a couple of things. I remember when my friend Senator Lathrop and Senator Tom Carlson worked to establish this critical effort in addressing water quantity and quality and establishing a really much more comprehensive statewide approach to water management. That was developed in careful consultation, of course, with our local partners at the NRDs, environmental entities, ag entities, what have you. And I'll never forget how hard he worked on that issue, how important that issue was to him, and how those two leaders brought that effort over the finish line. A deeply conservative senator from rural Nebraska joining together with a moderate progressive senator from the Omaha area to try and get the right funding and tools in place to address our state's critical water needs. And it's been really cool to see how that process has played out since that initial partnership and work.

And I have consistently heard from ag groups, from NRDs, that, that the funds, that the framework were making a huge difference. And I've had a chance to read many annual reports over the years that provide great statistics on the efficacy of these programs and even just crystal clear comparisons in terms of like a before and after photo rendition of how different landscapes looked before they received the support and resources and how they looked afterwards and what that meant in terms of advancing our shared goals in terms of water stewardship. So they've been pretty dramatic, and I think that's really an important program that has been put in place and has been used well. So then it was particularly bewildering when I started to get calls, sometimes anonymous calls, people who didn't want their identity necessarily put forward because they feared retribution for speaking out, but to start talking about what was happening under Governor Pillen's administration where they were inexplicably withholding funds, where they were sweeping funds from these very popular, very effective, very well-established programs that primarily benefit rural Nebraska. And they couldn't get answers as to why. They didn't know why these funds were being impounded. They didn't know why these funds were being withheld. They didn't know why these funds were being then perhaps swept. And it caused a great deal of consternation at the local level, and people wanted to make sure that that was-- that frustration and concern was filtering back up to state leaders to really raise a red flag on what was happening with this program under the Pillen administration. There's also interconnections in regards to this issue and important work with the environmental trust depletion that has also taken a hold in recent years. I think it-- some of the controversy perhaps first stirred under the Ricketts administration but has been particularly pointed and heightened in regards to the Pillen administration including, again, sweeps and holds on environmental trust dollars which put local projects into limbo, which have negative disruptions for local matching funds and which touch upon the important work of this task force and this project. So you can go back and start to look at the Riparian Management Task Force minutes where there are significant discussions about these issues over the last couple of years. You can look at--

ARCH: Time, Senator.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Conrad would like to recognize some special guests. They are eight members from the Blood Cancer United from Nebraska and elsewhere. They-- I hope they are located in the north balcony. Please

rise and be welcomed by your Nebraska Legislature. Returning to the queue, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Wow, my microphone was really high. Good morning, colleagues. I rise in support of LB807 and AM1828, probably going to be slightly repetitive on some of the things that Senator Conrad has brought up. So last year in the budget, we no longer funded noxious weed abatement through the specific program. There was a policy decision made that it could be funded through the Environmental Trust, which it can, that is true. But the Environmental Trust operates very differently than this dedicated cash fund. And so what we did essentially was require that they-- instead of having a dedicated pot of money that goes to that specific issue, they now have to go and apply for the money through the Environmental Trust granting process. And it is a competitive granting process. And it is not-- there aren't priorities laid out that they must fund noxious weed abatement. So essentially what we did is say, yeah, we think that we should be funding noxious weed abatement, but we're not going to give dedicated funds to it. And you can go through the process of the Environmental Trust and you can be denied. So-- and I think-- not a farmer, I do not represent an agricultural district. Unless you count my urban farm in my backyard that is supplied by seeds that my brother gets from the seed library every year and does my seed starters. So in that regard, I guess I'm an agricultural senator. Not really. I have three raised beds, so not a lot. But so anyways, noxious weeds is not something that I'm super familiar with, but I do recall, and it's been almost 8 years, but Senator Tom Brandt and Senator Myron Dorn took us out to their-- Senator Brandt's farm and we did a tour and I did not forget when you pulled out of the ground a noxious weed and talked about how invasive they can be and how important it is to stay on top of getting-- making sure that those things do not spread. And so we don't invest those resources. I can see Senator Brandt talking to Senator Hunt. I also remember Senator Hunt with maybe a machete cutting down some corn. It was, it was a day. So if any senator, rural senators want to take urban senators, just know 8 years later, it won't be forgotten. It will not be-- also, blessings to Senator Dorn for surviving. He and I were in a tractor together where he was letting me drive and it was a stick shift and I have never successfully driven a stick shift in my life. So we're both here just to tell the tale. It was very harrowing. Anyways, noxious weeds, I think that it's important that we have dedicated resources because it can be invasive and if we don't, it's sort of that pennywise, pound foolish concept. We need to invest in it. We need to stay on top of it

so that it doesn't become a bigger issue. And because we have had dedicated resources, the state has done a pretty decent job of mitigating the spread of these invasive, invasive weeds. And I'd like to see the shift back to a dedicated resource. I know-- I understand this is sort of a split of two different categories but progress is progress. So thank you to Senator Ibach and the Agriculture Committee for bringing this bill. Thank you to Senator Dorn and Senator Brandt for taking me on a tour years ago that apparently is reaping fruits in my own legislative policy mind today. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Clouse, you're recognized to speak.

CLOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the opportunity. And I would like to ask Senator Ibach if she has-- would yield to a question?

ARCH: Senator Ibach, will you yield to a question?

IBACH: Yes, I will. Thank you.

CLOUSE: Thank you, Senator Ibach, and I appreciate this. I do plan on supporting LB807 and AM1828. As I read through the bill and the amendment, it lists qualified applicants and it's, obviously, the NRDs and the weed boards, and so forth, but didn't include private entities. Can you give me an indication-- for example, if it's an ag producer and they would like to take something on themselves if they have a creek or a waterway running through their, their ground, would, would-- explain to me why they would not be allowed to do that?

IBACH: Well, thank you for the question. In the past, landowners have been able to apply for some of those grant dollars. But through this amendment, we have 12 weed districts, we have 23 NRDs that apply for those funds, and then they disperse them as they see fit. So you would have to apply through your local NRD.

CLOUSE: OK. Thank you. So through the local-- they, they can, it's just a different process, not through the [INAUDIBLE].

IBACH: That's correct, yes. Thank you.

CLOUSE: OK. Thank you. And I would also like to state that having seen the Republican River and, and when Senator Carlson from Holdrege was in the body a number of years ago, he was the driver behind a lot of these things. And it does work in not only just the weeds, but also what we see with the trees and, and things on these waterways. When

they're gone, there's a lot of water moving through and I think that's pretty apparent. So I appreciate you bringing this and I hope that we can continue funding the Water Resources Cash Fund through various avenues because I do think it has merit and I do plan on supporting both the amendment and the bill. Thank you.

ARCH: Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, if you go back and look at some of the concerns that emanated from the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force and look at their minutes over the last few years, you can see for example that there was great concern about the Governor's withholding and impoundment of these critical funds and how that was negatively impacting local projects. There is pretty significant discussion in some of those minutes and there was discussion about how the Governor's action in that regard withholding, impounding funds that we had appropriated, that we had appropriated for this purpose, because it was an excellent project, an excellent program. And with no authority, the Governor withheld funds that were appropriated for a critical program that benefits all Nebraskans, but primarily rural Nebraskans. And then it caused pressure and action on local NRDs to then have to increase their funding significantly to make up for the impermissibly withheld funds authorized by Governor Pillen without actual legal authorization. And it's not a one-off. This and other critical programs and other revenue streams and funding streams and appropriations that we have identified as the people's branch with the sole and only power of appropriation as clearly indicated and granted in the Nebraska Constitution has been thwarted by the Pillen administration's reckless fiscal mismanagement and it's hurting rural Nebraska. And I don't want to paper over that with this bill, which I know is trying to find a path forward because it's such a mess. And it didn't need to happen. I also want to make sure to lift up, because I've heard from ag interests, from conservation interests, from local governmental partners, including at NRDs, from economic developers, from housing, from human services providers, they, too, have found themselves similarly situated in recent years wherein Governor Pillen and his allies in the Legislature squandered a historic budgetary surplus and plunged us into a present and growing structural budget deficit. In order to paper over that, there has been countless sweeps from dedicated funds, including these programs and the Environmental Trust. And for that reason, I wanted to lift up the fact that I think we need to have a better, clearer handle on what's happening in these unprecedented budgetary times. I introduced LB1147 this very session to authorize our incredible State Auditor Mike Foley

to put out regular reports about how the Governor's Office was thwarting duly enacted appropriations by this Legislature so that we don't have to wait till the next biennial to know exactly who's not being funded with the votes that we took, with the bills that we passed, and we can start asking questions why and sooner, or push back, hopefully, with sunlight and transparency to stop the Governor's unauthorized actions in those regards. So want to lift that for members' attention. I have a few more substantive questions and comments about the bill. Hopefully, I can get them done in the next time at the mic and I appreciate your time and consideration. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Conrad, you are recognized to speak and this is your third opportunity.

CONRAD: Very good. Thank you, Mr. President. The other thing that I wanted to put on the record in regards to this issue is I'm just-- I'm not clear why we're moving a program that has worked well in the Department of Agriculture to another department. Both departments are code agencies. The Governor has considerable control over how they manage their operations and leadership. I personally am not aware of any deficiencies in terms of how the Department of Agriculture has handled its authority in regards to managing this program. And I actually have great confidence in their director and appreciate Sherry Vinton's great work. So it remains unclear to me why we're just simply moving authorization for this critical program away from its established home into a newly merged agency. And what peaks my curiosity and interest are quiet conversations, again, that I've heard a lot from ag interest over the interim period, that they're concerned that there's going to be an effort in this administration to merge agriculture into other state agencies. And there's a culture of fear that people have about speaking out about that. Everybody's for finding government efficiencies when we can. But we also need to honor and respect the fidelity of important agencies like the Department of Ag to continue their good work on programs like this. And, of course, they could do so through stronger collaboration with other departments if need be. But I do just want to put a marker down. Is this the first step towards a plan or a slippery slope to abolish the Department of Ag and move it to a different agency? I hope not, but I want to at least record that for the record. Additionally, if you look at the fiscal note for this measure that my friend Senator Ibach has brought forward, LB807, I think it's important to note that one of the bullet points does indicate that the measure strikes references to the Nebraska Hemp Farming Act. And that may seem innocuous, and perhaps it

is, but my good friend Senator Ibach has literally led the way to abolish or change the Nebraska Hemp Farming Act in an effort supported by the Attorney General to enact a ban on hemp, CBD, and THC products that are presently legal in Nebraska. So any time we're opening up that statute, any time there's a reference, therein, I want to make sure that we don't just move forward quickly without at least ensuring some sort of clarity that this bill is not meant to reinvigorate those past or future battles, but instead to address the unforeseen and unfortunate problems that the Pilleen administration has injected into this popular program that's critical for natural resources, water sustainability, partnership with conservation groups and local government, and now is being kind of moved around without any clear direction or reason as to why. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Hughes would like to recognize some special guests. They are seated under the south balcony. It is Tom and Dwaine Fosler from Milford, Nebraska. Please rise and be welcomed by your Nebraska Legislature. Returning to the queue, Senator Fred Meyer, you're recognized to speak.

F. MEYER: Thank you, Mr. President. Just a few comments. I was not really going to speak on this this morning, but after some of the comments that have been made about this issue I felt I had to just to clarify some. Again, I come from a rural area. I have my entire life, and I think I understand this issue much more than some of my friends who are senators from the city area. I don't think it's anybody's intention, the Governor's or anybody else, to water down, so to speak, the noxious weed bill. However, over the last number of years, there's several weed classes that have differentiated themselves from the rest of the noxious weed list. And those weeds are specifically adapted to riparian water areas, whereas the rest of the weeds that are listed on the noxious weed lists are not. So to confuse this with other attempts to change the noxious weed law is just not accurate. The department of water resources is much more attuned to the needs of managing those noxious weeds on those riparian areas than anybody else. That's their forte. And these weeds are exclusive to those areas. I don't find them growing on my Sandhills pasture or my [INAUDIBLE] pasture. They are exclusive to riparian areas. And the department of water resources, by its very nature, is much more attuned to handling those types of noxious weeds. So, to me, it's a real simple transfer of those weeds that grow in those areas to a department that is more attuned and has more expertise in handling those than others. That's all this is doing, nothing nefarious in my opinion, and I urge your support on this issue.

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Floor Debate February 4, 2026
Rough Draft

ARCH: Seeing no one left in the queue, Senator DeKay, you're recognized to close on AM1828.

DeKAY: Thank you, Mr. President. First, I'd have to echo what Senator Meyer just said. All this is is a shift to put the money in the subject-matter experts that can handle this program in the proper manner. So with that, I would ask for your support of AM1828 on LB807, and I appreciate your vote. Thank you.

ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of AM1828 to LB807. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 31 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the committee amendment, Mr. President.

ARCH: The amendment is adopted. Senator Ibach, you're--

CLERK: Mr. President, I apologize. Senator Ibach, I have AM1757 with a note that you would withdraw.

ARCH: So ordered. Senator Ibach, you're recognized to close on LB807.

IBACH: Thank you very much, Mr. President. And thank you for your comments. I appreciate Senator Meyer clarifying his position even-- as a, as a fellow producer and observation of, of the-- what this bill actually does. Thank you very much. With that, I would just say thank you to the 12 weed districts. Thank you to 23 NRDs that supported this. And thank you to my fellow Ag Committee members as well as Chair DeKay. I think this is good for Nebraska. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of LB807 to E&R Initial. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 33 ayes, 0 nays on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB807 does advance. Mr. Clerk, next item.

CLERK: Mr. President, General File, LB70, introduced by Senator DeBoer. It's a bill for an act relating to children and families; provides for adoption by a second adult person; defines and redefines terms; changes provisions relating to consent to adoption, home studies, terminology, child support and medical support, and the

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applicability of the Parenting Act; eliminates obsolete provisions; harmonize provisions; repeals the original section. The bill was read for the first time on January 9 of 2025 and referred to the Judiciary Committee. That committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments.

ARCH: Senator DeBoer, you're recognized to open on LB70.

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I am proud to be opening this morning on LB70, a bill which would allow adoption by a second parent-- adult person in limited circumstances. This is an effort that I have worked on all 8 years I've been in this office, and I'm glad that we're able to discuss it today. Second-parent adoption under LB70, as amended by AM1660, applies in a very limited set of circumstances, but passage of this bill will provide permanency and stability for multiple Nebraska children. To be eligible to adopt a child under second-parent adoption, all of the following must be true. The sole legal parent has consented to the adoption of the child by the second parent. The child has a parent-child relationship with the second parent. A parent-child relationship is the same standard we use in adult-child adoption. The child must be the biological child of the second parent. The second parent has not previously had their parental rights to the child terminated. And, finally, an adoptive home study has been completed for the second parent. This is a very limited proposal to allow certain individuals who are the biological parent, but not the legal parent, to adopt their own child and have all the legal rights and responsibilities that come with legal parenthood. LB70 does not change how many legal parents someone may have. The maximum number of legal parents someone may have in Nebraska is two, and that stays the same. It's about permanency and security for certain Nebraska children. So I urge you all to vote green on LB70 and the committee amendment, AM1660, which removed the Catholic Conference's opposition to the bill. I, of course, am happy to answer any questions you may have.

ARCH: As the Clerk indicated, there is a committee amendment. Senator Bosn, you're recognized to open.

BOSN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. AM1660 is the Judiciary Committee amendment to LB70. LB70, as Senator DeBoer pointed out, deals with what are sometimes called second adult adoption cases in which a child who currently has one legal parent may be adopted by a second adult who is not married to that parent. The committee amendment narrows the scope of the bill by adding two

important limitations. First, that the child must be the biological child of the second adult seeking to adopt. And, second, that the second adult must not have previously had his or her parental rights to the child terminated. These are narrowing provisions that ensure the bill does not create what some were concerned about being a new--- a broad new pathway for nonparent adoptions. Instead, this focuses on one specific circumstance, allowing a child to obtain legal recognition of a biological parent even when that biological parent is not married to the child's legal parent. Colleagues, during the committee hearing on LB70 we heard very compelling testimony from individuals and families who would be directly affected. First, we heard from Shilo Jorgensen, who is the biological parent of Landon, though, she did not carry her-- excuse me, she did not carry him, Landon, in her womb, she described the reality faced by families like hers, where a biological parent may be fully acting as a parent every day, but still lacks legal recognition and the legal protections that would come with it. At the same time, we had heard testimony from individuals who raised serious concerns about the broader impacts of a second adult adoption concerns about laws promoting stability for children, and we recognize that those were legitimate concerns. The family is the fundamental unit of our society, and policies that promote strong, stable families do matter, but at the same time we also know that not every family situation is the same or as simple. Our laws still need to promote fair and workable legal options for children and families in complex circumstances, especially when the consequence of doing nothing may be that a child is left without the security of having two legal parents, even when two biological parents are both present and functioning in that role. This issue has been the subject of difficult negotiations for Senator DeBoer for multiple years. So I do want to recognize her, as well as the stakeholders who have worked to address these concerns in good faith and with the committee. In my view, AM1660 to LB70 does strike that appropriate balance, and so I would ask for your green vote on this, on this amendment and the bill. It narrows LB70 to situations involving the biological parent and makes it clear that this is not a broader general second adult adoption. It is about a child's right to have legal recognition and the legal protections that come with it from their biological parent. For these reasons, I ask for your support to AM1660. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Bosn, you're recognized to close on AM1660, and Senator Bosn waives close. Colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of AM1660 to LB70? All those

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in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

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

ARCH: The amendment is adopted. Seeing no one left in the queue, Senator DeBoer, you're recognized to close, and Senator DeBoer waives close. Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of LB70 to E&R Initial. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 32 ayes, 0 nays on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB70 advances. Mr. Clerk, for items.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Your Committee on Enrollment and Review reports LB538 and LB538A to Select File, both having E&R amendments. Additionally, amendment to be printed from Senator Hughes to LB110, and notice that the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee will have an executive session today in Room 1507, immediately following their hearing. Government Committee, exec session, in 1507 following the hearing. That's all I have at this time for items, Mr. President.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, as it concerns the agenda, General File, LB877, introduced by Senator Hallstrom. It's a bill for an act relating to the Uniform Controlled Substances Act; designates certain substances as controlled substances; defines a term; corrects the spelling of certain substances; and repeals the original section. The bill was read for the first time on January 8 of this year and referred to the Judiciary Committee. That committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to open on LB877.

HALLSTROM: Speaker, members, I bring LB877 for your consideration today. The bill advanced out of committee and is an amendment that Senator Bosn will go over in just a moment. This is our annual update of the state-controlled substances schedule to conform to the federal-controlled substances schedule. We work closely with the State Patrol. My thanks to Celeste Laird at the State Patrol for all the

work that she puts in to make sure that we've got all of the updated state-controlled substance revisions to match those at the federal level. We're making some changes with regard to Schedules I and III, in particular, a number of areas with regard to Fentanyl derivatives and so forth. One of the things, and, and Senator Bosn may go into, or will go into more detail. You may have gotten some emails or received some emails regarding provision of the bill which is being removed having to do with the kratom bill, LB230, that we passed last session. That bill prohibited certain kratom derivatives containing 7-OH with more than 2% 7-OH alkaloid composition. The emails that we received, which is kind of a good reminder that always do a fact check on the emails that you're getting, they were concerned that we were going to criminalize or put in the federal-controlled or the state-controlled substance schedules some derivatives of kratom that were permitted under LB230. That was not the case, but subsequent to introduction of the bill, the State Patrol indicated to us that they would prefer that we wait on that particular substance because they do not have the equipment currently to be able to identify the substances that would be prohibited under that greater than 2% standard. So the amendment by the Judiciary Committee would accomplish that purpose. Again, we are simply updating as we do on an annual basis, and I would request your affirmative vote on both the committee amendment and LB877. Thank you.

ARCH: As the Clerk indicated, there is a committee amendment, AM1763. Senator Bosn, you're recognized to open on the amendment.

BOSN: Thank you, Speaker, members of the Legislature. AM1763 is the Judiciary Committee amendment to LB877, as alluded to by Senator Hallstrom. This amendment simply strikes the original Section 1 in its entirety, removing kratom, the 7-OH portion, in large part because there was some feedback we got that maybe that was opening doors that we hadn't intended it to open. I will also note that Senator DeKay has an amendment coming up to LB877, and it is my understanding he's going to be withdrawing that amendment since his bill, LB795, already advanced to Select File. Colleagues, I do ask for your support of AM1763 to LB877. Thank you, Mr. President-- Speaker. Excuse me.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Bosn, you're recognized to close on AM1763.

BOSN: Please vote green. Thank you.

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ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is AM1763, the adoption. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 27 ayes, 1 nay, Mr. President, on adoption of the committee amendment.

ARCH: AM1763 is adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have AM1818 with a note from Senator DeKay that he would withdraw.

ARCH: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, I have nothing further on the bill.

ARCH: Returning to the queue, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Would Senator Hallstrom yield to a question?

HALLSTROM: Certainly.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom.

ARCH: Senator Hallstrom, will you yield?

HALLSTROM: Yes.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. I apologize, I was distracted during your opening and during the committee amendment opening, but this-- does this create a new crime or does it expand an existing crime? Could you just give me a--

HALLSTROM: No, Senator, it simply adds the controlled substances that are at the federal level on the controlled substance schedule to those at the state level. It's more of an issue of local enforcement. We simply come in every year, we annually update this to ensure that state and federal are in conformity with regard to the controlled substances that are under the Schedule I, Schedule II, etcetera.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK.

HALLSTROM: It does not enhance any penalties at all. It simply adds substances in conformity with what the federal law has done.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. And so then-- thank you for that. So then the recent rescheduling of cannabis, will that fall under this as well at the federal level?

HALLSTROM: If, if that is adopted at the federal level, we will have the opportunity to take that up when we have our next annual update.

M. CAVANAUGH: Could we-- if it's-- honestly, I'm not as up to date as I should be on this, but if it was already adopted, then should we not just amend it into this bill between General and Select?

HALLSTROM: That would be a decision for the body.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. Thank you, and thank you for answering my questions. I, I apologize that I wasn't listening more intently to your opening. Thank you. I yield the remainder of my time.

ARCH: Seeing no one left in the queue, Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to close on LB877, and Senator Hallstrom waives close. Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of LB877 to E&R Initial. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 35 ayes, 1 nay on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB877 does advance. Senator Hunt would like to recognize some special guests. They are located in the north balcony. It is the Central High School Orchestra, 18 students and 2 teachers, and a very special guest, her daughter Ash. Please rise and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, General File, LB429, introduced by Senator Murman. It's a bill for an act relating to education; and provides restrictions involving professional employees' organizations. The bill was read for the first time on January 17 of 2025 and referred to the Education Committee. That committee placed the bill on General File, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Murman, you're recognized to open on LB429.

MURMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. LB429 is also called the Equal Access Act. It ensures that school boards do not pick winners and losers, but instead ensures any professional employees' association an equal opportunity. Under LB429, if a school board grants one professional employee association a certain privilege, such as access to school mailboxes, physical or electronic, access to bulletin boards, and ability to attend meetings such as a new teacher orientation, they cannot deny those same privileges to another professional employee association. There are currently multiple organizations for our teachers and education staff that provide the valuable tools of professional development and liability protection. But rather because of high cost, disagreement due to political donations, or general disagreements of point of view, one organization is not necessarily the best fit for every teacher. But when a school administration allows one organization to set up a table at its new teacher orientation while prohibiting other organizations to do the same thing, teachers are blocked from seeing all of these options. In some cases, teachers may not even know about all of the organizations that are available to them. This often isn't just for a lack of trying. The Education Committee heard from proponents who were deliberately blocked from school board after school board. By giving this favoritism to one organization over another, we do our educators a disservice. Under LB429, we allow all of the options to be laid out in front of teachers to decide what works best for them. The more options, the more competition, and the more information that we can lay in front of educators means the better they can make that decision. This is not an attack on any one particular organization because nothing in this bill takes away any of their powers. Instead, it simply ensures that any professional organization has the same opportunities. If no teachers decide to join other organizations due to this legislation, that's OK, but they deserve the right to be informed about all of them. To conclude, LB429 was voted out of the Education Committee on a unanimous 8-0 vote, and I ask for your green vote today. Thank you.

ARCH: As the Clerk indicated-- excuse me, there is no committee amendment. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I appreciate Senator Murman bringing this bill. I got in the queue because I thought that there might be an amendment filed, but it seems like maybe there's not an amendment filed. So just trying to catch up on this. Senator Murman, would you yield to a question?

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ARCH: Senator Murman, will you yield?

MURMAN: Yes.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Senator Murman. What would be some organizations-- I'm unclear as to what organizations are not able to participate. Do you have an example?

MURMAN: Yes, I, I think there's more than one, but the American Association of Educators is one example.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK, what do they do? I'm not familiar with them. What, what are they--

MURMAN: They provide liability insurance for teachers.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. And so this is-- I guess I'm not understanding. So is this organizations that-- it's giving teachers options on organizations that provide insurance?

MURMAN: Yes.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. And, currently, they're only allowed to go to one organization for that. I'm guessing like a collective bargaining type of organization, and this would expand their options beyond that?

MURMAN: Yes, it's a free speech issue. Some schools only allow one organization to have access to their teachers in certain ways.

M. CAVANAUGH: Do some schools allow more than one organization?

MURMAN: I, I believe some do.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. So you're trying to create parity across all schools in the state?

MURMAN: Yes.

M. CAVANAUGH: Is that accurate?

MURMAN: Yes, that's right.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. Sorry, I'm just trying-- you know, we're going through things fast this morning and I'm trying to figure out what-- the lay of the land. So, OK, I think I get where we're going with

this, and I appreciate you answering my questions. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Murman.

ARCH: Senator Hunt, you're recognized to speak.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues and Nebraskans. I've got no problem with LB429. I want to rise and recognize the students and the arts advocates that have come to their Nebraska Capitol today. It is so special to get to see your Nebraska Legislature in action and also to be, you know, in such a beautiful historic building that is also such an important part of arts history in our state. Built by Bertram Goodhue, famous architect. He also famously built the LA Library, but this is his masterpiece. And I hope that while you're here, you get some time to walk around and see the beautiful mosaics, and appreciate the history of this building. I want to confirm for all of you who are here for Arts Advocacy Day, our support of the arts, we know how much music education, arts education, humanities adds to a person's life, you know, everything is not STEM. Everything is becoming a little bit STEM, but we know that education in arts and literature and humanities is so important to having a well-rounded life and being able to appreciate everything that the world has to offer us. So I want to commend all of the students who are here who are committed to their arts education. I want to deeply thank the educators and staff who support them. And I encourage you to stick with it for as long as you can through high school, through college. And into adulthood continue to be an appreciator and supporter of the arts and support the people who are coming up next. It was definitely a very important part of my development. I don't think that I would be here if I hadn't had such a great arts education. And I, I want to welcome you all, thank you.

ARCH: Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning, colleagues. Sorry for the delay. I, like many members, getting up there in age and doing a lot of reading as part of this great, great honor to serve. I've got my close-up vision figured out, but I'm still a little fuzzy on, on the far away, so I wanted to make sure I was confining my comments to the right bill before us. So I wanted to add some comments to LB429. We've heard this measure or similar measures before the Education Committee during my last 4 years in service on that committee. And I wanted to at least share some of the committee perspective and discussions that we've had in executive session or with other stakeholders about our general approach to this. So on the one hand,

the first lens that I applied when this measure was brought forward that, in essence, seeks a sense of equity or parity for other professional organizations to have access to commons areas in schools or to communicate with teachers at schools. The first thing that I was thinking about, which is not an apples-to-apples comparison in regards to this particular measure, but I was thinking about the First Amendment approach that applies to how schools utilize their space when community groups or student groups want to utilize them. And paraphrasing, generalizing here for with purposes of time, essentially what the courts have found is that a school doesn't necessarily have to open its doors to student groups or community groups, but once it does decide to open its doors it has to open its doors to all on an equal basis. So that's why in my former work at ACLU of Nebraska, for example, we successfully fought as hard for students who wanted to peacefully express their perspective on racial justice as we did for students who wanted to establish a pro-life club at their, at their high school, at their institution of higher education. Because the First Amendment, of course, does not belong to any one point on the political spectrum, but belongs to all of us and must be vigilantly guarded by all of us, regardless of the messenger or the content of the speech. And that's something I'm very proud of in that past work and definitely believe in. So that was kind of the, the first thing that occurred to me when we were viewing this in similar legislation was, OK, how does this work out when it comes to the same questions of access or equity in terms of communicating with or discussing things with the employees, with the teachers in the building. And so then I started to learn more about how some of these avenues of communications are presently treated under existing practice and existing law. So, first of all, it became apparent that working through some of the practical experiences that the Nebraska State Education Association had, for example, is that, in many instances, they bargain specifically for the parameters to ensure that they can communicate with their members in an effective and efficient way through bulletin boards or break time or staff directories, mailboxes, etcetera. So that was an important learning for me. On the other hand, in one question that I've asked some of the additional professional organizations that are seeking this access or equity is why the existing structures that we currently have on the books are not sufficient to meeting their goals. It's undeniable that a staff directory for a public school is a public record and can be accessed by any individual or organization according to some specific parameters. So these professional organizations that are seeking

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access do already have access to staff directory information under our open records laws, under our public meetings laws.

ARCH: Time, Senator.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Guereca, you're recognized to speak.

GUERECA: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I wanted to stand up and really highlight, you know, earlier we had some guests in the, in the north balcony from the Nebraska Arts Council, talking about the amazing work that they're doing not just in my district which certainly, you know, does have the benefit of several theaters, opera houses, one of the one of 20 professional opera companies in the entire country, as well as various other amazing art opportunities, so definitely blessed to be able to represent them and stand up for them. But I really wanted to uplift the work that the Nebraska Arts Council really does across the state. One of my favorite hearings from last session was a bill dealing with the Nebraska Arts-- sorry, with the Nebraska creative districts and really the amazing work that they're doing in communities all across Nebraska providing opportunities that these artists otherwise wouldn't have. And really not just from a humanities perspective, but from an economic development point of view about the fact that the work that they do, the art that they, the music that they do, actually has an economic footprint in these communities, again, across the state. So the Nebraska art districts had 50 communities participating. They were able to uplift 34 new cultural festivals, 20 new or renovated cultural centers. They actually were able to help develop one new hotel. They leveraged that \$1.9 million in funding and actually saw a 46% increase in sales tax revenue on top of a 56% increase in lodging tax revenues. And I think they put it really well: Nebraska creative art districts equal increased tourism and jobs. And that's certainly the truth and, again, the numbers are there. And it's, it's really great to see-- and for those of you that haven't gotten your, your packet and your folder from the Nebraska art district, certainly from the, from the Arts Council, take a look, see if your communities are there. I figured that as the senator from downtown Omaha that I would have a creative district, I don't. And I think that goes to show the impact that this has across the state. 36, like I said, 36 communities across the state, and if you look, it really is every single corner of our amazing state. And, I mean, it's programs like this that we need to support, it's programs like this that, again, actually have an impact

in the lives of every Nebraskan to be able to enjoy the theater, to be able to enjoy the art, to the point where one of the programs that the Arts Council uplifts is the Veterans Arts Initiative and I'm just going to read little blurb that they have: We're in the midst of a national awakening to the power of the arts to promote wellness and mitigate the effects of trauma. In 2025, the Nebraska Arts Council was proud to support Beyond the Canvas, a mural project sponsored by At Ease USA. A group of service members, veterans, their families created a mural under the direction of the Nebraska Arts Council teaching roster artist Hugo Zamorano. We're looking forward to sharing photos from that and other service member focused residences. And really just-- and I was able to see some of those pictures, I believe, of some of the, the homes, veterans homes at the Nebraska veterans centers. It really is beautiful, it really is amazing. And, again, take a look at that packet that they passed around. Take a look at not just-- this isn't a humanities thing, this is absolutely an economic development theme. So with that time, I thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President, and I apologize. I think I misspoke at the very tail end of my last comments. I don't think open meetings laws necessarily come into bearing in this question of access for alternative professional organizations, but public records laws clearly do, so-- and would be available to professional organizations that want to solicit teachers or staff at educational institutions to avail themselves to their professional liability insurance, to their professional development opportunities, etcetera. So I'm still not 100% clear why the groups that are interested in communicating with the educators about those products aren't utilizing those avenues. The other thing that was brought to the committee's attention in looking at this issue was a general concern from schools themselves that once they opened up the floodgate, so to speak, beyond the carefully negotiated and bargained for communication logistics in regards to the recognized bargaining unit that it would be very challenging for them to get all of the time they needed on in-service trainings, on staff meetings, regular curricular update, and they were essentially worried about kind of a slippery slope approach where if any group approaches us now do we need to time on our staff meeting agenda to allow them to make a pitch? How does this-- do we have to allow any group that comes in to set up a booth for new staff orientation? Some of these kinds of questions and concerns that local schools when they had been approached by these professional development organizations just weren't quite sure how to handle, and in many instances not because of

any sort of viewpoint animus but simply because of a lack of time they couldn't afford a place on the agenda for regular staff meeting or staff orientation or back-to-school fairs or otherwise for every professional development group and particularly in light of how some of that is or has been carefully negotiated with the recognized bargaining units. So that just kind of practical concern was a through line at the committee level. So I asked our legal counsel at the Education Committee, who's doing a great job by the way, to see if he could help me dig in a little bit deeper to learn more about kind of Nebraska's current approach to this issue in terms of access to staff or facilities for alternative or competing professional development organizations and entities in contrast to the recognized bargaining units through NSEA or, or their locals or otherwise. Had other states taken up this issue, had the courts weighed in on this issue and he was able to help find at least two Supreme Court cases that provided some clarity on these questions about access and equity and provided, I think, some awareness for how the state should move forward in regards to these questions. So, again, generalizing for, for purposes of time on a complex legal issue, the two cases that were identified and were not previously known to me did seem to indicate that the schools didn't need to throw open the schoolhouse doors to any professional development organizations that asked. And that could have a specific relationship with the local bargaining units for specific purposes. Now, it also arguably and admittedly did not say in the case law that states couldn't act otherwise. And I think that's exactly what's at the heart of Senator Murman's legislation here that I know he's worked on for many, many years, is there's no prohibition on providing an equity in terms of access for other professional development organizations, but there's also no mandate required under the First Amendment or other aspects of law to do so. So that's a, a little bit about some of the practical concerns, a little bit about some of the legal issues that are involved in this measure and I see my time is up.

ARCH: Time, Senator.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr.--

ARCH: Senator Quick, you're recognized to speak.

QUICK: Thank you, Mr. President. And first, you know, I don't serve on the Education Committee, so I didn't-- you, know, really wasn't aware of this bill until just, just this morning, actually, and so, you know, I don't [MALFUNCTION], you know, what-- you know, who were

proponents or opponents, I haven't had the chance to look that up. But I know I've been hearing some concerns from some, some people out in the Rotunda that, that-- to make sure that this bill is going to actually-- it's not going to create consequences or unintended consequences. So I know-- you know, I work directly a lot with my, with my public school district. I haven't had the chance to even talk to them about this bill to see if it's something that, that, that they're aware of or something that concerns them. I know we have a lot of great teachers working and, and, and living in Grand Island, and it's not only just the teachers, but you have all the supporting staff. So you have all of your, your custodians, your, your people who work in the lunch rooms, everyone who works at the school. And so I know one of the concerns that was, that was brought to me that this legislation would narrow the who is, who is all represented or who all included in this, and so it'd be like creating a special legislation targeting a narrow group of people. So, so I'm going to guess it's basically just going to support teachers and it wouldn't support, like, your custodians and other staff and maybe that's something that needs to be defined. I don't know if Senator Murman at some point-- I haven't even had a chance to visit with him about it to see if there's any chance to make amendments to make this bill more acceptable, you know, I just don't know enough about the bill presently to make sure that I'm voting correctly on it and how it could affect people in my community. You know, I've talked about my work career where I, I worked at the power plant. So, you know, we always had, had-- and there's something that-- I know there was something brought up about contract negotiations. So we were IBEW, we would go in and negotiate on work issues, wages, benefits and things to that effect. You know, we always had the agreement with the city that whatever health insurance and whoever we picked to, to operate our pensions, we were-- that was within our contract that we would accept, you know, who, who-- you know, if the firefighters-- we'd all be on the same program just to make things simpler. So I think-- I'm looking at this and going, well, if not everybody's included within those-- some type of a, of a benefit or representation, then maybe we should make sure that that's going to happen. I know I've had a lot of great conversations with-- you know, just recently I met with our school, school, our school administration and one of the school board members at a luncheon and we talked a lot about issues that really are affecting kids in our school. You know, we have some bills in Health and Human Services that really affect kids and those are some of the things I'm really concerned about, how we're addressing issues that-- to make sure that our kids have the best outcome and receive the best

education and make sure we're doing things the right way. Sometimes we bring bills to the Legislature that really-- they don't really accomplish what they say they're going to do. So, you know, I think there's probably several of us that have talked about, you know, when we bring legislation, are, are we making sure that it's doing what we wanted to do and what's best for people in Nebraska, because sometimes we, we bring things and all of a sudden we realize we've created a barrier here for someone or we've, we've created something that's going to result in a lack of services for someone. So I just want to make sure that this bill is-- you know, really basically overall I, I, I don't, you know, besides the concerns I've mentioned, I don't know what else is, is in this, so I'm going to have to do some investigation and make sure that, that this is going to do exactly what we want it to do and be beneficial to people. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Rountree, you're recognized to speak.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, colleagues, and all of those that are watching across Nebraska. We welcome you this morning. I just rise to say I'm thankful for all of the teachers and educators that have been a part of my life. And as we debate this bill, looking forward to what we can do best for our teachers, I'm appreciative of the ones that have really taught me history. It worked out so great for me as I have traveled across the world and have an understanding of the places that we visited and their historic value. On Monday, Senator Spivey read our resolution for recognizing Black History Month. Many might not know, but we're living in history right now. We've debated AI bills. We've looked at the prevalence of AI. And if you do a Google search on how many in the history of Nebraska's Legislature, how many times have three black senators served together, you'll find that it hasn't happened by AI. Two at one time, but you are living in history because we have three that are serving here in this time. But I want to go back and just talk about our first African American legislator that served in the pre-Unicameral days here in Nebraska, and that is north Omaha's Dr. Matthew O. Ricketts. Dr. Matthew Oliver Ricketts was born 1858 to 1917, was Nebraska's first American-- African American legislator, serving from 1893 to 1897. He was also Nebraska's first African American doctor and first African American graduate of a higher education institution in Nebraska. Matthew Ricketts was born into slavery on April the 3rd, 1858 in Henry County, Kentucky. After the Civil War, his parents moved to Missouri where he finished school. He graduated from the Lincoln Institute in Jefferson City in 1876 when he

was 18 years old. He taught school in Boonville, Missouri, where his father was a minister for about 4 years before coming to Omaha. Ricketts' parents moved to Omaha at some point after that. His father, Reverend Richard Ricketts, became the minister of St. John's AME Church in the 1880s when it was located at North 18th and Webster Streets. In 1876, Ricketts earned a degree from Howard University. And in 1880, he moved to Omaha, working as a janitor at the Omaha Medical College at night, he decided to attend during the day. In 1884, Ricketts became the first African American college graduate and the first African American doctor in Nebraska. The Omaha Medical College eventually became the University of Nebraska Medical School. Ricketts has graduated with honors and moved to St. Joseph, Missouri for an internship in St. Joseph in 1884. He received his first medical license from the state of Missouri in 1886. Moving back to Omaha, Ricketts opened office to serve the city's African American community. He also ran for a seat in the Nebraska State Legislature that year but lost. Getting active in the community, he became President of the Afro-American League. In 1891, he received his second medical license from the state of Nebraska. Popular and charismatic, Ricketts quickly became a key leader in Omaha's African American community. In 1892, Ricketts ran for the Legislature and was elected as the first African American to the Nebraska House of Representatives when the body had two houses. Elected in the wake of the 1891 lynching of George Smith, he served two terms from 1893 to 1897. During his second term, he was temporary Speaker of the house. Serving the community determinedly, Ricketts is credited with opening Omaha's first African American firefighting company, securing appointments for African Americans in Omaha's city government and Nebraska state government, and serving throughout the community in philanthropic and service-oriented organizations. In Nebraska Legislature, Ricketts is credited with chairing several committees and temporarily chairing the body. Introducing a bill to legalize interracial marriages, which passed the Legislature only to be vetoed by the Governor. Introducing the bill to prohibit the denial of public services to African Americans. In 1893, Nebraska lawmakers passed a measure prohibiting race-based denial of services, strengthening the state's 1885 civil rights law. After being denied a federal appointment by the Nebraska State Senator in 1903, he moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, where he practiced medicine for another 14 years, and Ricketts died in St. Joseph on January the 15th, 1917, at the age of 64.

ARCH: Time, Senator.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much.

ARCH: Senator Guereca, you're recognized to speak.

GUERECA: Thank you, Mr. President. I-- you know, I'm looking at LB429 and, certainly, I plan on reading into it more and so I'm grateful for having a little bit of time to dig in a little deeper. Like happens so too often, colleagues, we, we were debating and had, had a long filibuster on one bill and then all of a sudden we speed through a huge tranche of bills on the agenda so just playing a little catch up. At a cursory glance of this, of LB429, there's definitely some things that stand out to me that are a little concerning. You know, collective bargaining and the ability to come for employees to come together, to have their will heard, to a voice in negotiations and safety in their workplace is an incredible part of, of, certainly, the, the fabric of American history. That's why I, for my entire life, have been really an active supporter of collective bargaining and, and unions and professional organizations that really do give individuals that voice, [MALFUNCTION], power in numbers. And, certainly, when, when you're going to the negotiating table, having been there before, it can be daunting. So there is that safety in numbers. So, certainly, I appreciate the work that all of our unions do across the state. And I think that sort of spawns some of the questions and the doubts that I have about LB429. I think the big thing that stands out to me is that it narrows-- so in statute it-- currently, Nebraska law talks about professional organizations, and what LB429 would do would be to narrow that to one that exists for professional development and liability protection, which is incredibly vague. And, really, unions do so much more than that. It also implies that student teachers are district employees, which actually contradicts existing Nebraska statute 729-875, which actually defines them as interns that are under district supervision. There's a reference to paraprofessionals in legislation, which actually there is no statutory definition anywhere else in Nebraska law. So that will leave what paraprofessionals is up to, I guess, a case-by-case interpretation. And what's interesting is that it does seem sort of narrowly focused at attacking one particular organization, that under the wording, one could argue that even the amazing work that our educators do, that the NSEA would not qualify because they do so much more than just professional development and, again, liability protection. Because they do so much more than that, right? And, and, and my concern is that LB429 really does undermine the amazing work that are educators, right, the right to collectively bargain, the right to have a workplace that is supportive, to have benefits that provide a dignified retirement. Those are fought for. That, that decent salary that is able to provide you, that Nebraska

dream is fought for. So I'm always leery of pieces of legislation that might interfere with that good life. Because at the end of the day, our hardworking teachers that, again, are in every corner of the state and every community that are the bedrock of our communities, just want that. They want a shot at a good and dignified life. So as has been my practice before, I will always stand up and, and question, and I'm not saying that's the intention of LB429, but, again, at a first glance, this to me could potentially weaken our teachers' ability to provide for their families, to be able to provide that quality public education that we're so proud of here in this great state. So, again, I look forward to the conversations, I look to reading more about LB429. Because, again, at the end of the day, I want to make sure that our teachers have what they need. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

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

DUNGAN: Thank you-- oh, thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, I do rise today, I guess, curious about LB429. This is one of those bills where, when it first came to the floor, I had a chance to look at the committee statement. And, obviously, when bills come out unanimously, that sometimes can mean something, and I appreciate the input of all the members of the committee. I've been in Banking exec for the last hour and a half or so, so I apologize for not being able to engage much in the debate earlier if I repeat some things that have already been said. But I read through the bill and I looked a little bit at some of the testimony and I just-- I have some concerns that I want to make sure are on the record or being addressed and I think Senator Guereca actually did a good job of outlining some of those broad 30,000-foot-view sentiments that I share. Taking that big picture approach and looking at this generally, I think that part of my concern with LB429 is that it is this continued, it seems like it's a part of this continued effort to demonize our teachers in the state of Nebraska who are simply trying to do their job, who I think many of us would agree have influenced our lives. Teachers when we think back to our childhood are often some of the most influential folks, and I think that whether you're talking to people on the left or on the right, everybody in this body seems to agree that teachers are doing one of the more important jobs that we have in our state. And they're doing that job, oftentimes, in a very thankless situation. They're doing that job in a very politically tumultuous climate right now where it's very difficult, I think, for teachers to feel comfortable and to feel safe, teaching their students about basic history or basic critical thinking, and certainly teachers are doing their job in a situation where money and finances are very tight. Since I've been in

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the Legislature for the last few years, myself and many of my colleagues have brought bills to try to better support our teachers. And whether that's through pay or through job security, I think that many of us understand that the people who are the boots on the ground doing this incredible work need all the support they can get from their government. Monday, I was actually invited to go speak to a, a class at my old high school, and I was invited to that class by my old teacher. It was AP GoPo, Government and Politics, and it's funny because I walked into my old high school and immediately had flashbacks to what it was like to be there back in 2006 at this point, almost 20 years ago. And I walked back to the classroom with my teacher and he's still in the same classroom that he was in when I took that class in 2006. We actually were able to pinpoint about where I sat in the classroom. But I was able to convey to that teacher how important the work he did was to me. And I, I, I don't know if I was even able to properly do that justice because when I look back on my time in high school, I look back on that class, in particular, among others, that had an incredibly impactful moment in my life. I was able to learn both about how government and politics worked, I was able to express my beliefs, I was able to change my thoughts and opinions because I was provided the environment in that classroom by that teacher to actually grow and to learn how to critically think. We all have stories like that, I'm sure. Everybody in here can think back to a teacher that changed their life or gave them that support when they needed it, or even just was a listening ear. And so when I think about what we as a Legislature can do to support our teachers and to support those who are the people who are the boots on the ground doing that incredibly important work, I think of ways that we can continue to make their environment as supportive as possible. My concern is that LB429 stems from a belief. That these organizations that are created in order to support teachers, in order to provide them the financial and legal supports they need to do their job, they're being demonized. And I think, oftentimes, there's this belief that these teacher organizations are like, you know, people in trench coats that are waiting around the corner to rough you up. These are your teachers down the street. These organizations are made up of Ethel, the teacher that you remember from back in the day. These organizations are made up of James, the social studies teacher that you had when you were 14 years old. These are not nefarious groups. These are groups that are trying to support some of the most hardworking, caring people that have affected any of our lives. And so I'm still listening to the debate on LB429 to best understand why we need this, but I do think that the intent behind the bill, whether explicit or implicit, is to

create a hesitance around these organizations that are simply created to make sure that people are getting support they need for doing one of the most important jobs that I think we all know is in the state. So with that, I'll continue to listen to the debate. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Quick-- excuse me, Senator DeBoer would like to recognize a couple of special guests. John and Patricia Mitchell from Omaha are located under the north balcony. Please rise and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Senator Quick, you're recognized to speak.

QUICK: Thank you, Mr. President. And, you know, I'm still trying to figure out what this bill is working on, trying to accomplish, and just making sure that we're doing the correct thing. And like I said before, I was a, a, a labor leader in Grand Island, we were IBEW, and having that voice at the table with the employers was really important. And I don't know that this bill really restricts any of that, but that's something we just want to make sure that doesn't happen, that you still have that ability to work with your employer on, you know, issues that teachers might be facing or other employees within the school system, make sure that they're getting the resources they need to be able to educate our children to the best of their ability. And I can tell you, as a labor leader, we, we worked directly with our employers on all areas, areas from safety to-- you know, of course, there was always the collective bargaining on wages and benefits, but there was more than just that. We, we talked to them about, you know, pensions, and when I was on the insurance committee we would, we would vet the vendors who would come in and bring up policy and, you know, wanted to provide insurance for all the employees in the city. So we'd get to sit down and, and really to interview all of these vendors that would come and be part of that process because, you know, the administration they were receiving the insurance benefits as well, the same benefits we had. But it was good-- and I was really glad that the, that the city of Grand Island allowed us to be part of that process because that insurance also affected us. So we got to help make some of those decisions on who our provider for the insurance would be, who would-- you know, what that insurance plan would look like, what things we would include or exclude in that plan. And that was really important for us to have that, to have that ability to do that. And so I know-- I don't think this probably has anything to do with those type of things, but, you know, I just want to make sure we're not crossing any boundaries that would, would take away any of that ability away from them. You know, I

can-- I still remember my kindergarten teacher, Miss, Miss Creech [PHONETIC]. And, actually, I remember all my grade school teachers. Of course, I went to a small public school. We were K-12. You knew everybody in the school, plus, you knew their families and you knew all the siblings that maybe were out of grad-- who had graduated, or who were still coming up to go into the school system. And I, I loved all my teachers. I can remember in high school one time, actually it was my senior year, I'd went to-- I'd written a term paper, I turned it in, and then I went to visit my grandfather in Arkansas and my aunt in Illinois, and when I got back, she had given me a, a grade less than what I thought it should be. So I, I did, I did get the opportunity to go in and talk to her, and she explained the reasons why, and, and, really, it was, it was about what I did. It wasn't about what she did. She did her job, and did it correctly, and she helped me understand that. And so I really admire what our teachers do, not just for, for what they did for me, but what they do for-- what they did for my children and what they're doing for my grandchildren now. And, you know, kids-- you know, even back when I was growing up, there were, there were kids who lived in poverty. There were kids that struggled in school. Well, I know I wasn't the top of the class in my-- at, at the school I went to. I always said-- I was in the top 10, but we only had 11 kids in our school. So I, I thought maybe I'd beat my friend out, but you never know. But, anyway, you know, I get to go to some of my grandkids, their programs now, and I get to meet some of their teachers once in a while. We just went and had lunch with both, both of our granddaughters here maybe, oh, maybe a month or so ago, and we got to go into the school, sit down and have lunch with them. We got to see their friends. They didn't sit at the same table with us but they, they told us who all their friends were there and they showed us who their teacher was and, and so it was really fun to be part of that. And I think really-- you know, if parents and teachers can all work together to make sure we're doing the best we can for our kids, I think that's so important for, for these kids to be successful and have good outcomes. So, you know, I'm still going to have to take a look and I'll, I'll go talk to Senator Murman, too, because I think there's some things maybe that we can address. I don't know, but at least we'll have the conversation to see if there's something that, that needs to be addressed in this bill. So thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Glen Meyer, you're recognized to speak.

G. MEYER: Thank you, Mr. President. You know, the most dangerous place for a speaker to be is between a group and lunch or dinner. So I'll

try to make this brief. I appreciate the debate and discussion today. One of the things, when we had our discussion in executive session, dealt with a matter of fairness and free speech. I had a conference call this morning with my districts, a number of my educators, some, some superintendents, school board members, that type of thing. And this was a bill that we did, we did touch on. And I didn't have any pushback with regard to having an, an alternative to the NSEA or any other professional organization being able to address folks in schools. And, and I think that's an important consideration. We can all have an opinion out here whether that's appropriate or not, but evidently in my particular district, it doesn't appear to be an issue, and we're back to that fairness and, and, and a matter of, of free speech. I think teachers and education is the key to anything we do in this state. Our K to 12 education, the excellence that we can provide there, we need to step up our game, obviously, but if we do a proper job K to 12 education, we will have a trainable workforce for the state of Nebraska and for those businesses that, that are scrambling and looking very hard for those-- that, that workforce. And by extension, the better wages, the better salaries, the better life that that will provide will keep fewer-- will, will provide for fewer people to be involved in, in our Medicaid programs and those types of things. So I think it all begins with education. Once again, I support LB429. I thought it was important that I should bring up the fact that I did not have any pushback in my district regarding this particular bill. With that, I yield the balance of my time.

ARCH: Seeing no one left in the queue, Senator Murman, you're recognized to close on LB429.

MURMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, I appreciate the discussion this morning, especially all of the support for the hardworking teachers and, and educators in the state. They're truly appreciated. I'd just like to emphasize that this bill did come out of committee 8-0 and also online we had 117 proponents and only 9 opponents. So a good count there online also. We will-- I'm open to continuing the discussion going into Select and I appreciate it again, and I'll ask Senator Conrad, is that something you would be open to?

ARCH: Senator Conrad, would you yield to a question?

CONRAD: Yes, yes, of course. Yes, to answer the question from my good friend, Senator Murman, chair of the committee, absolutely. I look forward to working with Senator Murman and other stakeholders on this. I think we've identified a really clear, clean path forward where we

just need to, perhaps, harmonize some of the existing definitions in relation to this bill and the labor relations sections of our, of our state code to make sure that there's no redundancies or inconsistencies. And just to, to be really clear here, this isn't about necessarily organizations that are, quote unquote, competing with the NSEA or that educational union, this is really more so about organizations that provide professional liability insurance, perhaps professional development in line with their faith or for other purposes that they want to share some of those products and services and an opportunity to associate with teachers that may actually complement what's happening in regards to the local bargaining unit in regards to working conditions and wages and compensation and safety, etcetera, etcetera. So they're not necessarily at competition with each other. And I want to lift up another example from Nebraska that may be familiar to folks. So over the years, for many instances, the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, NAPE/AFSCME, kind of had the umbrella for pretty much all state employees. In recent years, some of the Department of Corrections employees decided to organize and associate with the FOP, with the Fraternal Order of Police, as who the employees wanted to select to carry out their collective bargaining endeavors. So if, say for example, another union that was competing with NSEA, like AFT or something, American Federation of Teachers, were to come to Nebraska and wanted to make a pitch to teachers, that kind of access, that kind of pitch in the context of collective bargaining is all pretty carefully subscribed, restricted, listed out in regards to the National Labor Relations Act. So that's going to have a, a whole different posture to it if, in fact, the effort is to compete with the existing, the existing local bargaining unit which isn't really at play here. So I do think that we can harmonize the definitions. I'm excited to work with Senator Murman on that. We've had really good debate, and would ask for members' green vote so that we can do a little additional technical work on this to move it through this year. And we will do that between General and Select. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Murman.

MURMAN: And with that, I'll ask for your green vote on LB429. Thank you.

ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of LB429 to E&R Initial. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 30 ayes, 0 nays on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

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ARCH: LB429 does advance. Mr. Clerk, for items.

CLERK: Mr. President, items for the record: Notice of committee hearings from the Natural Resources Committee and the Revenue Committee; series of proposed rule changes from Senator DeBoer; amendments to be printed from Senator Ballard to LB771. Name adds: Senator DeKay name added to LB938; Senator Conrad, LB987; Senator John Cavanaugh, LR337. Finally, Mr. President, a priority motion, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh would move to adjourn the body until Thursday, February 5 at 9:00 a.m.

ARCH: Colleagues, you've heard the motion to adjourn. All those in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. We are adjourned.