

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office

Floor Debate February 11, 2026

Rough Draft

IBACH: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the Twenty-Fifth Day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Jared Storm. Please rise.

STORM: Thank you, colleagues. Please join me in prayer. Heavenly Father, today I lift up our leaders in government before you, knowing that you hold their hearts in your hands and guide their decisions. As they navigate the complexities of governance, grant them your wisdom to lead with integrity, justice, and compassion. Give them discernment to distinguish between right and wrong, and the courage to stand firm in the face of adversity. May they be filled with humility, recognizing the weight of their responsibilities, and seeking your guidance in every decision they make. Father, bless them with the empathy and understanding that they may-- that they may govern with empathy, and consider the needs of all people, especially the marginalized and the vulnerable. Help to bridge divides and foster unity among the diverse communities, working towards the common good for our nation. Guard their hearts from pride and selfish ambition, and instill in them a servant's heart dedicated to serving the people with honesty and sincerity. Surround them with wise counselors who will offer sound advice and support their efforts to govern justly. Lord, we pray for the protection over our leaders and their families, shielding them from harm, and guiding them in their personal lives as well. Strengthen their resolve to uphold righteousness and pursue justice, even in the face of opposition and adversity. Above all, may, may your will be done in the affairs of our government, and may your kingdom come to Earth as it is in heaven; may our leaders be instruments of your peace, justice, and love, in our nation and the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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

HALLSTROM: 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 Twenty Fifth Day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Senators, please record your presence. Roll call. Record, Mr. Clerk.

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

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

ASSISTANT CLERK: I have no corrections for the Journal.

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

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ASSISTANT CLERK: Yes, thank you, Madam President. Senator Hansen has amendments to LB1236; Senator Spivey has a motion to LB1156; Senator Lippincott has amendments to be printed to LB548; your Committee on Natural Resources chaired by Senator Brandt reports LB759 to General File with committee amendments; and Senator Rountree has designated LB839 as his personal priority bill. That's all I have, Madam President.

IBACH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We'll now proceed to the first item on the agenda. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, Transportation Committee-- Transportation and Telecommunications Committee would report favorably upon the appointment of Bradford L. Jacobs to the Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board.

IBACH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will now proceed to confirmation. Senator Moser, you're recognized to open on the confirmation report.

MOSER: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues and Nebraskans. The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee held confirmation hearings on February 2, 2026 for an appointment to the Nebraska Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board. The board's mission is to license and regulate dealers of motor vehicles, trailers, and motorcycles within the state. It's a ten-member, governor-appointed committee; the board members serve three-year terms. The chair of the board is the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Other members are split between one member of the general public, one new motor vehicle dealer from each of the three congressional districts, two used motor vehicle dealers, one trailer dealer, one factory representative, and one motorcycle dealer. Nine appointees have been approved by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee; our first nomination is for Brad Jacobs. He spent more than 20 years in the U.S. Army, and he serves on the Nebraska New Car and Truck Dealers Association Board of Directors. The Transportation Committee would appreciate the positive vote on the nomination of Mr. Brad Jacobs. Thank you.

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

CONRAD: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. I rise in support of the nominee, and it sounds like he has a stellar resume and background to serve in this position, and thank the committee for forwarding him to the full Legislature for consideration. I was trying to figure out exactly when to punch in agenda-wise in regards to relevance and germaneness, and this seemed like the right place, as it relates to committee business. I want to just note that, considering how we record our work, and considering that we've engaged in a, a rule change about corrections to the Journal and otherwise, there was

really no other place to do this, and there's no Education Committee bills on the agenda today. But I do just want to note that there is at least an error or aberration or inaccuracy in the legislative transcript from yesterday, wherein the Education Committee noticed an executive session that would be happening upon conclusion of the public hearings. All members who were a part of the public hearings were there and ready to work. That was noticed for purposes of compliance with organizing committee business, and also to give notice to the press, which has access, of course, to our executive sessions. Upon conclusion of the hearings, we were ready to commence with the executive session, and the chair asked the committee to stand by for approximately 45 minutes to an hour so that he could attend a press conference with the governor. We all understand that things change, that scheduling issues happen, that we're pulled in many directions as a course of our service, but I think the appropriate effort would have been either to cancel the executive session, turn the reins over to the vice chair, or provide notice to the committee when the chair realized there was a conflict with scheduling, because it does create an inaccuracy in our transcript, and it also kind of undermines the notice given to the press in regards to covering that business on behalf of the people. Legislative business is serious and important. We're a co-equal independent branch of government, and I'm not aware of any similar endeavor in my 12 years of service where legislative members were asked to stand by so that other legislative members could serve as a prop at a governor's press conference. Thank you, Mr. President.

IBACH: Mr. Clerk, for an announcement.

CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. Consistent with the Speaker's agenda, we will actually pass over this confirmation report. Instead, we'll take up the confirmation report for the gubernatorial appointment of Heath Mello to the State Highway Commission.

IBACH: Senator Moser, to open on the confirmation.

MOSER: Thank you, Madam President. So, we're going to switch gears here to our next nominee. The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee held confirmation hearings on February 9, 2026 for the-- for an appointment to the Nebraska State Highway Commission. The Commission's mission is to ensure public input on the development and operation of the Nebraska's state highway system. It's an eight-member governor-appointed committee; commission members serve six-year terms. Each member represents one of eight highway districts; the dist-- the director of the Department of Transportation serves as an ex-officio member. Heath Mello serves currently on the commission, and he also serves on the U.S. Strategic Command Consultation Committee and the Greater Omaha Chamber board of directors. The Transportation and

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Telecommunications Committee would request your positive vote on the nomination of Heath Mello. Thank you, Madam President.

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

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Madam President. Would Senator Moser yield to a question?

IBACH: Senator Moser, will you yield?

MOSER: Yes, I would.

M. CAVANAUGH: Senator Moser, why did we pass over the previous confirmation?

MOSER: I'm sorry, I didn't hear your question.

M. CAVANAUGH: Why, why did we pass over the previous confirmation report right before this?

MOSER: The Speaker's office said that there was a snafu in the Journal, that his name was not entered into the Journal in the right place, so we weren't really able to take that up today.

M. CAVANAUGH: OK. Thank you, I appreciate that. It wasn't stated, it was just passed over. So, thank you very much. I yield the remainder of my time.

IBACH: Thank you, Senator McCavanaugh [SIC] and Moser. Seeing no other discussion, Senator Moser, you're recognized to close. Senator Moser waives closing. The question is the adoption of the report offered by the Transportation and Communications [SIC] Committee. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Have you all voted? Mr. Clerk, please record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 39 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the Transportation and Telecommunications confirmation report, Madam President.

IBACH: The report is adopted. Mr. Clerk, the next item on the agenda.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. General File, LB771, a bill for an act relating to transportation: to change provisions relating to dynamic pricing used by transportation network companies during states of emergency declared by the governor; and to repeal the original section. When the bill was last being considered by the Legislature, it had before it the bill, as well as AM1948 by Senator Ballard.

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IBACH: Senator Ballard, you're recognized for a one-minute refresh on the bill.

BALLARD: Thank you, Madam President. LB771 is the bill out of Transportation Committee to establish dynamic pricing. Currently, under law, if a state of emergency is declared by the governor, dynamic pricing is, is banned from the entire state. This would flip the burden from an automatic opt-in to an automatic opt-out. So, with that, I'd take-- I'd appreciate your green vote, colleagues. Thank you.

IBACH: Mr. Clerk, for an amendment. Turning to the queue, Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr.-- Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. I have concerns about the bill as introduced, and I'm looking forward to the amendments that are pending and being negotiated because I think that strikes a better balance between recognizing that there's true emergencies wherein an executive needs to act swiftly, but not providing too broad of a grant of legislative authority to operate within the context of those emergencies, and it seems like there's thoughtful negotiations and amendments to try and strike a better balance in that regard. One of the issues that I wanted to pose for the record-- and I didn't have the opportunity to ever serve on this committee, so I-- I'm definitely not a subject-matter expert, but I was trying to discern whether or not there was a specific reference or definition to the emergency powers contained in the legislation, to know exactly what that referred to, or if again that needed additional refinement in regards to what specific definition of emergency or emergency powers we were seeking to alter or amend. And I know, for example, that Governor Pillen has been very active in issuing, issuing executive orders on a host of different topics, and I know many of them also declared an emergency for various purposes. Most recently, you might remember when there was a winter storm just a few weeks ago, the governor issued a very broad executive order in regards to managing power resources and otherwise during that period of time, and it extended pretty significantly over the course of many weeks. So, in trying to go back and do some research in that regard, to look at and inventory other executive orders that had been issued recently, to understand exactly the parameters and the timing and how it related to this measure, it also caught me by surprise when I see that Governor Pillen issued an executive order, number 26-04, literally last week on dynamic pricing, and I was wondering if Senator Ballard or Senator Mosers [SIC] or others involved in this legislation can talk about the interplay with this legislation in that specific executive order. Thank you.

IBACH: Senator Bosn would like to recognize the doctor of the day, Dr. Marlon Weiss of Lincoln, who is serving as our family physician.

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Please stand and welcome. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Ballard, you're welcome to close on AM1948.

BALLARD: Thank you, thank you, Madam President. 18-- AM1948 is just an emergency clause for LB771. I ask for your support, colleagues. Thank you.

IBACH: Colleagues, the question is, shall the-- shall AM1948 be adopted? All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 32 ayes, 2 nays on the adoption of the amendment, Madam President.

IBACH: The amendment is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, Senator Fredrickson would move to amend with FA967.

IBACH: Senator Fredrickson, you're recognized to open on FA967.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues; good morning, Nebraskans. So, I bring to you today FA967. I believe this is a friendly amendment; I spoke with Senator Ballard about this, and the language we have for this floor amendment specifically comes from NEMA, who originally brought the bill. So, I spoke about this on the mic a bit yesterday. My major concern with the bill as it was originally written was that, currently, we have this consumer protection in place that says, essentially, in a state of emergency, we want to ensure that Nebraskans are protected from being gouged with dynamic pricing in a state of emergency. The bill was saying that that is too broad because currently, the state of the emergency would apply the ban on surge pricing to the entire state of Nebraska. We agreed that this should be specified only to the area that is impacted by the state of emergency, so what this floor amendment does is that instead of an opt-in to a ban on the dynamic pricing, this still has that consumer protection piece that bans the dynamic pricing, but only specifically in the counties or subdivisions where the state of emergency is in fact declared. And furthermore, the other concern that was brought up was that sometimes state of emergencies take an extended period of time to close out, to pay the bills; this puts that in for seven days. So, this bans dynamic pricing for a seven-day period during a state of emergency in the specified county from, from which that state of emergency is declared. It also gives the governor the discretion to either increase that time period or decrease that time period, contingent upon what the actual emergency is. As we know, states of emergency don't always impact transportation, sometimes they do. But the reason I wanted to keep the automatic pause on the dynamic pricing was simply because of the consumer protection piece. When

there's an actual genuine emergency, the way this current law works is that that automatically is in place, it's statewide. That doesn't make sense; it should be more specified to where the emergency is. But we still do want to protect Nebraskans from price gouging in that state of emergency. So, I think this is a bit of some guardrails there that ensures that that consumer protection is still in place, A, and B, that it has a time frame on it that I think is appropriate, which is seven days. And again, the governor has the discretion to either increase that or decrease that, contingent upon the state of emergency. So, this is a serious amendment. I hope colleagues are open to supporting this. Like I said, the language came from NEMA, who originally brought the bill. I spoke with Senator Ballard about this this morning, and I appreciate his willingness to help make this legislation a piece that is both-- I think still fits the underlying intention of the goal, but also, it maintains that consumer protection piece for, for Nebraskans. Thank you, Madam President.

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

BALLARD: Thank you, Madam President. I, I, I want to thank Senator Fredrickson for, for working with-- giving me a heads up on this amendment, and, and NEMA for, for working with Senator Fredrickson on drafting a legis-- drafting an amendment that helps tighten up the language. I agree with the, the amendment. I just want to make sure that consumers are protected with the seven day. But I think really hits at the, the heart of our goal of taking this away from statewide, but also making consumers are protected, and also taking it out the-- easing some of the administrative burden on the agency to take this out of the proclamation. With that, I'd ask for your support on Senator Fredrickson's amendment. Thank you, Miss-- Madam President.

IBACH: Seeing no one else in the queue, the question is, shall-- the adoption of FA967. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 37 ayes, no nays on the adoption of FA967, Madam President.

IBACH: The amendment is adopted. Turning to the queue, Senator Dungan, you're recognized to speak.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. I do appreciate the back-and-forth we've had here today with regards to that amendment. As I stated the other day on Senator Moser's bill, I think this is why we have debate, and I think it's important to actually look at all of the various amendments that are offered, because oftentimes there are suggestions to improve bills in ways that I think actually help folks. I just wanted to punch in real quick and

mention a couple of things that were brought to mind by some of the conversation here. We've talked a lot today about consumer protections. For those who are avid watchers of the Legislature, you know that yesterday we talked a little bit on this bill, and I touched base a little bit on my bill that was in the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee yesterday, and also Senator Guereca's bill, both of which, at their heart, were consumer protection measures. Senator Bosn also had a, a bill up in Banking, Commerce and Insurance that dealt with trying to protect consumers from fraudulent ads. And so, the, the theme that we had in Banking yesterday was absolutely ways that we could step in and try to implement consumer protection measures to try to help folks in Nebraska. I think it's worth lifting up one more time, we talk about surge pricing like it's normal; we talk about surge pricing like it is something that we all just have to accept. But in my research that I've done, both for the bill that I had yesterday as well as on today's bill, I just want to point out a couple of things with regards to surge pricing. We all know that when you use these apps for rideshares, whether it be Uber or Lyft-- I'm not calling out any particular app-- that prices fluctuate. As the sort of ecosystem of that economy has evolved, I think a lot of people have become accustomed to surge pricing. They know that if I go to a Husker game down in the Haymarket and I get out of that game, the car that I call to get back home is maybe going to be a little bit more expensive than if I call a car on a Tuesday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. But what I think is important to note is the algorithms and the surveillance of your data that goes into various surge pricing is something that I think we should all be, if not concerned about, curious about. Since about 2016, there have been conversations going on and research that's been done that demonstrate that a lot of these companies and a lot these apps pull information off of your phone when you are trying to utilize some sort of service-- be it Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, whatever-- and they utilize a lot of your data, your metadata on that phone in order to cater a price that they think you're willing to pay. And a good example of this is there have been pervasive and persistent allegations backed up by independent research that the battery life on your phone is taken into account when you call a, a vehicle for a rideshare app because, as has been stated in interviews by those who work for that company, they know that people are willing to pay more if their phone's about to die. Now, I'm not necessarily saying that that's right or wrong, but it's something that I think we as a Legislature need to grapple with, and it's that I think that we as a Legislature needs to start addressing. And so, the bill that I brought yesterday, the bill Senator Guereca brought, I know facilitated what I thought were really good conversations in the committee. I'm on the Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee, and so we had a good back and forth about where do you strike the balance between allowing companies to operate in independent ways to turn a profit, because that's within their rights, and balancing that with consumer protection, and making sure that these companies, these organizations, are not illicitly taking your data, or at least taking

your data without consent, and crafting a price they know you're more willing to pay. And as I noted yesterday on the mic, there's even more broad examples of this where people's zip codes are taken into account with regards to pricing. We know that zip codes are often analogous to socioeconomic class and other things like that, and I think one of the things we all agreed on in the committee is that we should not be setting prices that disproportionately impact folks of certain communities; that should not be the intent of setting prices. Now, one of the things we discussed was, obviously, when it rains, in a big city for example, a lot of vendors come out and pop up on the streets, and they have their umbrella stands and-- you know, if there's an immediate need for something and that's going to cost a little bit more, I think that's different. But I just think that we as a Legislature need to be aware that some of these practices are going on, and we can't be caught flat-footed. This Legislature has been very cognizant, and I think willing to address things like social media, and we've seen a number of bills over the last couple of years where we've had to wrestle with social media and First Amendment and all of those different things. But I think that that concern that this Legislature has expressed with regards to protecting folks from social media needs to extend to a consumer protection lens and make sure that we are protecting Nebraskans, your constituents, from having their data taken from them, and having prices increased based on people's inability to actually peruse the market on the-- online and determine whether or not they can get a better price elsewhere. So, I just want to lift that up--

IBACH: Time, Senator.

DUNGAN: --and I appreciate the debate we've had today. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Ballard, you're welcome to close.

BALLARD: Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate the work of the committee on LB771. I'd ask for your green vote to advance this to Select File. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Colleagues, the question is the advancement of LB771 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 35 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB771, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill is advanced. Mr. Clerk, next item.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. General File, LB743 introduced by Senator Juarez. A bill for an act relating to Police Officers Retirement Act; to amend section 16-1007, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions relating to optional benefit forms; to provide an operative date; and to repeal the original sections. The bill was first read on January 7 of this year. It was referred to the Nebraska Retirement System; that committee reports the bill to General File. There are no amendments pending, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Juarez, you're welcome to open on LB743.

JUAREZ: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues and fellow Nebraskans. LB743 modernizes the Police Officers Retirement Act to provide police officers in Nebraska cities of the first class with greater flexibility and control over their earned retirement benefits. This bill came out of the Retirement Committee with full support and no fiscal impact to the state. This bill has the support of the League of Municipalities and the Nebraska Fraternal Order of the Police. Police officers in these communities have participated in state-mandated retirement systems for decades, reflecting the Legislature's longstanding commitment to supporting those who serve and protect our communities. In 2025, the Legislature took an important step forward by amending my bill, LB461, into LB179, which ensured that firefighters in cities of the first class may elect to receive their retirement benefits through partial payments in an amount and frequency of their choosing. The conversation last year made reference to accomplishment-- accomplishing this for police officers. LB743 builds on that discussion and promotes fairness and consistency across public safety retirement systems. LB743 does not increase benefit levels or impose new funding requirements on cities. Instead, it simply expands the optional forms in which the existing retirement benefits may be paid, allowing police officers to tailor distributions to, to better meet their individual financial and retirement planning needs. By permitting partial payments in addition to lump-sum options, the bill recognizes that retirement security looks different for every officer. By aligning the Police Officers Retirement Act with recent changes made for firefighters, LB743 ensures equitable treatment of public safety professionals and reinforces Nebraska's commitment to honoring the service of police officers through a modern, flexible retirement framework. Thank you.

IBACH: Seeing no one in the queue. Senator Juarez, you're recognized to close on your bill.

JUAREZ: Well, thank you. Again, thanks everyone for your time and consideration. This is just actually a quick fix, and I look forward to your green vote.

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IBACH: The question is the advancement of LB743 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 37 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB743, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill is advanced. Mr. Clerk, for items.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. I have a, a, a committee report on a gubernatorial appointment from the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. Senator Cavanaugh has amendments to LB958, an amendment to LB1261 from Senator DeKay; and then, an announcement: the Government, Military, Veterans Affairs will be holding an executive session at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2022. Government, Military, Veterans Affairs in Room 2022 at 10:00 a.m. The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee will be holding an executive session at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2102; that's Banking, Commerce, and Insurance, Room 2102 at 10:00 a.m. Also, Madam President, Senator Holdcroft would announce that LB512 will be his personal priority bill for this session. That's all I have, Madam President.

IBACH: Mr. Clerk, next item.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, General File. Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee introduces LB822, a bill for an act relating-- to rename the Police Officers Retirement Act as Cities of the First Class Police Officers Retirement Act, and to change provisions of such act; to define terms; to eliminate obsolete provisions; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections. The bill was first read on January 7 of this year. It was referred to the Nebraska Retirement System Committee; that committee reports the bill to General File. I have no amendments pending on the bill, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Ballard, you're recognized to open.

BALLARD: Thank you, Madam President. LB822 is a cleanup bill designed to update and modernize the statutes governing police retirement systems in the cities of the first class. The current statutory structure for police retirement in cities of first class, first class is the Police Officers Retirement Act, which was passed by the Legislature in 1983. LB822 mostly updates internal statutory references and eliminates obsolete, obsolete language. The current name of, of the act, the Police Officer Retirement Act, may have given mistaken impression that provisions of the statute apply to all police officers statewide, so LB822 would rename the act as the City of the First Class Police Officers Retirement Act. Consistent with the name change, the act-- the bill would also define the term city under the act to clear-- expressly limit the provisions to cities of the first

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class. The bill came out of Retirement Systems Committee 6-0; I'd ask for your support in advancing LB822. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Ballard, you're recognized-- he waives closing. Colleagues, the question is, shall the committee amendment be adopted? All those in favor, vote-- my apologies. The question is the advancement of LB822. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB822, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill is advanced. Next item, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: General File, LB824 introduced by the Nebraska Retirements Committee [SIC]. A bill for an act relating to retirement; to redefine termination of employment and termination and to change provisions relating to termination of employment under the School Employees Retirement Act and the Class V School Employees Retirement Act; and to repeal the original sections. The bill was first read on January 7 of this year. It was referred to the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee; the bill was placed on General File. There are amendments pending, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Lonowski, you're welcome to open on your bill.

LONOWSKI: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraska. I'd like to thank Speaker Arch for putting LB824 on the agenda. I also want to thank Nebraska Retirement Systems for advancing the bill out of committee unanimously on a 6-0 vote. There was no opposition testimony at the committee hearing, and no one submitted online comments in opposition to this bill. The teacher shortage problem in Nebraska continues. LB824 helps address that by amending the School Employees Retirement Act and the Class V School Employees Retirement Act to change the required period of bona fide separation for retirees to 120 days, with no exceptions. Our state's current bona fide separation period for retirees is 180 days, with exceptions for intermittent work as a volunteer or a substitute at a school district or an educational service unit. This has led to a lot of extra paperwork and a lot of confusion with how we maintain the accountability for those intermittent days. This change to 120 days for retired school employees on the state's retirement plan will provide uniformity and consistency with Nebraska's other retirement plans in the public arena, including state employees, county employees, judges, and our state patrol. Under LB824, retired teachers will be able to return as a substitute teacher following a hard bona fide break of service of 120 days. Our body can help alleviate the, the shortage of substitute teachers; LB824 will help, and I appreciate

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the support and positive feedback I have received. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, Senator Lonowski would move to amend with AM1942.

IBACH: Senator Lonowski, you're welcome to open on your amendment.

LONOWSKI: Thank you, Madam President. Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System, NPERS, has requested this amendment to LB824, which would add an operative date of May 1, 2026, for the provisions of this bill. Because May 1 would be before the typical period when a bill becomes effective, this would require the emergency clause, which is also included in this amendment, AM1942. Normally, when a bill passes the Legislature, it goes into effect 90 days after the legislative adjournment sine die, which, based on the current schedule, would occur sometime in the middle of July. NPERS has expressed legitimate concerns that a normal timeline could lead to some teachers being under the old 180-day bona fide separation period, and some being under the new 120-day bona fide separation period. Setting an operative date of May 1 would clearly place all teachers who retire after the current school year be under the 120-day bona fide separation period in LB824. I appreciate NPERS requesting this amendment, the Nebraska Retirement System Committee legal counsel sharing it with me, and I ask for your green vote on AM1942 to be added onto LB824. Thank you, Madam President.

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

BALLARD: Thank you, Madam President. I just want to thank Senator Lonowski for his hard work on LB824. This has been a, a multiple-year process for, for Senator Lonowski; worked with all the stakeholders involved, including the IRS and all the, all the teachers and education groups, so I believe this is a good bill to address some of the-- our teacher shortages across the state. And so, I'd ask for your green, green light on LB824. Thank you, Madam President.

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

MURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. As Education chair, one of the committee and I's top priorities has been to ensure that we get as many qualified teachers into the classroom as possible, both full- and part-time teachers-- substitute teachers. LB824 shortens the sitting-out period when a recently retired teacher can become a substitute teacher. This is a logical step to ensure we have as many substitute as possible, and I am happy that the retirement committee voted it out

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on a unanimous 6-0 vote. I won't spend a lot of time, but I want to thank Senator Lonowski for bringing this bill, because who better than a former teacher himself? To conclude, this is good, good news for our retired teachers; it's good news to our schools, and it's good for our students. Thank you, and I ask for your green vote on LB824 and the amendment.

IBACH: Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Lonowski, you're welcome to close on AM1942.

LONOWSKI: Thank you, Madam President. LB824 will help alleviate the shortage of substitute teachers by allowing schools to obtain the best substitute teacher possible, notably retired teachers who participate in a-- in the, the state employee retirement plan. Again, I want to thank you, Madam President, and I ask for your green vote.

IBACH: The question is, shall the-- shall AM1942 be adopted? All those in favor say aye-- or, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of AM1942, Madam President.

IBACH: The AM is adopted. Senator Lonowski, you're welcome to close. He waives closing. The question is, shall LB824 be adopted? All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB824, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill is advanced. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, LB816 introduced by Senator Storer. A bill for an act relating to public safety; to provide a privilege for peer support services communications; to define terms; and to provide for immunity. Bill was first read on January 7 of this year. It was referred to the Committee on Judiciary; that committee reports the bill with General File. There are committee amendments.

IBACH: Senator Storer, you're recognized to open on LB816.

STORER: Thank you, Madam President. Before I open on, on the bill, I just want to take a moment to wish Senator Andersen happy birthday. If you would join me in wishing him happy birthday. I'm sure he appreciates that. I rise today to introduce LB816, which establishes confidentiality and privilege protections for, for communication that takes place between first responders and certified peer support team members. I want to emphasize why the legislation is necessary. First

responders witness trauma that most Nebraskans will never see: fatal accidents, violence against children, overdose deaths, and human suffering on a scale that can take a profound toll. They carry these experiences while maintaining the professionalism and, and composure that we depend on them to have, but the numbers paint a sobering picture. Among over 4,000 EMS providers surveyed, 86 percent reported experiencing critical incident stress, and 37 percent had contemplated suicide. A 2021 national survey of law enforcement found that 44% of active officers were experiencing psychological distress, with over 11% reporting severe distress. Peer support programs have emerged as the most effective wellness resource for first responders, and these programs pair trained colleagues who understand the unique demands of public safety work with personnel who need support. That same 2021 national study found that peer support to be-- found peer support to be the most effective wellness service assessed by law enforcement professionals: more effective than counseling, chaplain services, or other interventions. So, there's a reason for that. First responders trust their peers; they trust someone who has been in the same situation, who understands what it's like to carry the weight of that work. Many Nebraska agencies have already established their own peer support programs, recognizing their value. However, there is a problem: without statutory confidentiality and privilege protections, first responders are reluctant to use these existing programs because they fear their conversations could be subpoenaed, used against them in disciplinary proceedings, or disclosed in litigation. This fear creates a barrier to seeking help precisely when help is needed most. So, LB816 does not create or mandate a statewide peer support program. I want to be clear, this is not a mandate for the creation of statewide peer-support programs. It does not build a new infrastructure. It simply provides legal protections for the peer-support programs that agencies have already developed or may choose to develop on their own. The bill establishes that communication occurring during peer support sessions are privileged and confidential, meaning they are not public records, are not subject to discovery, and are not admissible as evidence in any civil, criminal, administrative, or disciplinary proceeding. The bill includes responsible safeguards, however: the privilege does not apply when communications reveal child abuse or neglect, abuse of vulnerable adult, or the commission of a criminal act. A peer support team member may also disclose information when there is fear for someone's safety. These exceptions ensure that confidentiality does not come at the cost of public safety. The legislation, I want to let you know, reflects truly a collaborative effort. We had three separate proposals come forward that were introduced on this topic: LB816 was mine, Senator Lonowski introduced LB804, and Senator Wordenkemper [SIC] introduced LB755. So, rather than advancing competitive measures, the three of us worked very closely together to take the strongest elements of all bills and craft one comprehensive bill, which is before you now. I'm grateful to both Senator Lonowski and to Senator Wordenkemper [SIC] for their partnership and their commitment to our public safety

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community. The committee-- and we do have a committee amendment to reflect the, the-- those-- the combination of those bills in AM1814, which Senator Bosn will open on and speak to. So, some may wonder how this relates to critical incident stress management program that Nebraska already has in statute, otherwise known as CSM. CSM addresses acute responses to specific critical incidents. Peer support is broader; it helps first responders manage both professional and personal stress before they reach crisis levels. So, the bill complements CSM, it does not replace it. Several states have already enacted similar protections, recognizing that confidential peer support saves careers, it saves families, and it ultimately saves lives. This legislation removes a barrier that prevents first responders from accessing, accessing support. It gives them confidence when they're struggling, where they're witnessing-- from witnessing a child fatality, the cumulative weight of a traumatic call, or personal challenges affecting their work, they can go talk to a trained peer without fear of professional repercussions. So, the bill advanced from Judiciary Committee with no opposition. There is no fiscal note. First responders protect us without hesitation, and the least we can do is to protect them when they need, need our support. I urge your green vote on both AM814 [SIC] and LB816. I would yield any of my remaining time to Senator Wordenkemper [SIC], if he would like it.

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

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Senator Storer. The-- this is a good bill. We worked together with first responders, different agencies, and we believe we got a good finished product here, and we want people to get help, and we don't want any retributions for that, so I'd appreciate if there's support on this bill. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Bosn, you're recognized to open on the amendment, the committee amendment.

BOSN: Thank you, Madam President, members of the Legislature. It is my privilege to introduce AM1814 as the committee-- Judiciary Committee amendment to LB816. I hate to be redundant, but it was-- some of this, I know Senator Wordekemper and Senator Storer have already talked about. But this amendment is the product of a collaborative process. Early in this session, three separate bills were introduced that all addressed peer support services for public safety personnel. We had LB755, LB804, and LB816. Those were from Senator Wordekemper and Senator Lonowski and Senator Storer. Each of those bills reflected a shared concern that Nebraska should do more to support the mental well-being of the men and women who routinely experience traumatic incidents and extreme job stress in the course of serving the public. Rather than advancing three separate proposals, the introducers of those bills worked together with stakeholders to develop a single,

unified approach. The Judiciary Committee adopted that unified proposal as the committee amendment before you today, AM1814. AM1814 is a white-copy amendment that combines the key provisions of LB755 and LB816 into one coherent framework, and incorporates the broader scope reflected in LB804. Additionally, the amendment expands the definition of covered public safety personnel to include certain hospital, hospital personnel, and it includes hospitals within the definition of covered public safety agencies. Members, the public safety work is uniquely demanding. First responders and public safety professionals routinely encounter traumatic events, critical incidents, and the kinds of stressors that most of us cannot fully appreciate. We heard testimony from a number of provider-- of individuals. AM1814 begins by recognizing that reality. Section 1 provides legislative findings that public safety personnel routinely experience stress and emotional difficulties due to traumatic events and common job stressors; that peer support services can reduce long-term negative effects on well-being; and that confidentiality and privilege are essential to an effective peer support program because they encourage candor and honesty, without fear that those communications will later be used in disciplinary proceedings, litigation, or other official processes. Section 2 defines the terms used in the act and identifies the scope of covered personnel, covered agencies, and protected communications. The amendment expands the definition of public safety personnel to include hospital personnel who provide direct patient care or emergency services. This includes physicians, nurses, emergency department staff, and trauma center personnel. Relatedly, hospitals are included within the definition of public safety agency. Section 2 also clarifies that a peer support team member does not have to be an employee of the agency; a properly designated and trained individual may serve in a volunteer or professional capacity. This helps ensure agencies can build peer support programs that work in practice. Section 3 then provides that a public safety agency may establish a peer support team, and if it does so, the agency must adopt written guidelines governing the team and its members. This ensures the program is organized, it's consistent, and it's accountable. Finally, Section 4 establishes the central protections of the bill: comprehensive confidentiality and privilege for peer support services. In general, communications occurring during peer support services, communications among peer support team members and their supervisors, and records arising from those communications are confidential and privileged. They are not public records, they are not subject to discovery, and they are not-- excuse me, they are inadmissible in any proceeding. At the same time, LB1114 [SIC] includes carefully defined common sense exceptions. The protections do not override mandatory reporting obligations, such as reporting child abuse or neglect, or abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. The amendment also allows disclosures to address credible safety threats, and makes clear these protections cannot be used to shield criminal conduct. The amendment also makes an important clarification: evidence obtained independently outside of the peer support process remains

discoverable and admissible. In other words, colleagues, this bill does not interfere with ordinary law enforcement functions or investigations based on independently-acquired information. Peer support programs are one of the most important, practical, and proven ways to reduce long-term harm from the work these individuals do. They promote well-being, they strengthen agencies, they improve retention, and ultimately benefit the public. I ask for your support of AM1814 to LB816. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Colleagues, Senator Arch would like to recognize 15 people in the north balcony from Lincoln Littles. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Turning to the queue, Senator Dorn, you're recognized to speak.

DORN: Thank you, Madam President. Just wanted to get up and talk a little bit on this bill. As many of you know, I've been on a rescue squad, an EMT, for quite a number of years or whatever. Just wanted to speak on this because I've gone through one of these processes, where-- we call it a debriefing. There are certain trained individuals across the state that come down, and you have a discussion with them. One thing I very much remember was if you weren't on the call-- in other words, if you didn't go to the episode that happened, you couldn't be there. So, you couldn't be there and learn about all what went on. They are very good at what they do. It's a tremendous, tremendous program, and there are certain times when certain individuals really need this thing. I thought the whole time we were probably OK, we had immunity; we don't, and that's why I'm very glad that Senator Wordenkamper [SIC], Senator Storer, others have brought this bill forward. In very strong support of this amendment and this bill. Thank you.

IBACH: Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Bosn, you're recognized to close. She waives closing. The question is, shall the committee amendment to LB816 be adopted? All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 28 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the Judiciary Committee amendment, Madam President.

IBACH: The amendment is adopted. Senator Storer, you're recognized to close on LB816.

STORER: Thank you again, Madam President. Again, not to take much more of your time, LB816 is very straightforward: provides legal protection for peer support programs, establishing communications during session are privileged and confidential. I appreciate your support to help support those that in the emergency response world that are, are always there to help us. So, I ask for your green vote on LB816.

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IBACH: Colleagues, the question is the advancement of LB816 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 28 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB816, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill does advance. Next item, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. General File, LB900 introduced by Senator Lonowski. A bill for an act relating to revenue and taxation; to amend Section 77-1720; to change provisions relating to fees, commissions, and mileage of certain distress warrants for the collection of taxes; and to repeal the original section. The bill was first read on January 8 of this year. It was referred to the Committee on Revenue; that committee reports LB900 to General File. I have no pending amendments, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Lonowski, you're welcome to open on LB900.

LONOWSKI: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. Once again, I'd like to thank Speaker Arch for putting LB900 on this agenda. I also want to thank the Revenue Committee for advancing this out of committee by a 7-1 vote. There was no opposition testimony at the committee hearing, and no one submitted online opposition testimony. I introduced LB900 at the request of NACO, Nebraska Association of County Officials. This bill, in part, is an effort brought by NACO to have fees reflect the cost of providing service. The bill would adjust the fees for issuing distress warrants. When real property taxes become delinquent, tax sale certificates are sold to investors. After three years and nine months, the investors can begin foreclosure, or, if the value of the property is less than \$25,000, they can seek a tax deed to obtain the title to the property. Distress warrants are used to collect delinquent taxes on personal property, homes, as well as mobile homes, cabin trailers, manufactured homes. These latter three-- mobile homes, cabin trailers, and manufactured homes-- are considered real property for some aspects of taxation, but are treated like personal property when taxes are delinquent. When personal property taxes become delinquent, the county treasurer sends a letter to the owner of the personal property-- the mobile home or the cabin trailer or the manufactured home-- by September 1 to notify them that a distress warrant is being issued. The distress warrant itself must be issued on or before November 1. Then, the county sheriff attempts to collect the taxes or levy on other property of the same owner. If they collect, they currently receive a \$2 fee plus \$1 for each levy, and mileage. There's also a commission of literally pennies on the dollar. All of these are turned over to the county treasurer and deposited into the county general fund. LB900 would increase the fees for issuing distress warrants from

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\$2 to \$20 to more accurately reflect the costs incurred by county sheriffs in collecting delinquent personal property taxes. The rate was last increased in 1989 when it was raised from 50 cents to \$2. The same fee increase was proposed last year in LB 468 as part of the rightsizing of fees in LB468, which is Senator Clement's bill to reduce inheritance taxes and provide replacement revenue to counties. To be clear, however, this is a rate change which should have happened regardless to cover the cost of that government fee. In the bill, the \$1 fee for levying distress warrant would be rolled into this new fee. Sheriffs would continue to collect mileage, but convoluted procedures about prorating the mileage among trips would be eliminated. The commission of ten cents of sums collected up to \$100 and eight cents on amounts in excess of \$100 would be adjusted to change rate fees at \$500 rather than \$100 to reflect inflation, but the rates themselves would not change. LB900 is not a policy change; it is an effort to make fees reflect the cost of services, and to keep up with the times and the rates that, that it requires. Thank you, Madam President.

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

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate Senator Lonowski bringing this bill, and I support the provisions of it. The-- as he mentioned, this was part of the LB-- my LB468 regarding inheritance tax. I have worked with NACO on this; my LB468 is on Select File, and this would be some county revenue replacement if-- for the inheritance tax rate reduction. And so, I-- would Senator Lonowski yield to a question?

IBACH: Senator Lonowski, will you yield?

LONOWSKI: Yes.

CLEMENTS: Senator Lonowski, I'm glad to hear you were aware of this being part of LB468. If this goes forward, would you be willing to incorporate this language into LB468?

LONOWSKI: Senator Clements, yes I would. That would make perfect sense to me.

CLEMENTS: Thank you very much. This was important. I've worked with NACO, too. This was a fee-- these are fees that have not been increased for over 25 years, maybe 30 years, and NACO has adjusted them-- requested them to be adjusted to the actual cost of doing business and serving these notices, and so I would ask for your green vote on LB900. I thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Lonowski, you're welcome to close on LB900. Senator Lonowski waives closing.

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Colleagues, the question is the advancement of LB900 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. There's been a request for a call of the house. The question is, shall the house go under call? All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 19 ayes, 0 nays to place the house under call, Madam President.

IBACH: 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. Senator Hallstrom, Senator Juarez, Senator Jacobson, Senator Bostar, Senator Riepe, Senator Dungan, Senator Von Gillern, please return to the floor, the house is under call. All unexcused members are present-- present. The question is the advancement of LB900 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye. There is an open vote. Senator Lonowski, will you take call-ins? Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Senator Dungan voting-- Senator Dungan voting no. Senator Lippincott voting yes. Senator Hardin voting yes. Senator Hallstrom voting yes. Senator DeKay voting yes.

IBACH: Mr. Clerk, please record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 25 ayes, 1 nay on the advancement of LB900.

IBACH: The bill advances. I raise the call. Mr. Clerk, next item.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, LB823 introduced by Senator Wordekemper. A bill for an act relating to land management burning; to change provisions relating to permit and permit application for open burning; to define and redefine terms; and to repeal the original sections. The bill was first read on January 7 of this year. It was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources; that committee reports the bill to General File. I have no amendments pending to the bill, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Wordekemper, you're welcome to open on LB823.

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you, Madam President. Colleagues, I rise today to introduce LB823, a bill that makes targeted improvements to Nebraska's open burning statutes. It advanced with no opposition testimony and with the unanimous support of the Natural Resources Committee. LB823 addresses a gap in how we regulate and understand land management burning in Nebraska. Right now, our statute has one definition: land management burning. That covers everything from clearing a debris pile in a roadside ditch to conducting a 500-acre prescribed burn on

rangeland. These are fundamentally different practices: one is routine cleanup, the other is carefully-planned land management operation requiring weather monitoring, specialized knowledge, and significant coordination. The bill makes two straightforward changes: first, it creates clear statutory definitions. Controlled burning covers smaller-scale operation, debris pile, ditch cleaning, situations where fire spread is limited. Prescribed burning addresses the systematic application of fire to manage vegetation on grazing land, forest, and grasslands. Second, it requires new information on burn permits to identify which type of burning is planned, and, when applicable, the approximate acreage. Now, I want to be clear about what this bill does and doesn't do. It does not change local control. Local fire, local fire chiefs still issue permits; it doesn't add fees or bureaucratic hurdles; it doesn't restrict when or how burns can occur. What it does is bring clarity to our statute, and create the foundation for better information, and for that foundation matters. Here's why: prescribed fire is the most effective and cost-efficient tool we have for managing Nebraska's grasslands. As eastern red cedar continues spreading across the state, threatening rangelands and increasing wildfire risk, the controlled application of fire has become essential. It improves grazing productivity, controls invasive species, enhances wildlife habitat, and limits catastrophic wildfires. But right now, we can't answer basic questions about prescribed burning in Nebraska. Where is it happening? At what scale? How frequently? Where is it needed but not occurring? We can't answer these questions because we don't collect the data, and we can't collect meaningful data without first establishing what we are measuring. That's what LB823 does: it creates uniform definitions so that a prescribed burn in Cherry County means the same thing as a prescribed burn in Lancaster County. It requires permits to include information about acreage and burn type, details fire chiefs can easily include on forms they're already processing. This isn't additional work, it's more complete information on existing permits. The bill sets the stage for future data collection efforts. Once we have consistent definitions and basic metrics, researchers and policymakers can begin understanding the scope and patterns of prescribed burning in Nebraska. That information will inform future policy decisions about how we support this critical land management practice. I conducted an interim study on this topic through LR235, and what I heard consistently from stakeholders was that we need better information. Fire chiefs want to understand burn patterns in their jurisdictions; researchers need data to study effectiveness and identify barriers; landowners and conservation groups want policymakers making decisions based on evidence, not assumptions. LB823 gives us the tools to build that evidence base, and it does not-- and it does so in the way the burn community itself requested. This was a collaborative process involving the Volunteer Fire Chiefs Association, Pheasants Forever, Game and Parks, the nat-- the Nature Conservancy, our natural resource districts, Audubon Great Plains, and university researchers and practicing landowners. I ask for your green

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vote on LB823, and I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you, Mr. President.

IBACH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Wordekemper, you're welcome to close on your bill. Senator Wordekemper waives closing. Colleagues, the question is the advancement of LB823 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 30 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB823.

IBACH: The bill advances. Mr. Clerk, next item.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, pursuant to the Speaker's order, we will be passing over LB827. LB1127, introduced by Senator Dover. A bill for an act relating to Game Law; to provide for hang tang-- hang tag permits; to change provisions relating to the display of certain permits and where such permits may be procured; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections. Bill was first read on January 20 this year. It was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources chaired by Senator Brandt; that committee reports the bill to General File. I have no amendments pending, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Dover, you're recognized to open on LB1127. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, at this time the Speaker has asked that we pass over LB1127.

IBACH: So ordered. Mr. Clerk, next item.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, General File, LB979 introduced by Senator Brandt. A bill for an act relating to the Game and Parks Commission; to redefine a term; to change provisions relating to funds, fees, permits, and flotation devices; to provide for fees for educational programs; to provide a penalty; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections. The bill was first read on January 12 of this year. Bill was referred to the Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Brandt; that committee reports the bill to General File. There are committee amendments.

IBACH: Senator Brandt, you're welcome to open on LB979.

BRANDT: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues. Today, I ask for your green vote on LB979, which makes a series of updates to Nebraska's Game Law to modernize enforcement tools, clarify agency authority, and adjust certain fees to better reflect current costs and practices. The bill updates statutory language related to wildlife damage abatement to reflect the full range of activities the agency already performs. It clarifies how abatement funds are used and align

statutes with existing wildlife management practices. It also expands the allowable uses of the Game Law Investigative Cash Fund so conservation officers can use modern investigative tools, training, and equipment necessary to investigate complex and organized poaching activity. In addition, the bill authorizes the Game and Parks Commission to recover costs for wildlife education programs requested by outside groups, updates license, permit, and application fee caps to allow for future adjustments within existing statutory limits, and provides additional flexibility in administering preference points and landowner permit programs through rulemaking rather than statute. The bill also updates boating-related statutes by adjusting motorboat registration fees to reflect increased enforcement and access costs, and modernizes life jacket requirements to align with the current Coast Guard standards. And with that, I am ready to go to the amendment.

IBACH: Mr. Clerk for an amendment. Senator Brandt, you're recognized to open on the committee amendment.

BRANDT: Thank you, Madam President. Committee amendment AM1877 is very simple: it strikes lines 4 through 11 on page 17 of the bill, and in doing so, it eliminates the felony penalty enhancement for organized wildlife commercialization and trafficking schemes originally in Section 17 of LB979. Thank you, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Brandt, you're recognized to close on that amendment. Senator Brandt waives closing. The question is, shall the amendment to committee-- to the committee amendment, AM1877 in Natural Resources be adopted? All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the committee amendment, Madam President.

IBACH: The amendment is adopted. Senator Brandt, you're welcome to close on LB979. Senator Brandt waives closing. The question is the advancement of LB979 to E&R Initial. All those in favor vote aye; those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 25 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB979, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill does advance. Next item, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, General File, LB722 introduced by Senator Quick. A bill for an act relating to behavioral health services; to amend Section 71-812 to allow the use of Behavioral Health Services Fund for individuals with substance use disorder as prescribed; to define a term; and to repeal the original section. The

bill was read for the first time on January 7 of this year. It was referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services chaired by Senator Hardin; that committee reports the bill to General File. I have no amendments pending to the bill, Madam President.

IBACH: Senator Quick, you're recognized to open on your bill.

QUICK: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning, colleagues. Today, I'm introducing LB722. LB722 is a simple cleanup to legislation we passed last year, LB454. LB454 was designated as a Speaker priority bill and had two provisions: one, updating procedural requirements for regional behavioral health authorities to secure mental health care services; and two, clarifying the, the definition of individuals who have access to funding for housing needs. After the passage of LB454, however, it became apparent that we needed additional language in the statute to accomplish the goal of ensuring that individuals at-- individuals with substance abuse disorders, not just mental health illness, had-- can, can have access to housing assistance funds. Currently, the behavioral health service funds provides housing-related assistance and landlord risk mitigation payments for individuals with serious mental health-- mental illness. The Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund is a key component in serving individuals with behavioral health conditions because it funds repairs for damages that may occur by providing housing in this population. It serves as an incentive to landlords who would like to offer housing but may be concerned about the potential for physical damages to their rental properties. Aligning the Landlord Risks Mitigation Fund with the Behavioral Health Housing Fund will ensure all landlords offering housing receive equal protections, regardless of behavioral health conditions. I have worked with the, with the behavioral health regions and DHHS to ensure that LB722 aligns with the Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund with the Behavioral Health Housing Fund to ensure all landlords offer housing-- all and-- landlords who offer housing receive equal protections regardless of behavior health conditions, and that, and that individuals with substance abuse disorders can get the help they need. LB722 came out of Health and Human Services Committee 7-0; there was no opposition testimony. Thank you for your attention, and I ask for your green vote on LB722. Thank you.

IBACH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Quick, you're recognized to close on your bill. Senator Quick waives closing. Colleagues, the question is the advancement of LB722 to E&R Initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 33 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB722, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill does advance. At the request of the Speaker, we'll return to LB1127. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. LB1127 introduced by Senator Dover. A bill for an act relating to the Game Law; to provide for hang tang [SIC] permits; to change provisions relating to display of certain permits and where such permits may be procured; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections. The bill was first read on January 20 this year. The bill was referred to the Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Brandt; that committee reports the bill to General File. There are no amendments pending, Madam president.

IBACH: Senator Dover, you're welcome to open on LB1127.

DOVER: OK. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I apologize, I didn't mean to present you with any emergency on-the-job training. And good morning, colleagues. Today, I'm bringing LB1127, a straightforward constituent-driven bill that makes a small but meaningful improvement to how Nebraska access our state parks. I'm going to make this very brief. The intent creates an optional hang-tag park permit as an alternative to the current windshield sticker. It responds directly to a constituent concerns about sticker placement, removal, and usability. I think everyone here that's ever bought a park sticker remembers trying to get that off of the windshield. Allows a hang-tag permit to be transferred between vehicles owned by the same Nebraska resident. Does not eliminate or replace existing park permit options; people will still have the sticker option. Preserves the authority of Game and Parks Commission to set fees, designs, and rules. Commences January 1, 2027. It is similar to a handicap hang-tag. The cost will be somewhat equivalent to what the cost is for one resident park permit at \$35, plus a duplicate permit at \$17.50, and then, plus, up to a \$15 convenience fee. The effect, even if abused-- the increased sales of this tag with a convenience fee should be a revenue generator for Game and Parks. Again, I want to say it's a revenue generator, and although the fiscal note does say \$17,000-- [INAUDIBLE] \$17,750, this is considered to be a revenue generator for Game and Parks by Game and Parks. It advanced 8-0 out of Natural Resources. There is no opposition testimony and no online comments. Thank you.

IBACH: Seeing no one in the queue, colleagues, the question is the advancement of LB1127 to E&R initial. All those in favor, vote aye; those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 31 ayes, 0 nays on the advancement of LB1127, Madam President.

IBACH: The bill advances. Senator Rountree would like to recognize some folks in the north balcony from the Nebraska Athletic Trainer Association. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Mr. Clerk, for items.

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ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Madam President. I have notice of committee hearings from the Revenue Committee, the Natural Resources Committee, the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. I have a series of motions to LB512 by Senator Hunt, a motion to LB1239 by Senator DeKay, amendments to LB1234 by Senator Hansen. A letter to the Speaker from Senator Jacobson designating LB838 as one of the Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee priority bills; a second letter designating LB967-- from Senator Jacobson designating that bill as a Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee priority bill. Judiciary Committee will hold an executive session under the south balcony at 11:00 a.m. Transportation and Telecommunications will hold an executive session today at 1:00 p.m in Room 2022; that's Transportation committee at 1:00 p.m. in 2022. Appropriations Committee hearings are going to be moved to Room 1200 today, beginning at 1:30 p.m. Senator Clements has a motion to LB1260. Finally, Madam President, I have a priority motion. Senator Rountree would move to adjourn until Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

IBACH: The question is, shall the Legislature adjourn? All those in favor say aye. The Legislature is adjourned.