

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Attention Senators, the Legislature is scheduled to convene in five minutes.

DeBOER: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the Sixtieth Day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Our chaplain for today is Speaker Arch. Please rise.

ARCH: Let us pray. Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity you've given us to serve you in this session. Thank you for gift of freedom to live our lives in Nebraska, and to openly worship you. We pray for the upcoming elections, that your will would be done. We pray for those who are leaving this body, that you would bless their families and their lives. We pray for those who will be joining the Legislature, that you will prepare them to do your will and their work. And we pray for today, that we might please you in our decisions. In Jesus' name, amen.

DeBOER: I recognize Senator Wordekemper for the Pledge of Allegiance.

WORDEKEMPER: Colleagues, please join me in our 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.

DeBOER: Thank you. I call to order the Sixtieth 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.

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

CLERK: There are no corrections this morning, Madam President.

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

CLERK: There are, Madam President. Bills read on April 10, 2026 were presented to the-- excuse me. Bills read last week were presented the Governor on April 10, 2026 at 2:55 p.m. Additionally, communications from the Governor: engrossed LB304, LB304A, LB365, LB365A, LB429, LB455, LB525, LB596, LB721, LB722, LB727, LB737, LB743, LB745, LB748, LB749, LB753, LB758, LB762,

LB764, LB768, LB778, LB781e, LB784, LB787, LB788, LB797, LB798, LB815, LB815A, LB820e, LB820Ae, LB977-- excuse me, LB822, LB823, LB826e, LB838e, LB838Ae, LB852, LB867e, LB888, LB889, LB905e, LB912e, LB912e, LB912Ae, LB913, LB921, LB935e, LB952e, LB955, LB972, LB972A, LB977, LB986e, LB998, LB1010, LB1048, LB1055, LB1057e, LB1086e, LB1087, LB1091, LB1108, LB1126, LB1126A, LB1135e, LB1181, LB1181A, LB1195, LB1212, LB1216, LB1261, LB1261A were received in my office on April 10, 2026 and signed on April 14, 2026. These bills were delivered to the Secretary of State on April 15, 2026. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Additional communication: engrossed LB834, LB835, LB883, LB894, LB900, LB903, LB924, LB940, LB954, LB979, LB895, LB1067, LB1127, LB1127A, LB1155, LB1205, LB1236e, LB1236Ae and LB1240 were received in my office on April 9, 2026 and signed on April 14, 2026. These bills were delivered to the Secretary of State on April 15th, 2026. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Additional communication from the Governor: engrossed LB803e, LB803Ae, LB937, LB958e, LB962, LB965, LB966, LB1022, LB1032, LB1096, LB1114e, LB1165e, LB1165Ae, LB1187, and LB1209 were received in my office on April 10, 2026 and signed on April 16, 2026. These bills were delivered to the Secretary of State on April 16, 2026. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Additional communication: engrossed LB705e and LB705Ae were received in my office on April 10, 2026 and signed on April 15, 2026. These bills were delivered to the Secretary of State on April 16, 2026. Message from the Governor: Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I return herewith LB1256 without my signature and with my objections. LB1256 allows counties, cities and villages to exceed property tax caps by reclassifying, reclassifying snow and ice removal and flood management as emergency management services under the Emergency Management Act. I do not believe that this legislation was properly discussed in the context of increasing property taxes. When the Property Tax Growth Limitation Act was enacted during the 2024 Special Session to rein in annual out-of-control property tax increases, it created limited exceptions that allow municipalities to spend above their property tax levy, one of which is spending in response to a declared emergency by adding snow and ice removal and flood management to the list of accepted emergency-- exempted emergency spending. Municipalities would be able to circumvent these property tax caps to recover unplanned expenses in the event of just a single snow or flood emergency. Based on historical analysis of political subdivisions impacted by snow emergencies in recent years, the Department of Revenue estimated the statewide annual impact could be as much as \$40 million in additional property taxes, assuming a 2.5 percent increase in property taxes for snow

emergencies. I cannot in good conscience sign LB1256 into law, which will increase property taxes while we are in the middle of a property tax crisis. It is for these reasons that I urge you to sustain my vote of-- veto of LB1256 and bring LB1256 in some form next year, and deliberate the property tax implications of the bill. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Additional message: Dear Mr. President and Senators, I return herewith LB929 without my signature and with my objections. LB929 is the epitome of do-nothing legislation. As passed, LB929 states that the managed care organizations can, but do not have to, cover the costs of co-pays, deductibles, and other cost-sharing. This is already permitted under current law. Even though it has limited immediate effect, LB929 sends a terrible message. LB929 invites overuse of our health system and more meddling in future legislative sessions. Legally mandated-- mandating that the Department of Health and Human Services allow the managed care organization to pick up all cost-sharing makes certain that the relevant enrollees will get the message that they will never have any skin in the game. This creates an expectation that there will be no shared responsibility, which is a core tenet in ensuring that our benefits are hand-ups, not hand-outs. With LB929, the Nebraska taxpayer lose two ways. One, they get a more-complicated, cluttered statutory scheme that provides no benefit, and two, it encourages Medicaid enrollees that Nebraskans are paying for to overuse the system with-- without consequence. It does not streamline systems, and it potentially increases the future burden on Nebraska taxpayers. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, with this letter I'm returning LB878e without my signature and with my objections. I believe such benefits-- I believe benefits such as paid maternity leave should be negotiated through the collective bargaining process instead of a man-- instead of mandated in state statutes, allowing any increase to salaries and benefits for state employees to be properly accounted for during the budgetary process. Last year, the Department of Administrative Services worked in good faith with the leaders of the Nebraska Association of Public Employees Local 61 and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees to negotiate six weeks of paid maternity leave for expectant mothers. This benefit has also been extended to employees covered by the personnel rules and regulations pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 81-1317. At my direction, I have asked DAS to immediately begin working with the leaders of the State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the State Code Agencies Teachers Association to negotiate comparable paid maternity leave benefits for their

members. As of the writing on this communication, the state has successfully negotiated six weeks of paid maternity leave for close to 12,000 public servants. It should be noted that the benefit-- that the benefit that now all state employees have applies to all mothers, including those who adopt. It is not sound policy to bifurcate a benefit between adoptive fathers and biological fathers, which LB878 in its current form does. It is for these reasons that I urge you to sustain my veto of LB878. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I return herewith LB1029 without my signature and with my objections. Nebraska has consistently been a national leader in the fight to secure our state against a growing threat posed by foreign adversaries, specifically the Chinese Communist Party. Since 2023, we have worked together to build a robust legal firewall by implementing the Foreign-Owned Real Estate National Security Act, the Pacific Conflict Stress Test Act, the Foreign Adversary Contracting Prohibition Act, and the Secure Drone Purchasing Act. LB1029 is not just a step backward, but it is a direct contradiction of the security posture this Legislature has fought to establish by explicitly allowing institutions of higher education to shield employment contracts, salaries, and wages from public reporting. This bill creates a statutory vulnerability at the very moment transparency is most required. Reports from the U.S. House Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the U.S. and the CP-- CCP have laid bare the strategic intent of our adversaries to infiltrate American research institutions. Recent data reveals that China has poured approximately \$6.8 billion into higher education institutions across our country, often through opaque contracts designed to exploit American intellectual property. LB1029 would make Nebraska an outlier and a soft target at a time when the federal government is sounding the alarm on documented infiltration of our research institutions. In Michigan, a Chinese national working with the University of Michigan Laboratory was successfully prosecuted for introducing a danger-- dangerous biological pathogen into the U.S., a case characterized as a direct assault on our biosafety protocols. Similarly, on the same day, the Legislature passed LB1029 to my desk. The Department of Justice secured a guilty plea from an Indiana University researcher for smuggling E. Coli DNA from China, with prosecutors emphasizing that such covert transfers pose serious threats to public safety, safety and the health of our agriculture economy. The Department of War has indicated transparency is a prerequisite for security, and this culture of openness must start at home. Every single state employee's salary, including our own, is public; there's absolutely no reason why these expenditures should not be fully

transparent to the people we serve. Institutions that fail to maintain transparent reporting are in jeopardy of being designated as high-risk, potentially resulting in the loss of federal defense grants and research partnerships. This designation could threaten the university's partnership with the National Strategic Research Institute and the success of the Defense Efforts Workforce Act. I am deeply concerned that the impact of these reporting assumptions was not adequately debated by the members of the Legislature. Transparency in state-supported institutions is a fundamental right of the public to carve out these specific exemptions for, for higher education is a time-- in a-- at a time when global tensions and foreign academic espionage are at an all-time high is blatant disregard of our duty to protect Nebraska's infrastructure and intellectual property. For these reasons, I have vetoed LB1029. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Mr., Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I return herewith LB839 without my signature and with my objections. LB839 creates needless regulatory burdens on recipients of Affordable Housing Trust Fund grants by forcing multi-family housing developers to build an arbitrary percentage of accessible dwelling units for individuals with mobility and hearing or vision impairments. During a time when housing prices continue to rise, this new mandate will force builders to opt out of affordable housing programs, or spend additional resources on accessible dwelling units that often go unrented or are rented out to those without the physical impairments they were designed to accommodate. Instead of mandating these-- the types of housing develop-- developers should build-- the types of units housing developers should build, I believe a more prudent approach would be for the Department of Economic Development and the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority to work with disability rights advocates and the housing developers to develop a scoring system that incentivizes developers to build the appropriate number of accessible dwelling units. Simply put, adding expensive new regulatory requirements to a program designed to make housing more affordable is counterintuitive, and the wrong approach for lowering housing costs for Nebraskans. It is for these reasons that I urge you to sustain my veto of LB839. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, pursuant to Article IV, Section 15 of the Nebraska Constitution, I have allowed LB1237 and LB1237A to become law without my signature. While I believe this bill is a well-intentioned measure to enhance the security of the Nebraska State Capitol, I cannot in good conscience place my signature and approval on a bill that I believe unnecessarily disrupts the long tradition of allowing for the open and secure expression of

one of our most important constitutional rights, the Second Amendment, in the very building in which those rights frequently have come under attack. I share the Legislature's abiding commitment to ensuring our Capitol is safe and secure, both for the people that work there and the thousands who visit, especially the many young school children who brighten the building with their exploration of its vast spaces and history. My team and I will continue to work in partnership with the other branches of state government to be stewards of Capitol security, and I hope that other policies and steps, including but not limited to additional well-trained and armed security and State Patrol personnel will be the focus on future enhancements to our comprehensive security plans. Although LB1237 includes provisions which would not have been my preferred policy route towards achieving our shared goal of a secure Capitol, I nevertheless respect the good faith and earnest efforts of the bill's designers as well as the overwhelming support it received on final passage by the Legislature, and will therefore allow it to become law. Although I anticipate some challenges with compliance and implementation, I will provide diligent directives to the State Patrol to take care of all the provisions of this bill will be faithfully executed. For the sake of completeness, I note that LB1237 does contain a long-overdue revision to our, our, our laws governing concealed carry permitholders to be armed in the Capitol. I am grateful that the Legislature has fixed this problem in our laws. Signed sincerely, Jim Pillen, Governor. Additional communication from the Secretary of the Idaho State Senate, transmitting senate-- a Senate Joint Memorial. A report of registered lobbyists for April 16, 2026 will be found in today's Journal. Additionally, agency reports electronically filed with the Legislature can be found on the Nebraska Legislature's website. That's all I have at this time, Madam President.

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Bob Hallstrom would like to recognize the Doctor of the Day, Rob Rhodes of Eagle, who is serving as the family physician of the day today on behalf of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Speaker Arch, for an announcement.

ARCH: Thank you, Madam President. I've had some questions, and I just want to answer them, about today's agenda and how we're going to manage the day. First of all, I think my plan is that we're going to have to play it by ear as to whether or not we break for lunch today, from 12 to 1. And it really depends; we've had, we've had four motions to override vetoes that have

been filed now. It really depends on how long that debate goes. And so, we'll-- I, I will probably let you know a little bit later in the morning as to, as to whether we'll work straight through or whether we'll break for lunch, but thanks for your flexibility with that. I, I also-- you will notice that there are legislative resolutions on our agenda today. Those are debatable resolutions, so if you have words that you would like to say, if you have-- if you have comments that you would like to make, you, you, you will be able to make those when we come to those legislative resolutions. The last thing is, I've also had questions as to the rules of debate on veto overrides. We obviously don't do this very often. And the, the rules are very simple: like a regular bill, there-- there's-- each senator is allowed three times to speak, five minutes. However, no priority motions are allowed, and no amendments are allowed. Other than that, three times, five minutes. Those will be the rules of the debate with the override vetoes. Thank you, Madam President.

DeBOER: Thank you, Speaker Arch. Mr. Clerk, we will now proceed to the first item on the agenda. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Madam President, Senator Rountree would move that LB839 become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor.

DeBOER: Senator Rountree, you're recognized to open.

ROUNTREE: Good morning, and thank you, Madam President. Good morning, colleagues, and good morning to those who are watching online. Here we are again. Yesterday, I toured a school in my district. It was an amazing experience that helped me recharge after a long, tiring session. I spoke with fourth-graders, and they asked me questions about what it's like to be a senator and what we do here in the Legislature. It reminded me why we do the work that we do. We aren't here to get into fights with each other over perceived differences. We aren't here to beat someone else, or to have our team win. We are here to work for our constituents and everyday Nebraskans. We are here to provide a future for those fourth-graders that they can look forward to, and a lot were inspired. Yesterday, I was thinking about how we can work together as senators to build a better future. Well, today, we are here to discuss how the Governor has decided that he does not want to see LB839 become law. The Governor decided that legislation helping those with disabilities to find affordable housing should not pass. LB839 went through a committee hearing, which the Governor and his agencies did not testify. The bill was amended with thoughtful conversation with

the housing developers and cities to meet the needs that were expressed at the hearing. LB839 and the amendments went through rounds of debate here on the floor, where we had extended conversations about these very topics, and we made further amendments in consultation with the builders and the various stakeholders. You all should remember the conversations we had on the floor and the compromises we came to. This body decided to put those percentages back into the bill after they were removed entirely. The Legislature decided that we supported the goal of providing affordable housing for our disabled constituents. In each and every one of your legislative districts, there are disabled Nebraskans. Many of those are on fixed incomes, and many cannot afford the cost of living in our state. In Douglas County, 10.7 percent of the county has a disability. In Lancaster, 11.8 percent have a disability. In my county, Sarpy County, we have 10.08 percent. In Scotts Bluff County, 14.9. In Otoe County, 13.73 percent. Cherry County, 13.24 percent. In Dodge County, 14.3 percent. Nebraska has 93 counties, so I will not list them all, even though I do have it. And I will tell you this, only five counties have single-digit percentage populations of disabled individuals, and none have less than the 5 percent in this bill. Your district has a constituent with a disability who has problems affording their housing. In the letter we received from the Governor, which has been read across this morning, I'd like to speak to a few of those points. "LB839 creates needless regulatory burden," it was stated. The regulations in LB839 are not needless. There is a lack of accessible units in the state. We do not have definitive numbers because no one is collecting the data, a problem solved within LB839. The thing we know for certain is there are not enough units, and there are not enough accessible units. With the market not meeting the demand, that is where the Legislature has responsibility to act, and that's what we did. Next point, on recipients of Affordable Housing Trust Fund Grants. This fund is taxpayer dollars that have an obligation to fund the needs of Nebraskans, not the needs of developers and big businesses. We are in an affordability crisis, and part of that is lack of units. As the state builds units, we must build for everyone. Homelessness does not discriminate if you are able-bodied or disabled, so why should the Affordable Housing Trust Fund discriminate? If builders would like to avoid state regulations to ensure equity, they should be able to use private dollars. But if taxpayers are footing the bill, taxpayers, including disabled taxpayers, they should be able to use these units. "An arbitrary percentage of accessible dwelling units"-- Nebraska has an average percentage of disability of 13 percent. If all buildings in our state were built for 5 percent of

accessibility, there would still be Nebraskans in living conditions that do not meet their needs. The percentage in LB839 is based on federal legislation, which already applies to most builders in our states, and would not place a burden on builders during a time when housing prices rise. Disabled people in our state feel the rising costs just as much if not more than the able-bodied population. The Governor and DHHS have cut services for hundreds of disabled families across our state. This entire session, I have heard from countless families-- and you have as well-- who have been kicked off life-saving services by the administration in efforts to save money for tax cuts for the rich, and government handouts for corporations. These disabled Nebraskans are on fixed incomes, and now have to pay higher taxes at the grocery store, higher prices for health care, and higher prices for their housing, if any of their needs are going to be met. "To opt out of affordable housing programs"-- if building units of those with disabilities is too large of a burden for a building or a builder, should they receive state dollars? That's a question to be asked. The state has an obligation to provide accessible integrated housing under the U.S. Supreme Court Olmstead decision. Affordable housing should not be exclusively for able-bodied Nebraskans. We talk about spending additional resources on homes that often go unrented. I want to talk about that. If these units are unrented, I suggest developers reach out to NIFA, who has resources to connect those in need to available units. There is a desire for affordable housing. And if you have an available, affordable unit, I'm sure we can find a family in need. If an able-bodied person is in that accessible unit and not a person with a disability, that's OK, because an able-bodied person can live in an accessible unit, but a disabled person cannot live in an inaccessible unit. It was stated that there is a belief in a more prudent approach. The Governor has been in office for four years, and has not made this administrative change he claims to support now. It is easy to claim to support building housing units for those with disabilities, but when given the opportunity, the bill is vetoed. Simply put, LB839 was made in consultation with the disability community, housing developers, the municipalities, and with the 49 senators in this room, the 48 of you and myself. This bill was voted through with 34 votes last week, a clear sign that this body understands the need the legislation is seeking to address. We must continue to deliver serious relief to our constituents. And, to my "naitivity" this morning, I learned that just because a bill in this body is voted with a yes on Final Reading, it does not mean that there's an agreed yes. This bill passed with 34 yes votes, but in speaking with one of the other members of the body, said, oh no, no, I always

vote yes on Final Reading. So, we vote yes even though we don't believe in it. Deception. Just deception. So, that's something just for the body to know. You may vote that way. I don't vote that way. Either I'm up, down, and if I am indifferent, then I fall into a "no" category. So, I ask today that we think of those in need of a roof over their heads. I appreciate your support of this bill. Thus far, we've had all the discussion. So much. I'm not trying to go back into all of that again this morning, but I do ask that you vote yes on the override. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of the motion to override the Governor's veto, and in support of Senator Rountree. This is two years in a row since he's been in the Legislature that he's had a bill vetoed. And I told him something that Senator Wayne told me about vetoes. He was like, there's multiple ways to look at it, and one way you could look at it is that if your bill is being vetoed, then you're probably doing the right thing. You're probably fighting for just causes. You're probably doing things that need to happen, and you're probably being bold enough to push the needle and move the state into a better space for the people that you are representing. And I think that's what Senator Rountree is attempting to do with LB839, and which why this body voted to pass it. It's to make sure that Nebraska is a place for everyone and everyone has a space to live, and also, honestly, to hold developers accountable, in my opinion. And I've had conversations over the years about this, and it is my belief that if a developer wants to come to the state and say, hey, state of Nebraska, I want to apply for funds to do a project, then there, there should be some stipulations, there should be some things that the state is asking of those developers. It shouldn't be, hey, state, give me money, let me do what I want. Especially when we have a housing crisis, especially when we have situations in our communities where there isn't adequate housing for individuals with disabilities. We should require things. I think that's fair. If they want \$2 million, we should be able to say as a state, you need to meet these requirements. I think that is simple and fair. I don't think that's too much to ask. And then also, we also should make sure that our cities and municipalities are tracking the data about where there's gaps in the-- in housing and in the system, and that's what this bill is doing. So, that is why I'm supporting this bill, because I think we need to do better to make sure that our state is moving in a better way.

And I'm sure there are some people in the queue that are going to stand up and say we need leave this up to developers, and we're going to harm the market, and we going to do all these fear-"monging"-- fear-mongering things which are not accurate. All it is is talk from the perspective of a, of a developer that does not want to be held accountable, but still wants to come to the state and ask for money. If you don't-- if you don't want to be held accountable and you don't want to meet a standard, you shouldn't be allowed to come the state and ask for a penny. We always talk about protecting taxpayer dollars and making sure taxpayers are looked after, but when it comes to things like this, we disregard the taxpayer. Because disabled people are taxpayers. People with disabilities pay taxes, too. We should look out for them. It shouldn't be this imbalance where developers are getting more of a privilege than somebody with a disability. I'm not saying we should make anybody's life hard, but if you want \$2 million from the state to develop housing, I don't think it's too much to ask for 5 percent of that housing to be adequate enough for people with disabilities. Honestly, 5 percent of house-- like, they built these apartment complexes, there's what, 150 units? And we're just saying maybe 5 percent of them, 2 percent of them I think, or something like that should be adequate for individuals with disabilities. I don't think that's too much to ask. I really don't. I think that's the bare minimum we should ask. And the fact that people are going to stand up and say I, I, I don't support the override, and I voted on this, but I really don't support it, it's crazy. And it speaks to this biennium, and it speaks to this Legislature, and it speaks to the people who act as if they're allies and not allies, smile in your face but stab you in the back. That's what this speaks to, and that's what we're about to hear from others that are going to stand up and don't support this override. And, you know, it's the Nebraska Legislature. "As the Nebraska Legislature Turns." You know? But I would implore you all to support the override because we're going to do the right thing for individuals with disabilities in our communities, and I thought that's what we were all sent here to do. Thank you.

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

DOVER: Thank you, Mr. President. Would you like to hear an oxymoron, everyone? We need more mandates to lower the cost of construction so that we can build more affordable housing. Does that make any sense? We need more mandates to lower the cost of construction to build a more affordable housing. When Nebraska is faced with the, with the challenges of building affordable housing, the last thing we need to do is to increase mandates.

Congressman Flood is working on reducing regulation and mandates on a federal level. What could happen-- if, if we do not vote to sustain the Governor's veto, what could happen is Congressman Flood could, through an incentive program, handle the requirements for the 5 and 2 percent for immobility and stuff. And then, Nebraska would be stuck with a mandate when the federal level wasn't mandated because the federal government decided to do it through an incentive program. And so, we need to be careful. You have a letter from the Nebraska State Home Builders Association; it says that they oppose any additional mandates placed on affordable housing trust funds. There are some states such as California that have passed such more restrictive requirements. This is a state that has made it very hard to build affordable housing. We feel it is not in the best interests of Nebraska. We don't need to be another California where you-- the cost of a housing unit in California is astronomical. That's created by mandates. These mandates will increase construction costs for home builders, and will ultimately be passed on to homebuyers, further impacting housing affordability across Nebraska. That's from the Nebraska State Home Builders Association, from NeighborWorks of Northeast Nebraska who has built literally hundreds if not a thousand affordable housing units, from Roger Nadrchal, one of the most intelligent people in the state on affordable housing running the non-profit. In these challenging days, the develop-- the developing-- and of developing affordable housing is the last thing we developers and, and guarantees of NA-- of the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust need is additional red tape. As a affordable housing developer in northeast Nebraska, we oppose an amendment no matter what to the-- to those "percentagers." We do not feel that the Nebraska Legislature should impose additional mandates onto the use of, of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. If anything, they should be an incentive during the, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund grant application process. That's what I believe. We should be using a carrot, not a stick. I trust NIFA to-- if there's a shortage of, of these type of housing, they will create an extra bonus in the scoring system. Also from the Governor, I agree with him. I think you all read it, but there is a better approach, and that is working through NIFA and developing a scoring system that incentivizes developers to build appropriate numbers of accessible dwelling units. As you recall, I stood in opposition to LB840 when it was first brought to the floor and amended into LB839. I did meet with Senator Rountree, and we made it clear that I could not support the reduction to 5 percent and 2 percent, and we agreed to let the votes fall where they may. I then stood and stated my position, and believed we could move forward as agreed. However,

as the tone of the day shifted, it was-- I was labeled the enemy, a scapegoat, and believed-- and even I was called a bully. Following the advice of the Speaker and my staff, I remained seated and allowed others to speak. Votes were cast, but by the end, another amendment was filed reinstating the 5 and 2 percent language after my amendment to remove it had passed. Again, I remained seated, accepted the criticism, and allowed the body to take what was-- some called a change-of-heart veto-- a change-of-heart vote. Now, we find ourselves here, and with the entire bill vetoed over the very provision I warned against. Despite my concerns, I still voted for the bill on Final Reading to support the broader effect, which was this. The core thing of his bill that was good was he was going to have the cities find out how much-- how many units were there for the immobile, the hearing- and vision-impaired people. That's where you start; you don't just mandate everything across the board. We need to find out-- each individual city would have a different percentage. But today, I will not take the same approach as I did on Select File. I will state for the record that I do not support mandating building requirements when the-- within the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. I do support incentives within the application process, and I remain committed to working with Senator Rountree during the interim to develop a framework that encourages rather than mandates accessible housing for individuals with disabilities. For those reasons, I will not be voting to override this veto. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you, sir. This bill adds more restrictions on how affordable housing funds could be used. It requires 5 percent of all multi-family housings-- that is, five units or more-- to be set aside for mobile-impaired individuals, and 2 percent for visual or hearing impairments. This bill makes us as restricted as the federal government, and it should not be our goal to be as regulated as the feds. We should be less regulated. We're in an affordability crisis presently. We need more housing units built, not less, and putting further restrictions on housing funds would not help. A better solution is to separate-- to have separate funding for these populations. Thank you, sir.

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

DUNGAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I do rise today in support of the motion to override. I was wondering if Senator Dover would answer just a couple of questions.

ARCH: Senator Dover, will you yield?

DOVER: Sure.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Senator Dover. So, I was listening to some of what you were saying both here and on the first round of debate. So, the 5 and the 2 percent we keep talking about, that's the federal standard, correct?

DOVER: Correct.

DUNGAN: How many units are being built today that don't abide by the federal standards?

DOVER: I wouldn't have access to that information. That would be a question for-- I don't even know if DED could actually answer. I don't know-- I don't know if anyone answer-- and here's the important thing, that's a very important question, and that is to the heart of what I believe Senator Rountree was trying to achieve: how many units are there out there? And then, what he-- I would-- I'm guessing he would define what the need would be, and then, we could actually say well Omaha needs this many, Norfolk needs this many, Scottsbluff needs this many--

DUNGAN: Right. That's, that's the benefit of this bill, correct?

DOVER: Pardon?

DUNGAN: That would be the benefit of this bill, is we would see how many units don't abide by the federal standard.

DOVER: And I support that, and that's why my floor amendment only took out the require-- the mandate of his bill. It didn't take out the part to find out. I'm-- I support the initial part to figure out what the need is, because that's how you make-- determine the percentage. But he originally started at, I believe, 20 and 10, and then it went to 10 and 5, and then I think we're at 5 and 2.

DUNGAN: But it ended up with the 5 and 2, and the 5 and 2 mirrors the federal standard, correct?

DOVER: Correct.

DUNGAN: So, the question we're getting at here is, are there units being built that don't abide by the federal standard? And I guess my question for you, and what I'm trying to understand is, how many units are being built in the state of Nebraska that don't currently already meet that 5 and 2 percent? Because if all of them meet, or if the vast majority of them meet the 5 and the 2 percent, this isn't a problem. Right?

DOVER: Yeah. I-- well, it, it is for the small guy. See, that's-- and I'm glad you brought that up because I wasn't able to cover that. And so--

DUNGAN: Well, hold on--

DOVER: A lot of people-- excuse me.

DUNGAN: No, I'm trying--

DOVER: If I could--

DUNGAN: No, this is my time, Senator Dover. This my time.

DOVER: Oh, sorry. Yeah, yeah.

DUNGAN: So, I'm trying to understand what your objection is. You're saying you don't like mandates. But if the vast majority of units are already meeting the 5 and the 2 percentage, what additional mandate are we putting on people? Because in order to access the federal credits, they must already meet the 5 percent and the 2 percent standard. And so, if the vast majority of these units are meeting a 5 and 2 percent standard, do you think this is really creating a mandate that's going to raise costs like you're saying, if a very, very small percentage of units don't currently meet that standard? What is the actual impact on cost going to be?

DOVER: OK, can I answer now?

DUNGAN: You may.

DOVER: OK, thank you. So, in Lincoln and Omaha, the problem is we have a, a big state. And so Lincoln-- Omaha is its, is its own place, Lincoln is its own place, and we have the rest of us. So you're, you're quite correct. When you get in a capital

stack, we're using federal funds, and the large projects use federal funds. They already have that mandate. So my first question would-- I mean, sorry. My first thing is, why do we need to add another mandate? The big thing is-- so, I'm a, I'm a home builder, and we plan on getting into building, like, six-plexes and ten-plexes, which are smarter, which-- we don't, we don't plan on using and any affordable house-- housing trust funds. So, it's going to add additional costs to us to build those apartments. So, the little guy across the state wouldn't be using federal funds, and he might be using affordable housing trust funds and TIF-- which I'm sure they would because that's how you make it work. But they don't need additional mandates.

DUNGAN: So, when you say the little guys, how, how big of a-- what is a little guy? How do you define little guy? I'm just trying to make sure I understand that. Who are the little, the little guys we're talking about?

DOVER: Little guys build anywhere from duplexes to 12- and 24-plexes.

DUNGAN: OK. So, the little guys are people who are building the 24-plexes.

DOVER: They're not, they're not like Hoppe. Not like-- you know, I'm sure you know Fred and Jake Hoppe.

DUNGAN: Yes, yes, yes.

DOVER: They're big.

DUNGAN: OK. So, are you saying that those developers are not currently creating units that are accessible to people in the developmental disabilities community?

DOVER: I don't have access to that, but they-- that's-- they're-- well, no. I mean, I know people that built, like, little, like, ten-plexes in Norfolk. No, they're not, they're not accessible.

DUNGAN: OK. Do you think they should be accessible?

DOVER: I think that "defermines" on the results of Senator Rountree's finding in Norfolk. Do we need a more, more units? And then NIFA can do an incentive where you get 10 extra bonus points, and then we're going to-- and incentivize it.

DUNGAN: If we, if we gathered--

DOVER: I'm for-- I am for-- I'm for what you're for. I'm for what Rountree's for. I'm not for mandates; I'm for incentives. I'm for the carrot, not the stick.

DUNGAN: If we were to gather enough information to show that there is a lack of affordable housing for people in the developmental disabilities community, would you come back and support the 5 and 2 percent?

DOVER: I would support whatever percent that NIFA or the study resulted in. I would, I would resort an incentive based on that. I-- I'm, I'm for it. We just don't know how much you need. And, and as standard 5, 2 is not applicable to every-- I know not every town across Nebraska.

DUNGAN: OK. Thank you for answering my questions, Senator Dover.

DOVER: Thank you.

DUNGAN: I appreciate it. I see my light's on. I am in the queue again, though, so--

ARCH: Time, Senator.

DUNGAN: --I'll get back in in a minute. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. President. If we're mostly concerned about mirroring federal standards, I'd like to remind this group that marijuana is illegal federally. Nonetheless, I think this is a potentially good idea that Senator Rountree has, and I know that he is someone that cares deeply for his community and people across Nebraska, as do I. I think it's the right thing being accomplished in the wrong way, and that is because of supply and demand. Right now, Nebraska is short about 120,000 housing units in general. That's a lot for a state of 2 million people. And so, given that pressure, every house that comes available in my community, there's a rush to it. Whether it's for sale, for rent, they don't stay for sale or for rent for very long. And I know that that is made all the greater when in fact what you're looking for is a home that has ADA compliances for someone with disability. I think perhaps the better way to

do it is to approach this with a different kind of bill that would speak directly to the heart of the matter. Any time we deal with quotas, we're going out hunting with a jungle net. I do think this requires a rifle shot. Those are my thoughts. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Fred Meyer would like to recognize some special guests today: there are 32 fourth-grade students from Cedar Hollow Elementary in Grand Island, located in the north balcony. Students, if you would rise and be welcomed by your Nebraska Legislature. Returning to the queue, Senator Conrad, you are recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I rise in support of my friend Senator Rountree's motion to override. Friends, this institution, this Legislature, this august body is at its best when it stands up for itself, and when it stands up for the most vulnerable in our state. Historically, those goals and objectives have brought us together, bridging geography, bridging differences across the political spectrum. And right now, in this moment, with the issue before us on the board today, we have an opportunity to stand up for this institution against radical overreach and mean-spiritedness by our executive branch. We have the ability to stand up for those who are many times voiceless in the halls of power, and who've done the work to document the need for this issue, who held interim studies, who worked through the process, who had strong support; bipartisan, supermajority support in this body through three rounds of debate. We should override this mean-spirited veto. And let me be clear: a woman who lives in Lincoln who is deaf is not a regulatory burden, a man who uses a wheelchair in Scottsbluff is not red tape, and a kid who uses a feeding tube shouldn't rely upon, in my friend Senator Lippincott's words, something separate for these people. We should override this veto. It's mean-spirited. Yet, it also is the perfect, fitting, finishing narrative for this session, where this Governor and this Legislature doled out favors to big feedlots over cow-calf producers, the little guy; doled out favors to Tenaska and Google to build massive data centers, chopping up and diminishing our proud public power; decided not to give additional property tax relief to seniors, working families, and family farmers because Union Pacific needed \$50 million of our tax money and new carpet for their headquarters. We punched down on minimum wage workers. And what Senator Rountree and human rights and disability rights advocates from across the state have done is said we need to take a step forward to ensure our housing policy is equitable, aligns with

federal law, aligns with human rights, recognizes that people with disabilities have special needs. But they're also Nebraska neighbors, and they're also taxpayers, and they're also voters. And I hope they look at this board, and when the votes are there, I hope that they take them with them to the ballot box and they ask senators who turned their back on their own votes after moving this through three rounds of debate because their Governor said so why they didn't stand up for people who did the work, for people who've demonstrated the need, and for people who deserve dignity as our neighbors in Nebraska. And if you have a different solution, why didn't you bring it? If you proposed amendments that were unsuccessful, that speaks for itself. Now is not the time for sour grapes. Now is the time of leadership on behalf of Nebraskans who have different needs, but who are Nebraskans. Nebraskans with special needs deserve to have a thoughtful approach to our housing policy, and they should not be left behind, treated separately and unequal, Senator Lippincott, or treated as a burden or red tape, Senator Dover. These are neighbors, these are taxpayers, these are Nebraskans; they have special needs, they live and work in our communities and raise families, and the least we could do is move this bill forward and override this mean-spirited veto. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

DUNGAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate the discussion we've had here today, and I appreciate Senator Rountree's leadership on this issue. I think we've really had a illuminating conversation, and I do encourage your green vote on the motion to override. There's two last thoughts I wanted to share about this issue. I mentioned one of these last time I talked on the mic about this, when we were actually voting on the bill, but I wanted highlight it again. In my first year in the Legislature, I had somebody come and knock on the door of my office here in the Capitol, and it was a person in a wheelchair who asked if I could come out in the hallway and take their picture. And I thought, of course, yeah, sure, I'll come do that. I don't really understand why. And I walked out, and they had moved over to the bathroom right across the hallway from my office. And they were standing in front of the women's door, and there was a button next to the door, a handicap door button that allowed them to open the door. And they asked me to take their picture next to that button because they had been working for years to try to get a handicap-accessible bathroom in the Capitol. In the second house, we always call it, right? In the people's house. They had been lobbying and requesting and asking

for something that was handicap accessible. And it took that long, and it was such a victory for them to have access to a bathroom that they wanted their picture taken next to that door. And I think that's really telling, because if you look around the room, colleagues, we are obviously all different, we come from different backgrounds. But there are not many people in here, I think, that certainly have different abilities, who come from the disabled community. When you look at the people who come in the Rotunda and lobby, or can afford a lobbyist-- many folks who are just living their daily lives who are in the disabilities community can't afford their own lobbyist; they can't get people here to explain to you the issues they deal with on a day-to-day basis. The second thing I wanted to share is, earlier this week, I had a talk in my district at an art gallery called the Lux Art Gallery. Shout-out, Lux. And we were talking, and at the end of this, a gentleman came up and spoke with me, and he asked if I could talk to him for a minute, have moment of his time as a constituent. And he shared with me that he is the full-time caregiver for his son; that his son is nonverbal, his son is in a wheelchair, and he and his wife care for his son 24/7. They help him with literally every single thing that he needs. And for all intents and purposes, he asked me, why does the Legislature and why does our executive branch continue to try to make their life harder? This entire session, we saw conversations about reducing the amount of money reimbursement to caregivers. We saw an ongoing conversation about the assessment tool to determine the level of need that folks in the disabled community require. And I'm sure that many of you, like myself, have received countless emails and phone calls, hopefully visits to your office, from people in the developmental disabilities community who are saying what we're doing as a state is failing them; that they're being told they don't deserve the amount of money that they were originally told they could get for 24/7 care; that they're being told that they're not actually needing the level of care that they originally thought they needed. And these people are saying, "Why are you abandoning us?" And if I seem frustrated this morning, colleagues, it's because I am. And I apologize on this last day that there's, you know, these contentious things we have to deal with. Because certainly on the last day, there's oftentimes a lot of joviality, and I want to celebrate the colleagues of mine that are leaving. But this is an incredibly disappointing veto. I think it sends the wrong message to the people of Nebraska. I think it certainly sends the wrong message to our friends in the disabilities community. And I think is certainly petty, I think it is vindictive, and I think that it is cold-hearted. And I think that it is exactly what is wrong

with government today, because I fundamentally believe that what our government should do is stay out of people's lives when they can, but make sure that nobody gets left behind. And we are leaving people behind in the state of Nebraska who need housing. We are telling people that Nebraska is not for everybody, and that is not something that I think any of us want to say. So colleagues, stand in your power. Please step up, vote against this veto, and tell the people in the disabilities community that you stand with them. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, when we have the opportunity to override vetoes, every year that we have the opportunity to do this, what ends up mattering to me is less about the subject of the bill, although that's very important, but it's about-- and it is about the dignity of the people who are impacted by that bill and legislation. That's important. But I also think there's something that isn't said enough in this body, which is the dignity of ourselves and the dignity of this Legislature as a separate branch of government that so many of you, for some reason, don't have the confidence to stand in. So, it's not just about dignity for the people Senator Rountree is aiming to help with LB839 that all of you voted to support on Final Reading, by the way. Not all of you, but, you know, the body voted to support on Final Reading. The Legislature spoke, and we said to the executive branch that this bill went through a committee hearing, it went through three rounds of debate, it passed on Final Reading, and we've made the decision, as a branch of government, that it's good policy. And this is not for lack of compromise on Senator Rountree's part. He explained ad nauseam on the record to people who harangued him on three rounds of debate about why this policy was in good shape to be passed. And what we saw from the Governor reflects a pattern that we saw in every other piece of legislation that he vetoed this year. There seems to be almost no strategic or intellectual reasoning for the flight of vetoes that he handed down to the Legislature. I mean, in, in the case of Senator Conrad's bill, he didn't even understand what it did. Her bill that he vetoed, she worked with the attorney general and the university on it, it was on consent calendar, and she introduced it as a favor. And he vetoed it, why? None of these things are really that logical. And what's also sad about this process is how few of you are listening. One of my colleagues mentioned to me, it would be really nice for a veto override if people were in their seats as we are during Final Reading, and I agree with that because this is also one of the most solemn responsibilities we

have as a Legislature. Again, it is about dignity. And you are willing to subvert yourselves and get on your knees for a man in another branch of government who has nothing to do with you in your capacity in this work. And all he has to do is give you a wink and a phone call, and you will do his bidding every time. I think a reason a lot of you aren't listening-- and it did get a little quiet. But I think a reason a lot you haven't been listening is because you've already been told how to vote, and especially you newer senators, you're going to feel really different when eventually the shoe is on the other foot. The Governor is not going to be on your side for your four or eight or whatever years that you're here. I mean, you can talk to Senator Dorn about how the Governor vetoed his bill to help Beatrice because of the Beatrice 6 settlement. We stood by him on that veto override, and that was good. That was good policy, and we felt good after that for standing in our power as a separate branch of government. So, if you thought this was good on Final Reading, I want you to ask yourself, what changed since then except one man's opinion who didn't even understand most of the vetoes that he handed down? We spoke as a body on three rounds of debate to move this forward, we spoke for thousands of Nebraskans who could be impacted by this good legislation, and we need to stand firm in our power and in the responsibility to those we serve. Any lack of this-- of support for this override, it betrays not just your hard-heartedness-- which I don't care. That doesn't matter to me. I don't care if you're mean. Like, how would that affect me? It never has. But it-- what it does betray, what you should be ashamed of, and it doesn't surprise me, is your lack of understanding of the bill after three rounds of debate, and for the process, and for your independence as a Legislature. Character only matters when you stand by it when it's tough. After eight years, I understand what it means to be a separate branch of government, and I'm proud of that. And that means standing in your process, standing by people over profits, standing by each other as colleagues, even when the Governor doesn't know what that means or what that is. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

RAYBOULD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, fellow Nebraskans. Two words come to mind: courage, leadership. I am so disheartened to have to speak this morning on a bill that I thought would need no further discussion or explanation. I just wonder if there is a lack of awareness of what goes on in our state, and with our disability community, with our community of seniors in our state; how

having accessible, affordable housing is critical, is crucial for every Nebraskan to live with dignity. I have been so fortunate in my life as a city council member, county commissioner, and as a state senator, but most importantly as a grocer. We have stores in so many of your communities, colleagues, where I have gotten to know people in the community, the leaders in the community, and one thing they say loudly and clearly is the need for more affordable housing and a need for more senior housing. And this is what this bill addresses, and I want to thank Senator Rountree for his courage to stand up and clearly explain how important this is. And many of us listened, and the number count to be exact: 34 of us voted yes. I ask you all to demonstrate leadership and courage today. And more importantly, I ask you to go back to each and every one of your communities. And for those communities that are represented by former mayors here, they know exactly; they know exactly the need that goes on in their community. Every community that I have worked in and built a new store, or remodeled a new store, or done an expansion, I work with the local municipalities, the city council, their planning commissions, zoning commissions to understand exactly what this will do. And their need and their request has always been, can you add additional housing, particularly affordable housing, accessible housing? That's what matters to them. They're in touch with their community. I feel that we are not. When we say that there is a waiting list, trust me, there is. You can just ask Senator Moser. In his city of Columbus, they have a waiting for those seniors and people with disability that need accessible, affordable housing. It's a real problem. And when they build housing to this day, most developers automatically add that type of housing onto it without reservation, without qualm, because they know it's a need. And if you want to examine the whole economic scope of things, we want seniors to have housing that they can be safe in, but we also need to increase our inventory for those young families that to have that affordability as well. I hope we have the courage today to do the right thing for those in our community that need access to housing, the disability community. I've been getting email after email of how important it is to them. We've talked about our obligation to protect those that are most vulnerable in our states. We need to live up to that obligation. So, I ask for you to vote yes to override the Governor's veto. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. One of the things that I was going to talk about later-- and I, I hope I still will, I think

I still will-- is hope, is this institution. One of the things I was going to say is that you have four 4 or 8, or for Senator Clements, 10, Senator Conrad, 16 years in here. But your integrity is the rest of your life. You will look in your mirror for the rest of your life and know whether you stood in your responsibility and voted with courage. With respect to this bill, Senator Rountree compromised, he worked with stakeholders. He has a sliver of the bill he started with. We even gave housing more money this year with Senator Hallstrom's bill to raise the documentary stamp-- stamp tax. This is how this system is supposed to work. Senator Rountree has presented to you all a masterclass in compromise. If you want to talk about the dignity of all, you will vote to override this veto. If you want to talk about cooperation, negotiation, bipartisanship, process, you will vote to override the veto on this bill. It only takes an ounce of courage today; a minute that someone's mad at you, and they will forget it in an hour. But you will live with the consequences of your vote today forever. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Rountree, you're recognized to close on your motion.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much, Mr. President. And thank you, colleagues. Thank you, everyone who participated in our conversation this morning. You know, every Wednesday morning, I understand there is a Bible study here in the Capitol. I haven't had the privilege of attending, but I know that many of you respond to the Word of God, if you will. Proverbs 24:10 states, If you faint in the day of distress, how small is your strength? I like the old King James Version because it says, If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. This is a day of adversity, but I want to say to you that I am unbought and "unbossed." That was what the great Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm said. I am unbought and "unbossed." To stand up for what's right means that you're going to attract attack. It means you're going to be hit. Sometimes, you're going to be knocked down, but never knocked out. But the true measure of your integrity is getting up and getting back in the game and continuing to fight. I do not have land. I'm not a farmer. I do not have a business, so I can vote independently with-- when it comes to minimum wage and benefits. What I do have is a great care for the people of my district, for the people of Nebraska. What I do have is a great care for humanity. We worked very hard over the summer with all of our hearings, and every time that we had an opportunity in either one of the committees, our same community showed up, fought through obstacles to make sure that

our voice was heard. And so, I would stand always to ensure that their voices are heard. I do not have a personal agenda, and so there is nothing here for me but to stand up and to do what's right. Over in Madison County, Madison County, as of 2023, this report had 4,000 people with disabilities, 12.25 percent. We think about the 5 percent and the 2 percent that we're talking about in this bill. It has become clear to us that really, our administration does not care about the plight of our disabled community, and that's Victor Rountree's perspective. If so, we would forge forward and ensure that we take care of the least of these. We would not do what one of my fellow senators said, hey, let's just build a whole community for them and put them all together in that community, because the Olmstead Act [SIC] mandates that we integrate, integrate so that our members have an opportunity to live their best life. So, as we come to this vote today, I ask you to stand. When you stand for that which is right, you will get hit. You'll be talked about. You're going to be disliked, and sometimes even cast to the side. But none of us are here for that. We're here because our constituents voted for us to come, and that's where we are. So, I want to say, as we had the Final Reading, I want to thank Senators Andersen, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Clements, Hallstrom, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, Glen Meyer, Riepe, Storer, Storm, and Strommen. I want to thank you because on that particular vote, you voted no, and you stood by what you determined at that time. The other 34-- I see my light has come on, so I won't have time to read all of your names. But I will ask you today, as we get ready to vote for this override, that you stand strong also in this time of adversity. I ask that you also take the mantra that you are unbought and you are "unbossed," and let's vote for our constituents in the disabled community that we can give them the opportunity for right, liberty, life, and the pursuit of happiness. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

ARCH: Members, the question before the body is the motion to override. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 19 ayes, 28 nays. Excuse me. Voting aye: Senators Bostar, Brandt, John Cavanaugh, Machaela Cavanaugh, Conrad, DeBoer, Dorn, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hunt, Juarez, McKinney, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Rountree, Spivey, Wordekemper. Voting no: Senators Andersen, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Clements, Clouse, DeKay, Dover, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, Meyer, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Riepe, Sanders, Sorrentino, Storer, Storm,

Strommen, von Gillern. Not voting: Senators Arch and Hughes.
Vote is 19 ayes, 28 nays, 2 present, not voting.

ARCH: The motion is not successful. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Guereca would move that LB878 become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor.

ARCH: Senator Guereca, you're recognized to open on your motion.

GUERECA: Good morning, colleagues. I was not expecting to be standing before you all today asking for your support once again for my LB878. I would like to start off by saying that I'm disappointed that after working with many of you, the State Troopers association, and the Governor's staff on a compromise, that yesterday afternoon, I received notice that the bill had been vetoed. I will always work in good faith with interested parties to ensure that the policies we are pushing forward are as strong as possible, and I believe that's exactly what we did with LB878. LB878, my personal priority bill, would require the state of Nebraska to provide six weeks of paid parental leave to eligible full-time employees following the birth of their child. It also included six weeks of paid leave for the same employees should they choose to adopt a child under the age of 12 months. LB878 is an extremely modest proposal that helps our state employees, all of our state employers, plan for their future and expand their families. Colleagues, is that not exactly what we want for Nebraska families? Now, as many of you have seen, the offer of six weeks of maternity leave was extended this morning to the State Law Enforcement Bargaining Council, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the State Code Agency Teachers Association. What was missing was the leave for men who want to adopt, for fathers. So, that's who I'm standing up for right now: the State Patrolman who wants to open their home to a child that is in desperate leave of a loving home. What we have here is a simple policy dispute, colleagues. The Governor doesn't believe in paternity leave, and that's OK. What, what I heard when we were debating and negotiating on my bill is that the elected leaders in this Chamber did believe that if a father wants to open his home to a child, they should be given time. They should be given that time to bond, to make sure that child feels comfortable in this new environment. So, colleagues, you were with me on General File, you were with me on Select File, and you were with me on the Final Reading. I'm asking for you to stand with me one final time to show our unified support for the hardworking men

of this state that want to open their home to a deserving child. They're counting on us. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

GUERECA: Colleagues, I, I ask for your green vote again. What I heard while we were debating and while we discussing is that this is something that the leaders in this Chamber believe in supporting, believe in promoting. This is a simple policy dispute. So, colleagues, I ask for your green vote, and let's stand and create an environment where deserving children get a home. Thank you.

ARCH: Members, the question before the body is the motion to override. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 21-- excuse me. Voting aye: Senators Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Conrad, DeBoer, Dorn, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hughes, Hunt, Juarez, McKinney, Moser, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Rountree, Spivey, von Gillern, and Wordekemper. Voting no: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Clements, Clouse, DeKay, Dover, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, Meyer, Meyer, Murman, Riepe, Sanders, Sorrentino, Storer, Storm, Strommen. Not voting: Senator Bostar. The vote is 21 ayes, 27 nays, 1 present, not voting.

ARCH: The motion to override is not successful. Senator Sanders would like to recognize a special guest, Andrew Troy, who is director-producer and currently directing and producing the upcoming movie of Chief Standing Bear, "I Am a Man." He is an enrolled citizen, citizen of the Chiricahua Apache Nation in New Mexico, and is located under the south balcony. Please rise and be recognized by your Nebraska Legislature. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Fredrickson would move that LB929 become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor.

ARCH: Senator Fredrickson, you are recognized to open on your motion.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. I rise today to discuss my very first

veto, and to request your support in the motion to override this veto. So, I actually spent a lot of time debating whether or not I wanted to even file this motion in the first place, not because I don't believe in the bill per se, but more because, just from the perspective of kind of having to choose your battles. I think all of us can sort of relate to that feeling in here. That's part of what politics is, after all. But after a lot of thought about this last night, and I was just kind of reading over some of the recent news articles that have been coming out about the state of health care in our state-- and many of these, I've actually distributed on the floor for you to reference-- I realized that this is something I, I did want to have a legislative record on. And I want to be clear, I, I rise today not with frustration, but honestly kind of with a, a pretty profound sense of purpose and a great deal of optimism about our ability to work together as a body moving forward to address, I think, some of the disparities that we are going to be seeing before us, especially as we see all these changes to the health care landscape nationally and locally. So, as you now know, the Governor has chosen to veto LB929, or, as my son told me this morning, the Governor gave me an X, not a check mark. So, that is very first-grade-coded for not accepted. And while this is certainly his prerogative in our system, I want to be very clear, because a number of you have come up to me this morning, and I've had a number of people reach out to me asking if I'm OK, how I'm doing about this. And you know, I'm actually pretty unbothered by the political maneuvers of the vetoes that we had before us this morning, because my focus remains and it always has remained on where it's always been, which is on the people of my district and on the people of Nebraska. So, I wanted to talk a little bit about why we brought LB929 forward. We brought it forward as permissive legislation. It was not a mandate; it was a common-sense tool designed to give our managed care organizations the clear flexibility to pay deductibles and cost sharing for Medicaid enrollees when federal law allows for it. This was our previous practice as a state under conservative leadership, when deductibles and cost-sharing measures were in place for Medicaid enrollees. This body recognized value in that. We passed this bill with bipartisan support from across the entire state. We did that because we all see the same reality in our districts and with our constituents. Our health care system is, in fact, in a period of intense pressure, and there is some financial peril that we're facing. It's also important to note that this bill was the product of pretty diligent collaboration. After its introduction, my office worked closely with the Department of Health and Human Services to amend the language, specifically to address their concerns and

to remove their opposition. We did the work of building consensus because we knew that the stakes were high, and that it was important to get something passed that could get broad support. So, all of us in here have read the reports of what's happening across our state. So, as you can see in the-- I distributed a PBS News article. As you can in the article I distributed, in Creighton, Nebraska, a Nebraska family relies on their local hospital as a literal lifeline for their child. Yet, that facility faces an uncertain future as federal transformation funds fail to cover basic operational costs. In the NPR article that I distributed, you can read about how, in Chadron, we are seeing the impact of the closure of the only dialysis unit for miles. Nebraskans like Mark Pieper, who's featured in that article, are now forced to drive three-hour round trips just to receive life-sustaining treatment. These aren't abstract policy debates; these are the real lives of the constituents that we serve. The federal "landscape"-- the federal landscape, I should say, has shifted. And while there are new funds available, we have been warned by experts that these are just Band-Aids, and they don't address the \$137 billion loss that rural hospitals are expected to face over the next decade. LB929 was truly a modest way of saying that with all of these significant changes, MCOs in Nebraska are simply allowed-- they're not required, they're simply allowed to help cover co-pays for Medicaid recipients. It was a proactive step to reassure Nebraskans that we have their back when it comes to access to care. And the reality is, for some Medicaid recipients, is that a \$25 co-pay could deter them from seeking primary care, delaying care further until it's an actual emergency, which we all know will end up costing Nebraska taxpayers more in the long run. Now, some of you may see a veto and think that this conversation is over. I see it a bit differently. This is a moment for us to remember that we are a co-equal branch of government, and we cannot truly be a co-equal branch of government if we cave to the will of the executive branch whenever there's a disagreement. Some of us in this building may feel that they work for the Governor. But I want to be clear: I work for people in my district, and for the people of the state. So, regardless of the outcome of this vote, I'm committed to continuing this work. My door remains open to every colleague, regardless of party, who wants to work together to find solutions for what some are calling the dark days ahead that experts are predicting for our rural facilities and for our constituents' ability to get health care. The Governor's veto does not change the fact that Nebraskans still need access to care. It doesn't change the fact that we have a duty to lead in this body. So, I'm not discouraged, I'm pretty energized. And I

look forward to continuing this dialogue with all of you because the health of our neighbors is far more important than any political move. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. President. When you put a microscope on how much out-of-pocket is actually there for Medicaid recipients, regardless of which of the three MCOs they work with-- we have Nebraska Total Care, we have Molina, and we have United. The fact is, there's already very, very little out-of-pocket, either for prescription drugs, doctor visits, or hospital visits, and they've been doing that for a while now. Where this does have some effect is with dual-eligibles, those people who participate in both Medicare and Medicaid, because Medicaid is always the payer of last resort. That opens up an area in Medicare Part D, as in drugs. And so, for those who are dual-eligible, LB929 would provide some relief for those folks. But the fact is, from an insurance standpoint-- and that's what MCOs are; Managed Care Organizations are insurance companies, health insurance companies. They will all require participation because when you don't, not only in the Medicaid realm, but the Medicare realm, as well as in the major medical realm, when you don't, it does drive utilization. People will do that instead of making other choices first. And you might think, well, gosh, that's a good thing. Yes, people should go to the doctor. But you and I both know that sometimes we go to the doctor when, in fact, we should think it through. Don't just think, but think it through. And so, it does drive utilization, it drives costs, and that's part of the challenge with this. So, just wanted you to realize that when you're talking about out-of-pocket costs and going to the doctor and so on and so forth, all three MCOs have already, without LB929, brought the vast majority of those costs down to zero. So, this is affecting the dual-eligibles on the Medicare D side, and so that is something I just wanted to share with everybody. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Sometimes, it's hard to discern exactly where the bottom is for this Nebraska Legislature. And after 12 years of service, I really thought we hit a low point when we decided to balance the budget by stealing money from veterans in needs this year. But actually, I think the vote on my friend Senator Guereca's

override just a few minutes ago perhaps was a new low. Backing the blue means more than just wearing a blue sweater and taking a selfie. Proclaiming that you care about family values should follow with action that actually value families. The Nebraska Legislature just decided to deny benefits to cops who are dads that want to adopt after they decided that was good policy a few days ago, because the Governor said otherwise. OK. In regards to my friend Senator Fredrickson's motion to override, everybody can see what's happening in regards to this last day of session. The Governor is trying as hard as he can to change the narrative, to distract from the fact that he's done nothing on property tax relief, his signature issue, other than propose reverse-Robin-Hood tax schemes that he can't deliver on, thanks to the good sense of this body. He's done nothing but give sweetheart deals to big ag, big tech, and big business in the midst of an affordability crisis for everyday Nebraskans. He is the engineer and architect of fiscal irresponsibility that puts the largest corporations and the wealthiest over everyday Nebraska taxpayers and citizens. And look no further than the headlines in your paper today. You passed a reckless budget that was balanced in name only after making deep cuts to human services and the most vulnerable, and impermissibly stealing and sweeping funds from the Environmental Trust, Board of Education Lands and Funds, veterans, and other trust funds. And you had a balanced budget for, what, eight days? And today's headline shows you've already plunged almost back into a \$100 million deficit with your fiscal irresponsibility and a looming billion-dollar, almost billion-dollar budget deficit, structural budget deficit in the next biennium. So, the Governor and this Legislature can do whatever they want to try and twist and change the narrative, but Nebraska voters are smart, and they're not going to be fooled by these antics or this rhetoric. They're going to see the votes on the board. Who's standing up to remove barriers to access health care when we've seen 140,000 Nebraskans lose access to Medicaid through unwind? When we have seen 30,000 Nebraskans lose Medicaid access due to cuts? When we've seen the elimination and repeal of the ACA credits on the federal level because of Republican dysfunction, impacting 130,000 Nebraskans who use that, hitting the poor and seniors and kids and rural Nebraskan the hardest? Now, 91 percent of Nebraskans will see increases in their medical costs that are spiraling out of control. And Senator Fredrickson's bill that he worked with every stakeholder in the health care space to address these issues, to try to make modest but meaningful process-- progress, to make health care a little bit more affordable, that actually removes red tapes for those in this space, to help find efficiencies and helps to ensure that we

save costs by getting more Nebraskans care earlier rather than putting it off, where it hits harder and it's more expensive for everyone. This is a common-sense proposal. Senator Fredrickson did the work. You voted for it through three rounds of debate. Compromise and common sense and removing barriers to health care access is exactly what this Legislature should be focused on.

ARCH: Time, Senator.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator DeKay would like to recognize some special guests. There are 14 fourth-grade students from Elgin Public School, and they are located in the north balcony. Students, if you would 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. Good morning, colleagues. I rise in support of Senator Fredrickson's motion to override the Governor's veto. I'd like to say, apropos of nothing, that medical cannabis is currently legal in the state of Nebraska. As to Senator Fredrickson's bill, there was a lot of debate on the last day of priority bills and LB777, and whether or not we should prioritize-- who should prioritize LB777 or not prioritize LB777. For those of you that don't know, that was the Medicaid look-back that ultimately I amended into LB958. But we had discussed amending it into LB929 because there was a thought that that was the, the safer bill. And it was made very clear that LB777 was super important to the majority of this body, even a supermajority of this body, and I, I felt strongly that I wanted my two bills to be together, and so that's what happened. And you all voted for my bills, and the Governor did not veto my bills. So, I would put this question to you: if LB777 were in LB929 today, would you vote to override that veto? And if the answer is yes, then the answer should still be yes, even though it is only LB929 and does not have an additional bill in it. So colleagues, please do what you all intended to do when we were deciding on who would sign up to prioritize the Medicaid look-back. You were willing to put it in this bill and have this be the vehicle, so be willing to save this bill and override this veto. Thank you very much.

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

MOSER: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I voted against LB929 the first time, so I will be voting no on the override when that comes up. But I couldn't let the comments on the budget pass. Current budget has \$1.4 billion with a "b" in property tax credits. They go to the counties to come directly off of your property tax, and the next year's budget is \$1.5 billion that comes off your property tax bills. So, that's certainly not nothing. That's, that's I think 20 percent. It's a step in the right direction. The early revenue projections, the people who file earlier, the ones who have money coming back, and I think those hit in-- last month. And the people have to pay are waiting till the last minute, and I think those revenues will come in in the next couple of months. So, thank you, Mr. President.

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

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. So, I just want to sort of reiterate. So, LB929, as I sort of mentioned in my opening here, a real modest piece of legislation. It's permissive in nature. The bill that eventually passed was the one that I worked with. It was actually DHHS's language that they provided, so I would appreciate your support on that. I also want to just quickly, genuinely thank my colleagues who have been engaged in the discussion of all the veto overrides this morning. I know when we're in Final Read, all of us are in our chairs, we're listening, and it's, it's an, it's an arduous process. And I, you know, I think veto overrides are equally important as, as a Final Read. So, I know it's the last day, and I know many of us have been kind of given our instructions on how to vote for the agenda for the day, but I do appreciate those who are engaged and who are listening to debate, because it does matter. These are, these are important conversations to have, and they're, they're important discussions for, for Nebraskans, even if they're not important to those in the body. So, I would encourage your green vote. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Members, the motion before the body is to override. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Arch, Ballard, Bostar, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Conrad, DeBoer, Dorn, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hughes, Hunt, Juarez, McKinney, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Spivey. Voting no: Senators Andersen,

Armendariz, Bosn, Clements, Clouse, DeKay, Dover, Hallstrom, Hardin, Holdcroft, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, Meyer, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Sanders, Sorrentino, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Not voting: Senator Hansen. The vote is 22 ayes, 26 nays, 1 present, not voting.

ARCH: The motion is not successful. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator John Cavanaugh would move that LB1256 become law notwithstanding the objections of the Governor.

ARCH: Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to open on your motion.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. So-- well, this is the last day, so there are a number of you that are leaving today, and so I'll take my opportunity to say that when you're gone, I'll miss you. Some more than others. But-- thanks, Merv. So, LB1256 was a consent calendar bill that passed 49-0. It came out of committee 8-0, had no testimony against it. The Governor's veto message is simply just wrong. So, political subdivisions can only override their caps to the extent that they expended funds in response to a declared emergency. LB126-- LB1256 does not touch the definition of emergency referenced in the Property Tax Growth Limitation Act. LB1256 does clarify that snow and ice removal and flood management are emergency management functions. To the extent these functions take place in response to a declared emergency, political subdivisions were already able to override their caps. So, LB1256 may allow for other aid to be leveraged for these functions. So, the whole purpose of LB1256 was one, to add into the, the statute making it reflect reality, which is, we know that snowplow drivers in certain situations are emergency responders because they are clearing the streets in response to a declared emergency, and of course fire trucks, police, and other ambulances cannot travel on blocked streets. The same with flood mitigation. So, it's really a cleanup bill. But I'll walk you through where we're at. In the summer of 2024, this Legislature passed LB34 in a special session. LB34 created the property tax levy caps. And so, in 13-3403, the property tax request authority calculation, it says that the, the political subdivision's property tax request for any year shall not exceed the property tax request authorized as determined under the section, and then it goes through a lot of other parts, and then

it says except utilized-- except when the, the sum utilized under 13-3404. So, if you go to 13-3404, it says a political subdivision may increase its property tax request authority over the amount determined under 13-3403-- so, the last section-- by-- and then you go subparagraph (2)-- the amount of property tax needed to respond to an emergency declared in the preceding year as certified by the Auditor. So-- and then, you have to look at the definitions, which is, again, under Section-- Chapter 13, terms defined. Emergency means an emergency as defined under 81-80-- 81-829.39 for which a state of emergency proclamation or local state of emergency proclamation has been issued under the Emergency Management Act. So, all of that is to say that was passed in the special session creating the cap. This was-- I think one of the Governor's signature bills was this levy cap, and it had a, a outlet for emergencies. So, unexpected expenses when an emergency was declared, and an emergency can be declared either by the Governor or by the local authority. However, for purposes of overriding the levy cap, that emergency still has to be certified by the Auditor. So, they don't get the opportunity, I think, to certify the, the emergency, but only for purposes of overriding the levy cap. So, an emergency in that section of statute is an event or eminent threat thereof causing serious damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural or manmade cause which, in the determination of the Governor or principal executive of the local government requires immediate action to accomplish the purpose of Emergency Management Act and effectively respond to the event or threat of the event. So, this includes weather events, which are snow and flooding. So, this is-- that is already the law. None of this, what I have covered so far, is in this bill. None of this is a change in statute. So, the Governor's argument that emergency expenses in response to flooding and blizzards would increase property taxes is simply wrong. Property taxes being able to be increased as a result of a-- of snow and flooding is in a law the Governor passed, advocated for, signed, and has celebrated. So, that is the Governor's doing, to allow for those things. What this bill does is add into the emergency management means definition the language that includes snow, snow and ice removal, included but not limited to firefighter services, police services, medical services, warning systems, radiological preparedness, hazardous response, evacuation, stricken areas, emergency welfare services, emergency transportation, restoration of public utilities, and then adding in snow and ice removal and flood management, and other functions related to civil protection, together with all other activities necessary or incidental to the preparation for and carrying out of the functions listed in this subdivision. So, all-- snow and ice

removal and flood management are already covered. This is just explicitly adding them to include-- be included, as well as returning of power and cleaning up hazardous material, engineering services. So, this bill is a cleanup bill, which is why it had no opposition. At committee, it had-- it came out 8-0, it was 49-0 on the floor here, and does not change the fact that if there is a flood in your community and your local authority or the Governor declares it an emergency, that the county or city or village, any expense they incur to deal with that flood is exempted from the levy cap for the next year. Or, if there is a blizzard in your community, any response to that blizzard and it is declared as an-- declared as an emergency, any response to that, the cost incurred and the response to that is also exempted from the levy cap. That is already the state of the law. What this bill does is it, one, reflects reality, and two, allows, potentially, your county, your city, your village to access federal emergency funds or state emergency funds when those emergencies are declared for those services. So, if anything, vetoing this bill and sustaining the veto would potentially increase property taxes as a result of cutting off a funding source. So, I would encourage your green vote on the motion to override the veto. 49 of you voted for this bill. 8 of you voted for it in committee. The bill itself has not changed. No one has spoken against this bill until the Governor decided yesterday, apparently, that he has regrets about LB34 that was passed in the summer of 2024. So, I encourage your green vote. If you have any questions, I'm here to answer them for you. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of the motion to override for LB1256. The Governor and the Department of Labor are missing the reality of what's already happening on the ground. Including this language isn't expanding anything; it's recognizing that these are, in fact, emergency events, and that public works employees are already responding as a part of that system. To oppose this bill based solely on a projected financial assumption is a disservice to taxpayers, especially when it ignores the role these workers play in protecting our communities and keeping people safe. If the argument is that we can't move forward because of a property tax concern, then we're prioritizing short-term politics over long-term preparedness. That's a dangerous position to take when disasters don't wait for budgets to catch up, which has been clear this session. You know? We've, we've had disasters in our state. 49 senators

supported this bill without controversy, without opposition. This matter-- it-- that matters. It shows that there wasn't-- this, this isn't a partisan issue, it was a common-sense piece of legislation that we all supported. And at the end of the day, this is about being honest with taxpayers about what it takes to keep communities safe, failing to recognize that the reality doesn't save money, it's-- it just leaves us unprepared. And I think that's something we should think about. You know, there was mention about what happened in Beatrice and not being prepared to respond to that, and having to find resources for that. I'm sure, going into next year, if the feds don't step in as much as possible with fires, there's going to be legislation or something to try to address what happened with the fires in our state, which is why we need to be more prepared and make sure we're prepared. Because when you look around the nation and globally, natural disasters have been increasing over the past decade. Whether you believe in climate change or not, it's just a thing. Other things been happening as well, and I think that we should be prepared, and we should make sure that our communities are prepared. I don't understand the opposition to this bill, but I do support the override because I think we should make sure our communities are prepared. Thank you.

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

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. Apparently, in an attempt to look like he was owning the progressives, the Governor decided to veto a bunch of bills. But man, I mean, with this one, he had to scrape the bottom of the barrel. This is a real stretch. It's a cleanup bill. And you all knew that, because you voted for it three times. Maybe even four times, for those of you on the committee. If you switch your vote on this one, it either means that you didn't understand what you were voting for on three rounds of debate, or you don't actually control how you vote in here. Someone else controls that. And that seems like something the voters ought to know. But it doesn't show that you won, and it won't make anyone cry. It just shows that either you weren't doing your job in the first three rounds of debate, or you aren't doing your job now. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

JUAREZ: Thank you very much, Mr. President. Good morning to my colleagues, and good morning to those watching us online. I do rise in support of the motion to override for LB1256, and I'm just going to take a few minutes to discuss other topics also.

But I did want to say, you know, when I went and bought my last home-- and I've done this for other properties also, but it was a-- it's a good habit that I developed, I felt, because I've moved more than once. And when I'm looking at a piece of property, I think about snow, especially snow, and living in Omaha, Nebraska, and ice. And I go and I drive around the neighborhood, saying to myself, OK, am I going to get out of here OK on my own? Is it dangerous for me to attempt to leave some-- leave my home when the weather's not the best? And that's just been a good basic thought to have when you're looking at a house. And fortunately for me, there's only one time in my neighborhood that I actually slid right down through the stop sign onto the main street because of ice. Fortunately, no one was coming in the other direction. And mind you, the hill isn't even that big, but I still slid right through that stop sign. So, I think that it is good to consider supporting this, to recognize the duties that are involved in trying to help us in these type of emergencies that take place. I mean, I even looked at the issue of flooding. Even though I've never been in a flood, thank goodness, I still thought about something like that; thought about my little hill that I was on, and if the Missouri flooded, you know, did I think I was going to be protected OK? Because for me, as a single person, my house is my major asset. So, that's why I always took it seriously on what I was looking at when I was going to purchase my home. The other thing I wanted to say is, I can't believe that today is going to be a day to be saying goodbye to some of my fellow senators in this room. I mean, some of you, hopefully, will be coming back after your election. It'll be interesting to see how it all turns out for everyone. And this is only my second session, and I can't believe that in January, I'm going to be greeting, potentially, some new faces. And I sat here this morning wondering, gosh, what's that going to feel like, that I'm already going to be a senator who's going to be welcoming others to our body? And I appreciate the sacrifice that everyone makes to be here each and every day that we're in session. I know that some of you make greater sacrifices than others of us. I mean, those of you who get another place here so you don't have to-- because it's so far to travel back home. That's not the situation for me, but I know that it's still a sacrifice that we all make, even in my little commute. And I know that it's a sacrifice that we think about when we're even running to support not only our districts, but also to be supportive for our state and the important role that we have here in serving in the Legislature. And I just want to wish all of you the best rest of your year, that you stay safe, and that you try to have some fun for the rest of the year. Because believe me, some days in this

place, it's certainly not fun. Maybe more days than not. But I do want to say my farewell. Thank you.

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

RAYBOULD: Good morning, colleagues. You know, there is a very simple reason why this came out on Final Reading 49-0, why it came out of committee 8-0 in favor. It's just common sense. This is the most common-sense, most practical bill. And I think you have heard from your colleagues in city council, or your county commissioners, or your county supervisors that they know that our constituents will be the first to hit the phone to say, "When are you going to rock my road? When are you going to plow my road?" And it's the same. I can't tell you how many calls that we get on, "When are you going to, to plow my road? I need to get to work. I need get my child to, to daycare." It is so critically important. Counties know that. Those who have served in that capacity know it's just doing our job. It's called public safety. Number one, making sure our roads are safe and clear for commerce, for families to get to school. It's just common sense. And it's, it's the same thing for floods. Oh my gosh. I just remember flooding in 2015 and 2019, how critical it was. If you have one bad blizzard, one bad blizzard, ice storm, you name it, it'll blow through your budget in a matter of days, and it goes the same for flooding. I mean, the disasters that we're dealing with flooding, and the aftermath that we're stealing [SIC] with. Ask your county commissioner or your county supervisor that may have had to apply for NEMA, Nebraska Emergency Management funding, or FEMA, Federal Emergency Management funding from the flood back in 2019. Guess what they'll tell you? They have not yet been reimbursed. So, what does that do to those budgets? It really constrains those budgets to the point where you have to cut, cut, cut services. And keep your fingers crossed that we have another dry winter, which is not what our farmers and our ag industry needs. But so, this is such a common-sense, practical bill. I, I can't believe that we had to stand up today and talk about why it's so important. You know, we, we supported the lid. OK, that's fine. But what about all those communities that just went through the wildfires that we have? How do you expect them to recover? I guarantee that their resources have been depleted and drained. How are they going to continue to deliver the services that their constituents expect? I remember as a county commissioner talking to our county engineer, and I said, hey, we're in a budget crisis that was due in part when the state of Nebraska said we are not going to pay you your state aid to cities and counties again. And I said, well, you know, we're going to have

to cut your, your engineering budget on, on roads. And I asked the county engineer, what are you going to do? And the county engineer said, oh, I just won't rock any road, I won't pave any roads. That's the recourse, that's the result of, of one budget deficit, the result of one bad blizzard, one horrific flooding. And now, we have wildfires to add onto that. I don't think we should be meddling in local government decision-making when they have emergencies. They know how to deal with them. But to tell them that, I'm sorry, your, your budget lid is just impenetrable; you cannot raise that lid for these type of issues that matter to your constituents, that matter to the functionality of your local government. I guess it's your call today, you know? But if you all voted for it back then, 8-0, it was on the consent agenda. And in-- for folks that are listening out there, consent agenda is a totally non-controversial piece of legislation. And all of a sudden, it became a big controversy. Senator Cavanaugh said it very clearly, I don't think the Governor understands that it is not going to have the impact or the dollar amount they projected. We don't want to cripple local government; we want them to be able to function. We're seeing it play out with horrific weather conditions right now. Some of the states in the Midwest are going to be enduring their second round of tornado activity and devastation. Let's use our common sense, because that's what our fellow Nebraskans out there watching us expect of us. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator von Gillern would like to recognize some special guests. Before I introduce the 70 students, 70 fourth-grade students from Lifegate Christian School, there's a very special guest in the balcony: his granddaughter, Emmalyn. Emmalyn, would you rise so we could see who you are? Welcome. Students, please rise and be welcomed by your Nebraska Legislature. Senator Wordekemper would also like to recognize some special guests. There are four fourth-grade students from St. Wenceslaus in-- from Dodge, Nebraska. Students, if, if you would please rise and be welcomed by your Nebraska Legislature. Returning to the queue, Senator Bosn, you're recognized to speak.

BOSN: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise with just a few questions for Senator Cavanaugh. He and I spoke briefly off the record, and I thought it might be a good opportunity to try to articulate-- not that he didn't do a great job of explaining his concerns, but back and forth using an example. Would Senator John Cavanaugh yield to some questions?

ARCH: Senator John Cavanaugh, would you yield?

J. CAVANAUGH: Yes.

BOSN: Thanks, Senator Cavanaugh. I-- you and I talked briefly, and I think sometimes it's helpful for people if we use examples. So, the example we were using was, if there was a blizzard in Omaha, under LB34 that we passed two sessions, two sessions ago, would snow and ice removal be covered under LB34?

J. CAVANAUGH: So, for it to be covered under LB34, first, it would have to-- there'd have to be an emergency declared by the Governor or the mayor of Omaha. But then, yeah, it-- so, a-- LB34 allows for the levy lid in the next year to be exceeded by a municipality for a weather-related emergency, if there's an, an, an emergency declared. So, not just a blizzard, but it'd have to be a blizzard that rose the level of a declared emergency.

BOSN: OK. And so, that's under LB34, nothing to do with LB1256 that we're talking about today.

J. CAVANAUGH: Correct.

BOSN: And it's my understanding from our conversation that LB1256 deals more with granting the State Auditor the authority to use federal and state emergency funding to cover those exceeding costs so that we can avoid a levy increase.

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, it-- so, it, it explicitly lists snow and ice removal and flood management in the emergency management activities, which then allows for those expenses when there is an emergency declared to be accessible by the local entity for state or federal emergency funds.

BOSN: And that would essentially be in lieu of going to your property tax cap levy and asking for the funds from there.

J. CAVANAUGH: Right. It would, it would be an additional funding source that the local entity would be able to capture rather than increasing property taxes to cover those unforeseen expenses.

BOSN: And based on my conversation with you, I'm, I'm learning to understand that the State Auditor, as it stands right now, occasionally will deny those emergency funds for purposes of snow and ice removal and flood management under the Emergency

Management Act, or whatever it was that you called the-- FEMA and whatever the state version of that is.

J. CAVANAUGH: Yeah, the State Emergency Management Act. My understanding is, yes, that the, the Auditor, because it's not explicitly listed there, that when the locals, the counties and the cities, have gone and asked for some of those funds, they said those are not eligible expenses at this point. And so, that's what the clarification is for. Because the events themselves are already covered, but it's these specific expenses that had not been-- are, are not-- had been not deemed eligible in certain instances.

BOSN: So, the purpose of your bill is to make snow and ice removal and flood management funding eligible under FEMA and the State Emergency Management Act.

J. CAVANAUGH: To clarify that, yes.

BOSN: OK. Because technically, they could be covered, but it's your concern that as it stands right now, they're not. And so, this would, under the included but not limited to language, more clarify that it also includes flood management, snow and ice removal.

J. CAVANAUGH: Yeah, exactly. So, yeah, the included but not limited to language, I think, does already include this, but we're just explicitly adding it so that there's no confusion.

BOSN: OK. Is there anything under the FEMA or the State Emergency Management Act right now that creates a property tax lid levy eligibility increase?

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, I mean, that-- the emergency part is already in this act, as it's just a separate subparagraph. So, that exemption under LB34 is, is, is referenced to a declared emergency, which is a separate section of this act. So, it is under the Emergency Management Act, but that's just a separate definition.

BOSN: OK. My last question. Right now, if there is a blizzard in Omaha or Lincoln, or anywhere, quite frankly, and snow and ice removal services are required, who pays that as it stands right now?

J. CAVANAUGH: The, the city or the county where the event happens.

BOSN: Using property taxes.

J. CAVANAUGH: Using property taxes, yeah.

BOSN: OK. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh.

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

HALLSTROM: Thank you Mr. Speaker, members. I just had maybe a question to ask Senator Cavanaugh, too. I, I think Senator DeBoer's comments were a little bit over the top. I went back and listened to the committee hearing. It was all of 10 to 12 minutes, including Senator Cavanaugh's opening and closing. A representative from AFSCME testified, talked a lot about essential workers and, and recognizing the employees' activities in keeping public safety. But I really never gathered or garnered what the underlying benefit of the bill was. But Senator Cavanaugh, I'd, I'd like to give you an opportunity to, to maybe expound. During the course of that hearing, Senator Guereca asked you, what are the benefits of the bill? And as close as I could tell from listening to the committee hearing, you responded that it frees up some budgetary restraints that are not applicable to emergencies. Can you go further--

ARCH: John Cavanaugh, will you yield?

HALLSTROM: --exactly what that meant? Because once I listened to the committee hearing, Governor Pillen's remarks in his veto message started to resonate a little bit more with me that maybe we are looking at the public safety exemption under LB34, and the soft caps and the exclusions that exist when there are emergencies. So, if you could maybe explain that in a little more detail.

J. CAVANAUGH: Am I good to go? Thank you, Mr. President. Thanks, Senator Hallstrom. So, we're not touching the public safety cap. That's a separate section. This is under-- this is the emergency response. And so, the-- again, the only-- when, when there is an ability to exceed the levy caps in an emergency, it is only for the expenses incurred during the emergency, and it has to be a declared emergency by the Governor or the local entity. And for purposes of the levy cap override, that has to then also be

approved by the Auditor. And so, that is a separate section that is not in this section. What this is, is including in what is called emergency management in adding-- in addition to hazard-- hazardous waste materials response, evacuation persons, restricted areas, emergency welfare services, emergency transportation services, restoration of public utility services, snow/ice removal, and flood management are added explicitly into that. And the, the purpose is, as the, the representative from AFSCME was saying, those folks, members of AFSCME who do-- you know, snowplow drivers, AFSCME is a lot of snowplow drivers and other folks like that-- when you drive between Omaha and Lincoln, maybe when there's a big storm-- I remember there was one in January of 2024, I think it was-- it might have been 2025. But we had-- there was a big snowstorm where you couldn't traverse between Omaha and Lincoln until the snowplow drivers had been through. So, it closed off the interstate. And so, that was an emergency situation to get the interstates open. And so, snowplow drivers already have, like, a card that says they are an emergency responder. In this section of statute, they are not explicitly recognized as an emergency responder. And so, that was, I think, what that gentleman was talking about. But specifically for this, what it does is allows the county or the city, municipality that has a declared emergency to gain access to emergency funds from either the state or the feds if there is a declared emergency, that then they would be able to use to pay for the cost of that response. That's what this section allows for under the emergency management definition.

HALLSTROM: OK. You would indicate that, again, your remarks were it frees up some budgetary restraints that are not applicable to emergencies. Were those only referring to federal budgetary restraints?

J. CAVANAUGH: No, it, it, it allows access to both state and federal emergency response funds.

HALLSTROM: OK. Thank you.

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

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Hallstrom thought that my comments were over the top, but I do remember hearing the statement "all provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with," and then we passed the bill 49-0. So, it seems to me that a senator's responsibility is to understand what they're voting on. That's what it seems is the

responsibility of a senator: to vote for things that they know what they're voting on. And if they don't do that, then that seems like they are not following their duty. That's all I meant, Senator Hallstrom; that if you voted for three times on a bill and you didn't know what you were voting for, that seems like an abrogation of your duty. But we'll see how this vote goes. We'll see if folks vote the way that they had before, or if they vote differently. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to close.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, colleagues. I appreciate the interest in this bill. As Senator DeBoer just said, this bill passed 48-0 [SIC], came out of committee 8-0. No one testified against it, no one raised any concerns, the Governor didn't express any of these concerns along the way. But just to, again, put a point on it, the, the Governor's complaints about emergency activities being subject to levy overrides, that is in a bill that he passed, he signed, he called a special session to do. That is the law currently. So, if you don't like that law-- I'll tell you, I didn't vote for that law. But if you don't like that law, you got a problem with somebody else, and it's something that already happened. But this bill does not affect that. This bill adds the words snow and ice removal, flood management to the list of emergency management means. And so, it is, of course, a recognition of reality: the snowplows and flood response are dangerous and urgent in when they come up. But what it is intended to do is say, when one of these emergency activities happens and there needs to be a response, that some opportunity to capture the, the cost the city, county, municipality incurs in response to that declared emergency can be recaptured. And so, the Governor's complaint is with his own bill. This bill actually provides the opportunity for counties and municipalities to find other funding sources rather than property taxes. So, if anything, this veto will increase property taxes. This bill provides an opportunity for property tax relief through funding emergency response through other opportunities besides property taxes. So, this was a consent calendar bill, 49-0. I encourage all of you to vote the same way you did on the three previous rounds of debate. I appreciate the conversation, and I would ask for your green vote. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Members, the item before the body is the motion to override. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Arch, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Conrad, DeBoer, Dorn, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hughes, Hunt, Juarez, McKinney, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Spivey, Wordekemper. Voting no: Senators Andersen, Armendariz, Clements, Clouse, DeKay, Hallstrom, Hardin, Holdcroft, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, Fred Meyer, Glen Meyer, Moser, Murman, Sanders, Sorrentino, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern. Not voting: Senators Ballard, Dover, Hansen, Storer. Vote is 23 ayes, 22 nays, 4 not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: The motion is not successful. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, LR509 introduced by Senator Storer. It congratulates Deloris Marshall Adamson for being inducted into the Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame.

ARCH: Senator Storer, you are recognized to open on your motion.

STORER: Thank you, Mr. President. I admit, when I got into the office this morning, I was not prepared to do this, because we don't normally get to speak to legislative resolutions, but given the short turnaround of when this was introduced. So mom, if you're watching, this is kind of a surprise to me as well, but I know you didn't know I did this. So, I'm just going to read briefly, but I was very honored to have got all 48 of my colleagues to sign on to this resolution. Whereas the Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame banquet and induction ceremony will be held on June 6, 2026 at the Cherry County Fairgrounds in Valentine, Nebraska; and whereas Deloris-- otherwise known as Dee-- Marshall Adamson will be inducted into the Hall of fame for her dedication to honesty, hard work, and care of livestock, exemplifying the cowboy way of life; and whereas Dee was born September 27-- 22, 1937, and lived on a ranch near Whitman, Nebraska, where she grew up working the ranch with her family and was almost always on a horse; whereas Dee rode her horse to school, helped drive cattle, spent time plotting horse adventures like taking her horse to the county fair in Mullen, despite not being entered in any competitions; whereas Dee, later in life, entered in western Nebraska and national cutting horse association competitions with her favorite horse, Puff of Smoke, where they were a formidable pair; and whereas Dee continued to go on daily rides until she broke her femur, on a horse by the way, in a riding accident at the age of 79, she has since been able to return to riding from time to time; whereas

Dee married her husband Jerry while teaching in rural Cherry County in 1960, raised four children, and now has 11 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren; and whereas Dee and Jerry use their expertise in judging 4-H FFA college competitions; whereas Dee's love of horses and her cowboy way of life runs deep. Now, therefore, let it be resolved by the members of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature of Nebraska, Second Session, that the Legislature congratulates Deloris Marshall Adamson for being inducted into the Nebraska Sandhills Cowboy Hall of Fame. And I would just say that it's an honor to have had you all sign this. It's an honor to give this honor to my mother. She will formally have this presented to her at the induction. But mom, you're truly one of the hardest-working examples of honesty and integrity that anyone could hope to have. So, thank you.

DeBOER: Thank you, Senator Storer. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Storer, you're recognized to close. Senator Storer waives her closing. The question before the, the body is LR509. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 47 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the resolution, Madam President.

DeBOER: The resolution is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mister-- Madam President, new LR: LR510 introduced by Speaker Arch--

DeBOER: Speaker--

CLERK: --thanking Carol Koranda for her exceptional service and commitment to the Legislature and the state of Nebraska, and congratulating her on her distinguished career and well-deserved retirement.

DeBOER: Speaker Arch, you are recognized to open on your resolution.

ARCH: Thank you, Madam President. I think, first of all, I would say that there ought to be a law against this, that, that Carol cannot retire. It is not allowed. Well, we're probably not going to get that done today, but we are going to recognize her. 38 years in the Clerk's office. And I-- anybody that knows-- anybody that knows Carol-- I, I have one question for Carol, and

I know you can't answer it on the microphone, but I'll just ask it. And that is, were you born happy, or did this job make you happy? I think the job made you happy, or maybe it was working with us, that's what made you happy. But if you know Carol, you come in in the morning, she's happy. Late at night, we adjourn at 10:00, she's happy. Of course, we're hap-- she's happy we adjourned. But yeah, she-- her positive, always-positive outlook has, has always been appreciated. And the job that she's had over the years, very technical, very detailed, depending upon her to make sure that everything is accurate, because the record that is built by this Legislature is in large part depending upon her indexing work that she does. So, I-- it was a pleasure to introduce this resolution, and I see that there's others that also want to make comments. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

DUNGAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in favor of this resolution. I would encourage your green vote on that. I won't take all the time, but I just wanted to say a couple things. First of all, I did not realize, Carol, you've been in this office for 38 years. I'm 37, just to put that in perspective. I appreciate the amount of time and effort you've put into this job. For those watching at home, or if you don't do this job on a regular basis, you probably don't know all of the amazing work the Clerk's office does in general. This job is hard enough as a senator, but it's-- it would be impossible without the amazing work of the people we have in the Clerk's office. And I could stand up here and thank all of those people, but Carol, your leadership and your continuity in the office I know gives a lot of us as senators comfort and confidence that we know what's happening in the Clerk's office is being done correctly, and being done in a way that is making everything run smoothly. With term limits, there's not a lot of people who have been here very long. And when I first came in, I had a bajillion questions. And you probably-- those watching at home, again, know that I walk up to the front a lot and ask questions on a regular basis. And Carol, your consistent ability to answer those questions professionally, accurately, and again, with a smile on your face, I think is one of the things that has given me a lot of comfort and security in this job. And so, moving forward, we're all sad to see you leaving, and this Legislature is worse off without you. That being said, we will limp along as best we can. Thanks to all of the amazing work you've done training up the other members of the Clerk's office to continue the work in your

same vein. So, thank you for all of the amazing work you've done. Please vote yes on LR510.

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

SPIVEY: Thank you, Mr. President. So, I was super sad when this LR came around and we were getting the signatures. And I was taken back by surprise of, wait, "Carol-who" is retiring? And it can't be my Carol, the Carol that works here and is so kind and understanding and patient, and, as Senator Dungan says, really makes sure that we have what we need to do our job. I am-- I guess I'm a second-semester freshman, so coming out of my freshman year, and the Clerk's office in general has been super helpful. But you, Carol, have just been such a joy to work with. We have really hard nights, and this job is really stressful, and you are always so accommodating. "Yes, Senator, whatever you need." "Make sure you do this." "Yep, I can take care of that." And I know that I skipped some corners and you allow me to just make sure it can get done because you want us to be focused at what's in front of us, which is a really big, important job. You have put so much effort into the work that you do, and it has been so meaningful to me to work alongside you in the Clerk's office, to be able to see you every day, to have our pink on Wednesdays. And I'm going to really miss you, and I hope this next chapter brings you so much joy and rest, and all the things that you deserve and need, because you have poured so much into this institution. So, thank you for your service and sacrifice here as well.

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

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. I already grabbed Kleenex, Carol, because I know I'm going to cry. You have been a lifesaver in this place. Your work is so important. I make you sign it for me every year, the index book. If you guys don't have it, you can get a copy in the Clerk's office. You can also look it up online, because we've gone digital. But your presence has meant more to me than I could ever fully express. I don't think I would have survived this place without having you to look at when I was talking about crazy things, or telling myself jokes at 10:00 at night, and you would just smile at me and make me feel less alone. And I have cherished every interaction I've ever had with you, and I'm excited for you to have this next chapter. I'm seeing Janice [PHONETIC] and Sally over here, and

I'm like, I've missed you ladies. I can't even imagine. I'm so glad I don't have to be here without Carol because it's-- I-- it-- it's just-- it's too much. It's too much, because you are a rock star, and people don't even know who you are half the time. They're like, who's she's talking about? Carol Blood? And I was like, no, that's Senator Blood. Carol is Carol. It's Carol. So, thank you for your years of service, the lifetime of Senator Dungan that you have spent here. Actually, a little bit-- I guess if we count his mother's pregnancy, it really is the lifetime of Senator Dungan that Carol has served the Legislature. And I know you will be missed, but not by me, because we're going to leave this place together. Thank you, Carol, so much.

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

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. I'd "urd"-- urge the members' favorable consideration of this resolution, which appropriately marks the life and legacy and work of our good friend, our dear friend, Carol Koranda. There's a famous saying from the movies that's made its way into our, our popular culture, describing the role that leading women play along with leading men. And when they were describing how Fred Astaire worked with Ginger Rogers, they talked about how she did everything Fred did, but backwards and in heels. The focal point on the dais each day has been strong male leaders, from our beloved Patrick O'Donnell to our present Brandon Metzler. But the steady presence, the quiet presence, the brilliant presence, the attentive presence, the kind presence, the caring presence seated next to them for decades was Carol. Carol, we'll miss your smile. I will miss our shared affinity for black turtlenecks. I will miss your invaluable institutional knowledge and attention to detail at any given moment, no matter what chaos is happening in the world or on the legislative floor. Thank you for sharing your brilliance, your dedication, your fair-mindedness, your good humor with each of us who are lucky enough to steward this institution. And thank you for your incredible commitment to public service as a true patriot and as a Nebraska treasure. Carol, we thank you, we love you, we'll miss you. Nebraska is better because of you. Thank you.

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

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. Carol, I want to wish you the best of everything that life has to offer. You and I have been around here for almost the same number of years in one capacity or another. And I think that a testament to the impact you have had on the institution are the staff members, as I look around the Chamber, that are dabbing their eyes right now in respect for what you've done. Senators come and go every eight years or so; some, fewer than that. But the dedicated and professional members of our staff like you make all the difference in the world, and make the process work. So, best of luck, and good health in your retirement or whatever the next step of your journey involves. And most of all, thank you for your friendship. Thank you, Carol.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. Senator Rountree, you're recognized to speak.

ROUNTREE: Good morning, and thank you so much, Mr. President. And I do rise in total support of this LR. And Carol, I just want to say thank you. You've always had my back. Even in the times when I came in and I didn't press my button to-- for accountability, you made sure I was accounted for. This old mind would get to be scatterbrained sometimes, but I really appreciate the fact that you always knew what I needed before I knew what needed. And that really attested to, you know, your strength, your service, your wisdom, and just knowing the process. So, I really appreciate that. And I'm just going to leave with one scripture out of Proverbs 22:1, and I think this sums you up. And it says: a good name is better than riches. You can have all the riches in the world, but if you don't have a good name, it matters not. You have a good name. And as you go forward, your name will go before you, and it will open doors for you. But the memory that you leave with us is part of the institution. I always talk about honoring the institution; you are part of the institution, and will be a part of that forever. So, thank you so much, and it's been an honor and a privilege to sit on this first row and work with you. So, I appreciate you. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Rountree. Senator Clements, you're recognized to speak.

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of LR510. Carol Koranda, it's been great knowing you 10 sessions. And we've had a little agreement going on. Carol's been helping me out, because about five years ago, I decided I want to-- I

wanted to have the highest-numbered bill in the session. And I handed the bill to her-- Carol, would you-- don't record this one until everybody else is in. And for about five sessions now, she would take a bill and set it aside so that I would have the highest number. If you looked, last year, it was number 714, and this year, it's number 1260. And I just wanted to thank you, Carol, for [INAUDIBLE] your smile, having an odd request come up, and you accepting it with a smile. Thank you very much.

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

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, I rise in support of the resolution as well. Although I-- an aside, that's a great idea, Senator Clements. I wish I had thought of that. So, I appreciate that. Carol, I love that, that you helped facilitate that. This is a, a place where we have-- there's so much stress and anxiety and, and acrimony. And so, the, the light that you bring to this place and the calming influence-- you know, all of us-- I'm sure people watch and see us running around and, and, and making it look so chaotic. And so, I just always appreciated that when I bring that chaotic energy to the front, and you just sort of meet me with that, that happiness and the calm, and then you facilitate whatever harebrained scheme that I've cooked up, that isn't quite the same as Senator Clements' harebrained scheme, but I know we all-- I'm sure we all have that experience where we have some sort of idea that we're not fully fleshed out, and you're always there to meet us with just that calm, steady, "OK, we'll make it happen." And so, we're really going to miss you. This place is made so much better by the people in the in-- that serve here, and your service is much appreciated by all of us, and you've made these long and trying days so much better and joyful. So, thank you for your service, Carol, and we'll miss you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Seeing no one else in the queue, Speaker Arch to close.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. So, it concludes this: that the Legislature thanks Carol Koranda for her exceptional service and commitment to the Legislature and the state of Nebraska, and congratulates her on her distinguished career and well-deserved retirement. I would encourage a green vote.

KELLY: Senators, the question is the adoption of LR510. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Madam Clerk.

CAROL KORANDA: 49 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the resolution.

KELLY: Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, LR511 introduced by Senator Arch thanking Marcia McClurg for her service to the Legislature and the state of Nebraska, and congratulating her on her career and well-deserved retirement.

KELLY: Speaker Arch, you're recognized to open.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. I see Marcia's 42 years, and if Carol would have just stuck around for another four, it could have been a tie. But, Marcia McClurg. So, Marcia is one of those, I say, foundational pillars in this building that, that holds the place together. She is, she is the Revisor of Statutes, and all of our amendments, all of our bills, all of our thoughts go upstairs for her to make sense of them, and her staff. And she has been doing this now for almost 42 years. So, there is a resolution here congratulating her. I always felt a little sorry for Marcia, because of course she, she does-- she gets-- literally she gets, like, ideas for bills and tries to make sense of them, and tries to put them into language that could become statutes, and works with staff, and, and all of that. And has, and has patience. But where I really felt sorry for her was when it was time for the Referencing Committee. So, the referencing, the referencing, of course, is all the bills introduced then go to the Referencing Committee, and the Referencing Committee then decides what committees they go to. And we get a list, and they are recommendations, they are suggestions from Marcia as to what committee these bills should be referenced to. And there's often times we will say, well, I have a question on this particular bill. And Marcia comes up and sits in front of the Referencing Committee, and, and, and, and the question is, you know, Marcia, why in the world did you decide that that bill should go to that committee? It wasn't quite that harsh. But she's often challenged on those things, and she always has the logical reason. Well, the last time this bill, and this has mostly this, this subject matter which goes to that committee-- always thoughtful, always reasoned, always there with a response. But you don't see her down here in the

room. You don't see her like Carol, sitting up front. She's upstairs. And she is always there, she is ready so every session, at the end of the session, we start the-- I wonder if we're going to get the bills turned around in time to come back downstairs so that we can read them into the record tonight so that we can lay them over one day and vote on Final Reading. And all of that is Marcia and her staff at work; unseen, unsung, but absolutely critical. We do not have statutes without the Revisor. And so, congratulations to Marcia. Well-deserved retirement. She has, she has really been holding us up over all these years, and I'm sure after 42 years, you've seen a lot. You've seen a lot of bills over that period of time. But again, like Carol, very technical, very, very, very detailed, very important be-- so that we have good laws; not messy, not mistakes, good statutes. And that is Marcia and her team. So, we want to congratulate her today as well. And again, I see there are some members in the queue. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Speaker Arch. Senator Jacobson, you're recognized to speak.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. President. It's hard to believe I was born 42 years ago, and-- oh, maybe, maybe plus 30. But I will say that having served on the Exec Board and, by default, the Referencing Committee, Speaker Arch really underestimated, really, the work that Marcia's gone through. Because oftentimes, we get into committee hearings and people say, how did this bill get referenced to this committee? Well, look at the referencing guide and you tell me where I should put it. I mean, and then you get Senator Bostar's bills, which [INAUDIBLE] have five bills in one, and then I don't know what you even begin to do. But Marcia figures it out. And anybody that questions her in the, in the, in the committee hearing or the committee meeting when we're trying to figure out how to reference bills, why did you pick this? Marcia is always going to tell you, well, because we did this and we did this, on this-- and this year, we, we did that. She always knew there was a very good reason for why this bill got referenced where it did. But again, and then you come to Senator Bostar, he comes along too, but he makes it interesting. But, but nonetheless, what an outstanding individual. She's very, very good at what she did. She'll be very hard to replace. We really appreciate everyone in the, in the statutes office. They've, they've done a great job of getting bills turned around, making sense of some of the stuff that we send to them, and then making sure that it all fits when we start doing amendments. So, thank you again, Marcia, for your time here. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Jacobson. Senator DeBoer, you're recognized to speak.

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to add my congratulations and gratitude to Marcia. There have been any number of quick turnarounds that we have asked her and the Revisors to do over all of these years. I can't even imagine how many that has been. And we also know that in the first weeks of session, when all the legislation is being introduced, I don't think they even go home. I think they, they stay there and work overnight to get everything done. And I don't know how, but in the eight years I've been here, every single time, she's gotten it done. It's remarkable. The talent, the patience, the good humor with which she has handled it. There've been a few times when I've gone up and said, "but I really need this today!" And somehow, she got it done for us. So, there are a lot of people in this state government that are heroes that we don't know if their names will ever be on the front page of the paper, but they certainly deserve to be. Thank you, Marcia.

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

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I rise in support of this motion by my friend Speaker Arch to recognize the one-and-only Marcia McClurg. Starting her career in this body, body decades ago as a legal counsel, and now rising literally to the highest echelon in state government when it comes to the incredible responsibility to be responsible for drafting the laws of Nebraska, bills that go through this body, resolutions; from being a key leader in the referencing process, which is critical to both process and substance, from managing a team of brilliant, dedicated lawyers and public servants to understanding the nuances of process, and to have to have a vast knowledge of so many different subject areas to be effective in this role, Marcia has done this well and competently behind the scenes. And I think about her commitment to this institution and to our state, and I think Marcia's career really exemplifies why so many of us go to law school, with the ideals of recognizing the special place lawyers have, and lawyers in public service particularly, to ensure that we are a nation of laws governed by a rule of law, not arbitrary decisions of individual leaders applied inequitably or unequally, to restrain those in powers, and to protect individual rights. I think about Nebraska's official state motto, Equality Before the Law, to signify our state's commitment actually to civil rights and our approach through legal process to ensure equality. And these bills and

these resolutions and these laws-- and I know we're not allowed to use props. Believe me, I understand the Rules of the Legislature, but I'm going to ask for some professional courtesy. These laws which line our Chamber, which line our bookshelves, which are significant, have meaning. They have meaning, and they're not just words on paper that start in the bill drafting process. They impact every Nebraskan's life. And when Nebraskans are trying to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, they look to these books. When lawyers are trying to help Nebraskans work through complex issues that are impacting their lives, they look through these books. When members of this body are trying to figure out how to solve a problem that's happening in their district and utilize the power of this platform to make a positive difference, they look through these books. These books aren't just a paperweight or something that gathers dust, or something antiquated in a digital world; they're the foundation of our democracy as a nation of laws, not men. They're the foundation of our state that believes in equality before the law. And we couldn't uphold these ideals without competent, talented public servants like Marcia. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Conrad. Senator Quick has some guests in the balcony-- north balcony from Starr Elementary in Grand Island. Please stand and be recognized by the Nebraska Legislature. Returning to the queue, Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to congratulate Marcia on 42 years of dedicated and professional service to the Nebraska Unicameral. I knew Marcia for quite a few years through my relationship with her father who was in the banking industry, and I think the biggest compliment for Marcia-- I walked up to congratulate her this morning with a couple other of the senator's staffers, and one of the staffers said, you know, I bring an idea up to you, and you say, "did you think of this?" or "have you considered that?" And that's always the response that you are able to get from Marcia, always looking to try to make the statutes that you are bringing before the body the best that they could be. And yes, sometimes, they even have to make sense out of nonsense with some of the ideas that we take up there. But as with Carol and the two amazing women that we're going to miss going forward in this body, I want to wish Marcia the best of luck, good health, and the best that everything that life can offer. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. Senator Dover, you're recognized to speak.

DOVER: When I first came down, I was appointed to fill Mike Flood's seat. And I wanted to make sure I could do my job, and it was six months before the session started, and so I tried to meet with all the directors, the departments and agencies, and saw this name, Marcia McClurg, "Revisor" [SIC] of Statutes. And thought to myself, no, it can't be. And then we met, and he asked, was Marcia McClurg from Norfolk? And we'd first met in Sunday school class when we were very young. And to tell you truth, she kind of looked like her mom, because her mom used to teach Sunday school. So, it was just a, a pleasant reunion to see her again. And I'll tell you this, she made Norfolk proud. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Dover. Senator Raybould, you're recognized to speak.

RAYBOULD: Thank you, Mr. President. I, I too want to pipe in on the accolades towards Marcia. I learned firsthand how extraordinary she really is. So, we were just given the budget bill, and I got up at 6:00 a.m., and I started coming up with amendments. And I had maybe 13, 14 amendments to, to turn over to, to Marcia that morning. My legislative aide was out sick, my administrative aide was gone. And she did it; she churned out 13 to 14 amendments in a short amount of time, and I-- that's a testimony to just the expertise, the amazing people that we have in our state of Nebraska and that work in the Legislature. I just can't thank her enough for being so unflappable when someone just throws all this stuff at you, and I just want to thank her for her kindness and her calmness. And I, I do wish her and Carol all the best, and thank them for their years of service and guidance and kindness. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Raybould. Senator Spivey, you're recognized to speak.

SPIVEY: Thank you, Mr. President. It's really hard to follow up with all of these great, amazing speeches and affirmations to Marcia, but wanted to, to add a few words of my gratitude in thanking her and just the Revisor's office in general. As a new senator, I had a lot of questions. I was-- before I got-- once I knew I was elected, I was using other people's office to try to get some stuff drafted for me, and then moving things over, and I had lots of questions. And it's a lot, and it, it is an art

form; it is detail-oriented, it's very particular, and it takes a lot of care and intention in that work, and she made sure that that happened. Would work so well with my office, and just really responsive and making sure we had what we need in order to try to be successful, especially as things move quickly on the floor. And so, I wanted to thank her for her service. Again, I hope this next chapter brings everything that she wants and hopes for. And Senator Jacobson, I am actually 40 this year, so I think she has lived my entire life of my career maybe versus yours. But we'll-- we can figure out those details later. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Spivey. Seeing no one else in the queue, Speaker Arch, you're recognized to close.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. The legislative resolution concludes that the Legislature thanks Marcia McClurg for her service to the Legislature and the state of Nebraska, and congratulates her on her career and well-deserved retirement. I would encourage you to vote green on this resolution. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Speaker Arch. The question is the adoption of LR511. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 49 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the resolution, Mr. President.

KELLY: The resolution is adopted. While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do hereby sign LR495, LR496, LR497, LR498, LR499, LR500, LR501, LR502, LR503, LR504, LR505, LR507, and LR508. Mr. Clerk, for a series of items.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Series of communications from the Clerk of the Legislature to the Secretary of State concerning the-- that the Legislature did not override the veto on LB1256, LB929, LB878, LB839, and LB1029. Those will be transmitted to the Secretary of State. That's all I have at this time.

ARCH: While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do hereby sign LR509, LR510, and LR511. Mr. Clerk, next item.

KELLY: Senator Clements, for a motion.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that a committee of five be appointed to notify the Governor that on the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session of the Nebraska Legislature is about to complete its work, and to return with any message the Governor may have for the Legislature.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator. Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. The motion is adopted. I appoint the following five senators to the escort committee: Senators Brandt, DeBoer, Moser, Murman, and Raybould. Please escort the Governor to the Chamber. The chair recognizes the Sergeant of Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee escorting the Governor of the great state of Nebraska, Jim Pillen, and First Lady Suzanne Pillen. Governor Pillen, you're recognized to speak.

GOVERNOR PILLEN: President Kelly, Speaker Arch, members of the One Hundred Ninth Nebraska Legislature, friends, distinguished guests, and my fellow Nebraskans. Last month, we had extraordinary days with historic fires that we've never seen before in the great state of Nebraska. The good news would be, we Nebraskans once again proved our extraordinary grit and came together to protect the people in our land. The Sandhills are an incredible treasure for our state, and some of the best cattle grazing literally in the world. So, I think what's important that we never forget about this is that this isn't a story about the number of acres burned, although we could say that if we went out west of the Capitol and got on Highway 77 and drove to Beatrice, you'd have 20, 20 miles on the west side and 20 miles on the east side, that's how much land was burned. I think what's really important that we talk about is the incredible lives changed, the lives that the people that fought through the experience and the ravage of Mother Nature. It resulted in extraordinary pain. These fires hurt our land and our people, and it's going to take time to heal. But here's the one thing I will tell you that I believe in with everything in my heart: we're at the beginning of the most extraordinary comeback story in our history because of our Nebraska people. We know stuff can be fixed. We know Nebraskans help Nebraskans, no matter what. And the pioneering spirit that makes our people so incredibly strong and unbreakable is shining through at this very moment. As Governor of this extraordinary state, every single day, I'm

in awe of the people of Nebraska. And in the balcony today, we've got some extraordinary, extraordinary heroes. I can't find the words to express my extraordinary appreciation for the salt and the earth of our rural communities of volunteer firefighters, extraordinary and incredible; our National Guard service members, emergency responders, local officials, and everyone else that pitched in to fight back against this extraordinary, extraordinary challenge. If everybody could please join me in showing our appreciation. Everybody here, please stand up and be recognized. I hate to admit it, but I really had to become your Governor to fully appreciate the things that our volunteer firefighters do every, every single day in our community. I hate to admit it, that I have to become Governor to appreciate what the Nebraska Emergency Management team does, and how they're there no matter what. I hate to admit it, that, that I had to become Governor to fully appreciate the Nebraska Air and Army National Guard. I love you guys. I'm so incredibly in awe. So, I think what's really, really important is these moments, right? Where our work is so incredibly important. The people we, we serve deserve all of our absolute best. I think we'd all agree that this is a very unique calling. We've got lots of challenges, lots of hours. But I think when we recognize the people we did-- just did, it's easy for us to see that the people of Nebraska deserve all of us to give our very best. And with that, I want to give a shout-out to members of the body that's the last day, and a great thank you for all your years of work. Senators Rob Clements. Thank you, Rob. Senators Machaela Cavanaugh, Megan Hunt, Wendy DeBoer, John Arch, Ben Hansen, Christy Armendariz, Mike Moser, Jane Raybould, Myron Dorn, Tom Brandt, Dave Murman and Fred Meyer. Thank you. I-- yeah. [APPLAUSE] I can't tell if everybody's-- if they're all smiling a lot right now or what, but we're grateful. I especially want to give a shout-out and thank you to John Arch for stepping up, being the Speaker of the body. Thank you very much. And also to-- and also to Senator Clements, for his leadership and efforts as the Appropriations chair. Because of your leadership, we've helped pass historically, historically conservative budgets. So, we're grateful for you, Senator Clements. Thank you. I'll put a little bias in on a couple of things. I believe our state was also served and will particularly miss some strong, steady approaches from senators like Senator Murman and Senator Moser. Grateful for them. And also, I've got to say to Senator Meyer, congratulations. This is your second retirement party, for crying out loud. I'm, I'm, I'm guessing that on the way home, Kay's going to have a new phone number, so I can't ever call you again. But, but really grateful for your, for your stepping up and helping our state. We

accomplished a lot of good for our state in this session, but there's always more work to do. I'd like to spend a couple minutes talking about my hope for future sessions. I hear from Nebraskans everywhere I go. I can't go out in public one time without having a Nebraskan come up and say thanks for your service, thanks for all you do, thanks for not giving up on property taxes. I will bet the farm that everyone here gets the same thing. So, I believe in 2027, it's time we come together and solve the problem. I won't go into the list of why. But when this body reconvenes, I'm challenging the One Hundred Tenth that we just come together and we solve the property tax crisis. My team signed a couple executive actions to ensure Nebraskans are seeing property tax relief, but it's certainly not enough. The people of our state deserve more. We need to set to get practical, pragmatic; we need to set aside our ideology and come together to solve a decades-old problem. I might be a little too old to say this started when I was a kid, but you get the picture. As we turn toward January, I believe we need to focus on what matters the most. We need to focus on what matters the most for Nebraskans. That will make an incredible difference, as I learned for seven generations. I would encourage us all to start thinking and seeing Nebraska from seven generations; I learned from Santee Sioux, Santee Sioux tribal leader Alonzo Denny three years ago on what allows us to compete and win so that we can be the absolute best state in the United States of America. I believe we can. Part-- let's partner together so this legislative body, that we can be more efficient and more "effectant"-- effective. I believe there's a simple way to consider it. I believe that if we focus on the quality of bills and issues that we are going to work on instead of the quantity, we can really make an impact for Nebraskans. Over the past four years, I've teamed with almost all of you in this body on various issues that I believe are critical to the future of the state of Nebraska. During this One Hundred Ninth Nebraska Legislature, I signed over 60 "at the request of the Governor" bills passed by this body at an 80 percent success rate. I believe when we focus on key, incredibly important issues for the people of Nebraska, we can together make real, meaningful, lasting differences for the people of our state. As Nebraskans do, we passed a fiscally, historically conservative, balanced budget. By decreased spending, by using idle pillow-case money, and increasing revenue while we ensured services improved, not cutting them, just like we all do in business. A few highlights from the session. Really, really proud that we're defending Nebraska agriculture by passing Senator Jacobson's LB525. This is a first-in-the-nation law. From my view of the world, really, really important because it ensures agricultural

producers, Nebraska family farmers and ranchers, that they will own and control their ag data that's generated on their farms. It's really important, because it's about national security, it's about food security, it's about family farm security. 95 percent of Nebraska is owned and operated and controlled by Nebraska family farmers and ranchers. Through Senator Murman's LB653, we're bettering education for our kids by improving classroom experience and increasing special education services for the families who rely on them. I was really proud, with Senator von Gillern, to partner on LB1165, the Grow the Good Life Act; to create an incentive package that will compete with anybody in the nation; that will help businesses here grow at home, and recruit top talent from all over the country. This is a great message: Nebraska is open for business. Nebraska, the safest place in the United States of America to live and raise your families. Speaking of more number ones, Nebraska is number one in public power. We have the best electrical rates, the most competitive electrical rates for all Nebraskans in the United States of America. And thanks to LB1261 behind the meter that Senator DeKay and I partnered on, it will stay that way for Nebraskans. Private companies will build their own electricity plants and pay for it themselves so that the cost-sharing burden is not on us Nebraska ratepayers. I believe this legislation will be an incredible game-changer for the state of Nebraska, helping us reach our economic and developmental potential. With a bipartisan law introduced at my request by Senator Bostar, LB1096 helps Nebraska stand up to foreign interests protecting agriculture and infrastructure from adversaries like Chinese Communist Party. With support and work from many in this room, we've strengthened our relationships with our federal partners, including President Trump's cabinet. Through the rural health transformation program, we're investing millions of dollars in the future and health of rural Nebraska. And while it's not a guarantee, I can tell you, from my seat, it's a heck of a high expectation. This year and the next four years, we'll have over a billion dollars coming to Nebraska to have transformative work. Through our partnership with ICE, and the McCook Work Ethic Camp has been repurposed and is now helping get criminal aliens out of American communities. Through an executive order I signed, Nebraska signaled our intent to opt in to the federal scholarship tax credit. This initiative is a no-brainer. It will help us educate our kids in public education, in private education, and homeschooling, to keep federal dollars here at home. This is an education that our kids deserve. Through our Department of Health-- Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, we're supporting the Make America Healthy Again initiative. It's a win-win for our state, encouraging families

to make healthier choices that also benefits Nebraska producers. I don't know about all of you, but I just don't think we should be feeding kids pop and Twinkies for breakfast, for crying out loud. Through our Department of Transportation, we're working with federal government to defeat environmental bureaucracy, cut red tape, and reduce administrative burdens as we design and construct Nebraska roads and bridges. Through our Department of Economic Development, Nebraska is leading the way on the implementation of opportunity zones. Opportunity zones are an incredibly powerful federal tool to help us grow workforce housing, help people that are impoverished be able to have the American dream and create wealth for their families by owning homes, and this will happen in both urban and rural communities. And finally, I'm incredibly honored to have the privilege to sign LB596, which included a provision introduced at my request by Senator Lonowski that allows Tom Osborne to be the first living person inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Coach has given so much in his entire lifetime to the people of Nebraska. As a championship-winning coach, as the founder and a mentor of the most extraordinary in-school mentoring program in the country, as a statesman, he personifies that Nebraska is the people. He changed my life, and he's invested directly in countless Nebraskans across our great state, and still does today, at this very moment. So, I'm grateful, and I-- we all agree, he unquestionably deserves this honor. Coach believes in doing things the right way the first time. I learned that from him. He believes in doing big and impactful work for people. And obviously, that's what we all get to do here. I think it's really important that we all cherish the work that we get the privilege to do on this 250th anniversary of the greatest country in the history of civilization, and it's important that we take great advantage of every second that we have the opportunity to do so. So, with all that said, on behalf of our team and our cabinet, Lieutenant Governor Kelly, a gigantic thank you for your service in the One Hundred Ninth Nebraska Legislature. May God bless all of you, may God bless your families, and may God bless the extraordinary people of the state of Nebraska. Thank you.

KELLY: Will the escort committee escort the Governor and the first lady out of the Chamber? We will now begin the presentation of service awards. Speaker Arch, you're recognized.

ARCH: I just want to have a, a moment to talk about our Lieutenant Governor who has been presiding here. It, it was-- it, it has been great serving with him. I, I will just say that. Every week, you know, we, we exchange emails, and he tells us

what his schedule is going to be like, and if he's available, he's here. And I have so appreciated that, because as you see sometimes, my work, it's running around on the floor in circles, and I can't do that if I'm presiding. And, and I would say to you, Lieutenant Governor, Mr. President of the Legislature, you should have been a judge. That's-- that-- you missed, you missed that piece of your distinguished career. But you just have a very steady-- a very steady hand at presiding. It's, it's measured, you can, you can count on you following the rules, and I've just so appreciated-- you have, you have been an excellent president of our Legislature. So, thank you very much.

KELLY: Speaker Arch, please approach.

ARCH: When he said "please approach," I thought, uh-oh. Please approach the bench. Isn't that, like, uh-oh? Well, instead of doing it off the cuff here, I thought I would share with you some of my-- some of my thoughts here, on the last day. You know, what do you-- what do you say after eight years that, if you haven't said it by now, it's probably, like, too late? So, I was just reflecting on, on what this-- the past eight years has meant. And, and what-- the phrase that came to mind is "it has been a privilege." An un-- an unbelievable privilege, a privilege to serve. I mean, consider this, and this is true of each one of us here. Each one of us is one of 49 out of 2 million citizens in the only body in Nebraska that can pass laws to govern our lives. One in 40,000 people in Nebraska. First day, I walked into the room through the, the glass doors back there-- maybe you've had a similar experience; you kind of look up, and you say, like, wow. I mean, this is quite the room. I mean, it, it just has that, that aura of gravitas, serious things are done in this room, and, and I, and I sensed the responsibility at that moment, but also the privilege of being elected to, to be here. And I remember the first Legislative Council I attended in 2018 in Nebraska City. Again, it was that experience of walking into the room and looking around and saying, it-- this is it. I mean, as a Unicameral, the people in that room, 49 people, if we don't do it, it's not going to get done. Can't get done. We're the only body that can do that, and no one else has that privilege given to us by the citizens in each of our-- in each of our districts. So, first of all, it has been an absolute privilege to serve my constituents. I want to thank them for, for electing me twice to represent them. I, I know I didn't always vote how each one would have liked, and I learned on difficult issues, no matter how I voted, there would be those who approved and those who disapproved. You ever stared at those buttons when it's time to vote? It's like, either way,

right? I will be getting the response from constituents, and those have been difficult. But the majority of the voters trusted me to represent them, and they couldn't be here, so they sent me. And what a privilege to serve my constituents. So, to my constituents, I say thank you for trusting me to represent you over the past eight years. Second, it has been a privilege to serve with you. All of you made sacrifices to be here. We know that because you had a set of beliefs that compelled you to run to make Nebraska a better place to live. W. Cleon Skousen, in his book *The 5,000 Year Leap*-- which, by the way, I highly recommend reading. It's published by the National Center for Constitutional Studies-- wrote this. One of the most amazing aspects of the American story is that while the nation's founders came from widely divergent backgrounds, their fundamental beliefs were virtually identical. They quarreled bitterly over the most practical plan of implementing those beliefs, but rarely, if ever, disputed about their final objectives or basic convictions. The relative uniformity of fundamental thought-- that's a key phrase-- shared by these men included strong and unusually well-defined convictions concerning religious principles, political precepts, economic fundamentals, and long-range social goals. On particulars, of course, they quarreled. But when discussing fundamental precepts and ultimate objectives, they seemed practically unanimous. They even had strong criticism of one another as individual personalities, yet admired each other as laborers in the common cause. Is this how we would describe our political scene today? Maybe not. Perhaps this-- the relative uniformity of fundamental thought may not be as common as it once was. Others have used the term worldview to describe these fundamental thoughts. We all develop a worldview to help us make sense of the world around us. We observe and try to form these fundamental thoughts to help us make sense of all that we observe. And a worldview answers two basic questions: "what is wrong with this world?" and "how do we fix it?" You clearly see the differences in worldviews when we debate controversial topics. It is in those moments that we are debating worldview when it looks like we're debating policy. That is why the intensity. These core beliefs have developed in each one of us over time, and we feel very strongly about them. They are more than just thoughts about policies we might have in any given day, they are convictions. When you see passions rise to the point of boiling over in this room, we are debating worldview. We are touching our core beliefs; what is wrong with this world, and how do we fix it? There are times when compromise is not possible, given our different worldviews. There are issues that are true or false, yes or no. But if those debates then lead to a culture where we

cannot work together on the majority of the other issues, where we agree with the common goal, we have failed in our pursuit of a government by the people and for the people. I'm hopeful that perhaps knowing that we each have a worldview that we are following and not simply debating the bill before us may give us a greater understanding of one another, which could lead to greater acceptance of each other as individuals. We do not need to hate each other for our different worldviews, nor agree with someone else's worldview. But we do need to attempt to understand each other, and then civilly disagree, and then vote. Something to consider. I also want to thank you for the tremendous trust you placed in me four years ago when you elected me as Speaker. You asked me to be fair; to follow, not bend the rules; to treat each Senator with respect, and I've attempted to fulfill your trust you placed in me each day, and thank you the privilege of serving you and serving with you as your Speaker. The last privilege I'd like to mention is the privilege to serve-- excuse me. I was going to say, I'm not going to get emotional, but can't help it. The last privilege I'd like to mention is the privilege to serve Jesus Christ in this role. We're not a blank piece of paper when we're elected. We come with a clearly-developed worldview, and my worldview is shaped in large part by my personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Finally-- this is even harder-- I want to thank my wife, Brenda. I would not be here today without her support. We all know that spouses sacrifice alongside each elected official. She has supported me through all the past years, and I, and I love her and appreciate that. In closing, I would encourage you that in the midst of the responsibilities entrusted to you, never forget the privilege of serving. Some days, responsibilities weigh heavy. Some days, it seems like the days never end. But it is a privilege. It is an absolute privilege, and I would encourage you, as best you can, to make that part of your everyday experience. Thank you very much for the privilege.

KELLY: Senator Dorn, please come forward.

DORN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. There's one thing you learn when you come up here. You always look in the queue, and if there's not a great number in there, you look in the queue and see who you might follow. You don't want to follow somebody that just gave a speech like Speaker Arch; you get back out of the queue and come back in later. That, that you did learn. I, I too want to thank some people. My wife, Julie, who, who supported me through all of this. Thank her very much. She, she, like everybody here-- everybody needs a strong person behind them. That's why you're here. And she was very, very good for

me, helped me through these eight years, and through the process of being here. Thank my kids, Kyle and Andrea, and my two grandkids, Dempsey and Dayton; my daughter Erin, her husband Al Tyler [PHONETIC], and their kids, Rigs and Braelynn. I want to thank them very much. And I also want to thank my staff. Sitting over underneath the balcony, Janet Anderson, who is retiring at the end of the year, something like some of the others, over 40 years of service. So, I thank her very much. And one, one of the other staff members that came in and was with me for six years, and the last few years in the Clerk's office, Barb Dorn, no relation to me, but her husband is. But she has been here for over 30 years, and she's retiring at the end of the month, so I really want to thank them and-- being here. Yes. And my other staff who's been here, not even a year, six months, Wesley Earhart. Yes, thank him. Eight years. Eight years have come; eight long years at times, and yet eight very short years. Seems like yesterday when we came into the Legislature as new senators. A lot of change came here. One thing that the new people aren't part of, but many of us here were, was the Capitol remodeling project. When I came here, they were starting on the first quadrant. It's been going on for six, seven years. Finally, we have the first two floors with nothing on, they just have the up, up-- upstairs ones. One of the things that I really want to be thankful for and what this body emblems is the process, and I call it the process of making a bill. You would not believe how many people I've had approach me that-- with different ideas for-- this is just an idea for a bill. You can do it, you just pass it and it's done. We have such a process up here for a bill. We have designing the bill, getting the bill done, introducing the bill. Then, you have a committee hearing on the bill, has to be voted out of committee. Then, you have General File, maybe an amendment; Select File, you probably will have an amendment. And then, it has to pass all those rounds, and then the Governor has to sign it. That process is a reason why many of you are here, many things get done, and bills get done right. With that process, I learned that that board up there is so important. It took me most of the first year to learn that. Everyone is one vote up there. We're not-- don't get to punch that vote for five other people. I remember Senator Linehan one time walked in from out in the lobby, and she punched a button that she thought it was her vote, and it was the desk in front of her. She had to come up to the Clerk and apologize, and to make sure that was on the record because you don't push somebody else's. So, the process, it's very important part of why you're here and what goes on up here. I am so thankful that we have that process, that we don't rush through things; that we have that process so that we get good bills. The

other thing I wanted to talk a little bit about was Appropriations, and I figured Senator Clements would more later. But been on Appropriations eight years. Enjoyed that. So thankful. Tremendous, tremendous opportunity. Got to work with a lot of numbers. But I got to be the best of times, because the year before I came up here, they had a billion-dollar deficit, and we had \$300 million in the rainy-day fund that first year. To the point where, with the ARPA funding and the federal funding, we had \$2 billion in the cash reserve, and we had a billion dollars that we got to, almost like another budget, allocate out to help the people of Nebraska through COVID, to where we're at again now here, where we are at two years of a budget deficit, and we have \$546 million in the cash reserve. You will have up-- ups and downs. You will have good times, you will have bad times. Strong revenue, short revenue, spending, all of those things will be part of it. But it is the one thing that this legislative body is responsible for, and that is passing a budget. And I am so thankful for that process, also. In closing, I'd just like to mention that it's been a privilege to serve for all the people of my district and have them-- hope I made them proud, hope I did good for them. But it's been a privilege and an honor to be up here and serve the great state of Nebraska for eight years. And with that, I will say thank you and goodbye.

KELLY: Senator DeBoer.

DeBOER: First, I want to say thank you to the constituents of District 10. It has been truly the honor of my lifetime to be your voice in this room. Thank you for believing in me and sending me here on your behalf. To my family, my mom and dad are here. Thank you all for your support. I could not have done it without you. I will never be able to thank you enough. To my emotional-support sister, who many of you know, thank you. My brothers and in-laws and nieces and nephews, to all six of my godchildren, thank you for putting up with me during all of this. I love you. Thank you to the staff, to Brandon and the Clerk's staff, dear Carol, to Julie and the Ombudsman, Fiscal, Marcia and the Bill Drafters, Revisors, LRO, Accounting, the cleaning crews, everyone I'm forgetting, thank you. You make our work possible. Thank you for your service to our state. And for my staff; for Taylor, Tom, Courtney, Izabel, and to my amazing Brian, who's been with me for all eight years. Thank you for your help, your counsel, for being sounding boards, for keeping me going. I cannot express how grateful I am and how lost I'm going to be without you. Thank you. For the senators I have worked with, past and present, thank you for expanding my

horizons and teaching me about people who are different than me. Thank you for the friendships, and for helping me to become who I am today. You all have truly shaped me. I remember in my first term, I said that my natural habitat, the place I felt most comfortable, most at home in all the world, was sitting in Judiciary with Brandt by my side and Lathrop at the helm. This place has given me the opportunity to meet people and become friends with people that I never would have met. A Mennonite farmer from Henderson; a twenty-something who wore sequined chucks on our first day; three wise men; my walk group; midtown; Danielle Conrad; two hospital administrators; a wrestler; a prosecutor; and a preacher. And so many others. Thank you. To Megan and Machaela who started this journey with me, the women of our class. We have very different styles and ways of doing things, but when I really, really needed you, you both were there without a beat, and I will never forget that. Thank you. To the rest of my class, to all the men we couldn't tell apart the first week we were here, thank you. When I came here, I was full of so much hope, having just been writing a dissertation on hope. And after eight years, that hope has been battered even a little bit more today. My hope has been chastened and had to mature. But it has persisted because I have had a front-row seat to all that has happened here in this room, in this unique place that does not get it all right, not by any means, but where a spark of the original hope that 250 years ago impelled a group of flawed men to dream up an experiment of a government by the people. And the rumors of the flickering of the flame of that experiment may not be wrong. We are at a testing point. Democracy dies when we do not see the humanity in each other. Republics die when leaders speak only in the octaves of fear. And America may not survive its next 250 years if we do keep striving and keep learning every day to live side-by-side with each other with liberty and justice for all. And in all the places where that 250-year-old experiment whispers, I think it speaks loudest in this room. Here, where you can have a Conrad/Hunt/Meyer/Storm/Storer caucus voting against everyone else on a bill like they did last Friday. Where so many bills-- but not enough, surely-- where this room divides on lines not based on the color of your jersey but on the convictions of citizen legislators about individual issues. Care for this institution, this special place where the pressure is ridiculous and everyone runs in their own direction, and from time to time makes coalition governments issue-by-issue. The purest form of democracy left at the state level. Keep outside-the-glass outside. Remember, your time here is short. It shocks me now, how short it is. We will spend a lot longer looking at ourselves in the mirror afterwards, thinking about that one time or that

one vote, than suffering of the consequences of it when it happened. Do the thing that lets you look in the mirror for all those years. And even in the thirteenth hour of the fourth week of late nights, having eaten nothing but candy all day, remember that you sit in the chairs of history, which, granted, at that time of night, can look like nothing other than plain leather and wood, but have within them the banked coals of the republic smoldering under the surface, waiting for a generation of 49 who will decide again to decide for themselves. There will be good years and bad bienniums ahead, but my friends, take care of each other, dislike and disagree with each other. But remember, each one is human and precious, even when it is hard to see it. Every day, when I'm watching from a distance, I will pray for you who serve in this place, and that you see each other as fellow Nebraskans first before adversaries. I have this hope because in this room, I have seen people do the hard thing, the unpopular thing, just because they think it's the right thing to do. Going against your friends is the hardest thing you will ever do, but I have seen it happen. Not always, not enough, but sometimes. And every time that courage comes out, it is a prophetic moment, and the embers of a government by the people burn brighter. Listen to each other. Really listen to each other. Learn from each other about each other, about people who are different but valid. Do better than I ever did. Have courage. We are all counting on you. Thank you for your service, and for sharing your life with me. Thank you to the people of District 10. Thank you.

KELLY: Senator Clements.

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Mr. President. Ten years ago, I could not have imagined standing here delivering a farewell address. In February of 2017, I was a happy small-town banker who nobody knew. So I thought. When Governor Ricketts asked me to fill the District 2 vacancy, I was surprised, to say the least. But my wife Peggy and I sensed that it was a God thing. We trusted that our faith would get us through what was ahead, and it has. I was honored to have so much faith put in me, especially knowing my weakness in public speaking. You might have heard that I like numbers more than words. I was pleased to be placed right away on the Appropriations Committee, where there are many more numbers than words. My first day here, I was seated directly behind legendary Senator Chambers, who I knew could humiliate me in any debate. As it turned out, we got along better than I expected over those four years. Reality struck a few weeks later, when I was told I needed to knock on about 6,000 doors and raise up to \$100,000 in the next year. I thought to myself,

if I enjoyed knocking on doors like a vacuum cleaner salesman, I would have done that instead of office work. In addition, I've never liked asking anyone for money. But Peggy and I come from families who stick with our commitments, so we stuck with it, and we did what was needed. I've always enjoyed learning new things. Serving in the Unicameral has been quite a learning experience. I learned a lot over six years with Chairman Stinner. We started with a huge shortfall the first couple of years, then came COVID and large surpluses. That experience made becoming chairman easier. I thank all my committee members who have been great to work with. We have had good discussions about a wide variety of issues. I also want to thank the Fiscal Analysts in the balcony who provide great details about agency operations. All of you have made navigating our challenging budgets much easier. I introduced fewer bills than most because I've always believed that if it isn't broken, don't fix it. I came in feeling that Nebraska was already in good shape. Good government, to me, means less government and more individual liberty, with less spending and lower taxes. None of this would have been possible without the loving support of my wife Peggy, who has loved and supported me for 53 years. She drove me while I went door to door, and she greeted me pleasantly when I came home much later than expected. Our five loyal children, Andy, Tom, Mary, Sarah, and Debbie, and their spouses quickly learned how to gather for weekly parades each summer. We're also blessed with 14 grandchildren, many of whom were volunteered to help, and we look forward to spending more free time with them. I want to thank Dan Wiles and Mark Freeouf, both on my staff for 10 years, whose prior experience helped me hit the ground running here. Committee Clerk Cori and my AA Kate have also been very helpful. My twin brother Rick, back there, my son Andy, and my nephew Aaron had to suddenly take over most of my banking and tax preparation duties during tax season. I thank them for stepping up without complaining. Also, it taught me that I was not irreplaceable. And I leave knowing that the Legislature will be fine without me. I have enjoyed getting to know a great cross-section of Nebraska leaders. A true reward of these years is the lifelong relationships and friendships I've formed with so many fellow senators. To you senators who will remain, and those coming next year, I challenge you to put all of Nebraska ahead of yourself and be true to your principles. Work to make Nebraska the envy of the states around us. Guard the taxpayer dollars as if they were your own, remembering that some of those tax dollars are mine. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Remember that there is no place like Nebraska. God bless you. God bless the great state of Nebraska. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

HUNT: We have the legislative step stool. Wow. Colleagues, staff, media, family, and friends, for the last eight years, I have entered this building and this Chamber mindful of how rare and special it is to get to do this work. And today, as I leave this Chamber, I carry that same gratitude with me. So, I want to begin there, with thanks. And then, I want speak to the future of Nebraska. First, I want thank the people of District 8 for trusting me with this work. I've spent every day here trying to be worthy of the honor and repay you for how you have supported my family and my business over two decades. So, thank you for the confidence that you've placed in me, and letting me be a part of your lives in this way. The greatest asset that anybody can have when you have a job like this is a team that believes in the mission, and I have had the extraordinary privilege of working with some of the most capable, thoughtful, and committed people to ever pass through the doors of this institution, especially Hanna Murdoch. You are a legend in this building, and everybody knows it. Everybody says that. And I'm so grateful and lucky that you wanted to come and work on this team, and I have been forever changed by your friendship and generosity. Cassy Ross, who's here somewhere, thank you for always taking care of me so that I had the stamina to do this hard work. I'm so proud of you both, and I'm so lucky to call you my friends. Trey Quick, you are on the absolute rise. You are a shooting star, and I will always be here to help you with anything you need in the future. I believe in you so much. You are a star, and I cannot wait to see what comes for you in your future, and I will always be watching you. Also, Deena Keilany, Dave Gottschalk, Kristin Hughes, and the many interns who gave their time and talent to our office: Matt, Anna, Temi, Cleo, Mili, Maggie, Iesha, Sophie, and Kaci, all of whom are stars. They came through my office. They're incredible. Thank you. Thank you so much. I also want to thank my mentors as a politician, Senator Ernie Chambers, Senator Paul Schumacher, who's up here, and Senator Sara Howard. I have spent eight years trying to live up to your standards and put into practice what you taught me, and be worthy of your pride. I also want to recognize the people who make this institution function every single day, often without adequate gratitude. To the Clerk's office, especially Carol Koranda, you deserve so much recognition for your decades of service, and I wish you nothing but peace and happiness. No one deserves it more. And of course, my friend, Mr. Clerk, Brandon Metzler, who I always say has the most important job in Nebraska. I really believe that. To the Fiscal Office, to the Redcoats and Troopers who keep us safe, to members of the press

who document this work and hold it up for public view, especially Fred Knapp, Zach Wendling, Andrew Wegley, Chris Dunker, and also JoAnne Young and Martha Stoddard and Don Walton. Thank you for your scrutiny and for being the eyes and ears of the people of Nebraska. All of you, this place doesn't run without any of you, and the integrity of the institution depends on your professionalism and your hard work. Finally, to my family and friends. I'm so grateful that my dad and my brother are here today. To my teams back at the shops, to all of my friends who stood behind me through this whole crazy journey that I didn't ask anybody what they thought about it. I just did it, and here I am, and they were there with me every step of the way. So, I want to thank you all for the sacrifices that you had to make so that I could serve, and for believing that this work mattered enough to share that burden with me. I'll never forget that. Thank you. To the people of Nebraska, right now, I'm speaking only to you and to the record that will remain long after our speeches and votes and reputations and names are forgotten. Whenever that time comes, you Nebraskans of tomorrow will still be living in the world that we shaped through our actions in this Chamber. As Senator Paul Schumacher has said to me many, many times, our responsibility is to bring the future into being. It really doesn't just happen; it is designed for you in rooms like this one by people who you may never meet. Those people know that when we design and reinforce a system that rewards fear and anger, you are driven further apart. And that's useful because it makes it easier to codify policies that concentrate opportunity for the most powerful, which results in inequality and a lower quality of life for you. You will inherit the economy we designed that made your life more costly or more affordable, the freedoms that we've chosen to protect or restrict, and the culture of belonging that we have strengthened or weakened. That is the true scale of this work. There's a path that we're on, and it's not hard to see where it leads. Nebraska is kicking the can of fiscal solvency by expanding tax incentives. We have financing structured over decades. We are breathlessly and obsequiously gifting your tax dollars to corporations, all in the belief that more people will come, more businesses will form, and more prosperity will somehow find us. We are pouring our hopes literally into concrete, as new towers are rising up from the prairie. And I was talking about this with Paul, with Senator Schumacher over dinner, and he said we can't forget to ask the most important question. Who is this for? Who is it for? Who's going to come here? Who's going to live in those towers? And I think that's a good question, and I thought about that a lot. Is it going to be young people who hear us say that they deserve less than a minimum wage for their

work? Is it going to be immigrants who hear us say that they are criminals who aren't welcome here? Women, who hear us politicians say that we know best what they should do with their own bodies. LGBTQ people and their families, who hear us say that their belonging in Nebraska is conditional on them staying in the closet. Educators, who we constantly accuse of indoctrinating our children for nefarious ends. Researchers and scientists, who hear us say that their life's work is not worthy of investment. Who exactly are we building for? Plato said that every government needs a myth to reinforce the system. A legend, a story. His was the legend of Ur, the myth of Ur. In this country, we were born out of a revolution to get rid of a king and replace him with the radical idea that the power belonged to the people. And this happened relatively recently in world history. And the story goes that in a democracy paired with a market economy, individuals could rise through hard work, through talent and effort, that that would be rewarded, and that anyone from anywhere could build a good life here in this country. That story has always drawn people to the United States, to Nebraska, especially immigrants who are willing to take a risk in the pursuit of something better. But we should be honest: for many people, that story still remains a myth. And when the reality people experience in their real lives diverges too far from the origin myth that we tell them, we get to where we are today, with more division and inequality than there has ever been in any of our lifetimes. In this country, we helped people around the globe who were once separated tear down the walls and bridge rivers that for centuries divided them. For example, today it's possible to travel from Poland to Italy without so much as a border checkpoint, and the channel has become the Chunnel, uniting Britain and France. In exchange for that help and diplomacy, the people of Europe bestowed upon us the great honor and responsibility of conducting international trade and holding our national reserves-- holding their national reserves in our currency. We promoted democracy to the world, the checks and balances, and the stability of our three branches of government, divided power in Congress, the supremacy of precedent-based law, the secure rights of the individual, and the ease of voter access in full and fair elections. But in the last decade, that foundation has been stress-tested, and it has cracked. Today, the dominance of people and nations, the bullying of minorities, the banishment of the different, the moral cleansing of society, and the chance of the lynch mob all thrill the psyche of the self-proclaimed righteous who find it fulfilling to believe that they might be among the chosen ones to be at the top. And there's a seductive idea at the center of this that if everyone believes what you believe, or can be

forced to by law, then it must be true, it must be right. What happened to the idea that we should allow trade to cross borders so that armies do not? To the idea the global markets allow Nebraska farmers and manufacturers to sell to the entire world? To the idea that immigration has brought us some of our brightest entrepreneurs, doctors, and teachers? What happened to the idea that research and science can conquer disease, feed the hungry, solve the problems of tomorrow that we cannot even yet see or comprehend or understand? Or the radical idea that talent and genius is everywhere, all across Nebraska, in every city, in every town, in every village, even if opportunity is not? Somewhere along the way, we sinned; we lost confidence in that origin story. Nebraskans of tomorrow, I hope that you can see that even in moments of contraction and decline, there were voices insisting on expansion. And that in times of great division, there were voices insisting that we still belong to one another. As Nebraskans and as Americans, we are still nothing more than people riding together on a small blue planet, on borrowed time, in made-up institutions that we just invented. We are not an island, and the whole world will move forward, interconnected, pluralistic, innovative, whether we do or not. The Nebraska of tomorrow will either have grown because we embraced the future, or calcified because we feared it. In 2020-- I think it was 2020-- I was leading a filibuster on something. I don't know, it doesn't matter. And we didn't end up blocking the bill. So, you know, I felt like I wasn't successful. I was upset. And I had been distracted and irritated throughout the entire debate because Senator Chambers was not on the floor helping. And so, it was a lot more work than I'd ever had to do, and I was exhausted. I, I did everything right. But by the time it was over, I felt like I got hit by a bus. I felt awful, and I was upset because we lost. And after the bill passed, lo and behold, look who's here. Senator Chambers comes through the door here. And he walks right up to my desk, and he comes over to me, and he says, so how are you feeling? And I said, well, pretty bad. We lost, and I'm mad. And he gently said, but did you do everything you could do? And I said, well, yes. And he said, well, then how can anybody ask any more of you than that? And the way it just brought my temperature down-- but I said, where were you? Where were you during all that, in your office? Because I believed wrongly-- wrongly, I know now-- that part of the reason we lost was because he wasn't helping me. And I asked him that, and he put his hands on my shoulders, and he came eye level with me. And he said, I didn't come up here and help because I needed to know that you could do that when I'm gone. Senator Chambers has a saying that has become a mantra for me, and it's-- many of you know it. Success is doing what's

available for me to do. Success is what's doing what available for me to do. You don't always win, but you can be an extraordinary agent for change by doing whatever it takes to make a little progress, to bring the future into being. That's all we have to do with our time here. That's all I think I have to with my time, anyway, on this earth. So, District 8, thank you for eight years. I wish I could do more, but I can't believe you let me do any at all. I never meant for any of this to happen. I think my ambition got away with me, and then it became, like, the only way out is through. And now, I'm through, and it's, it's a very wild place to be. I'm so full of gratitude, and I can tell you, Nebraskans of tomorrow and the people of my district, I have done everything I can do to be worthy of this gift. Thank you.

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

MOSER: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, first of all, I'd like to thank my family and employees who kept my business and household going while I was down here so often. And thank my staff here, Drew Borske, Betty Madlener, Gus Shoemaker, and our clerk, Katy Coquat. And I'd to thank to my colleagues and, of course, my committee members who are also colleagues. And thank the Clerk's office, because they were always so friendly and thought of my problems before I did. Oh no, wait a minute, that didn't come out right. But anyhow, they were very helpful and very, very good. I really appreciate them. I want to thank the constituents that voted for me. Serving here in the Legislature has been an experience of a lifetime. Everybody should be interested in serving. It's not exactly what you see on TV; I think it's better than that. I hear stories about pro wrestlers, where they would hit each other over the head with folding chairs in the ring, and then they'd all go out to lunch together. I think there's some of that here; some hitting over the head, and some going to lunch. But having said that, there are some here I will miss more than others. In closing, I want to quote from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, with some edits. To everything, there's a season, and to every time, a purpose under heaven. A time to weep, a time to laugh; a time to mourn, a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time of love, a time of peace; a time to rend, and a time to sow; a time to speak, and a time to be silent.

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

RAYBOULD: Good afternoon, colleagues. Can you see me? That's great. Grateful, humbled, honored. It has been a privilege to serve my city, county, and state over these many years. I am deeply thankful to the countless individuals who believed in me, trusted, and supported me through challenging times and many, many campaigns. Most especially, I thank my family for the sacrifices they have made alongside me on this journey of public service. It has been a privilege to work with so many of you over the past four years. My staff, Kate and Regina, have been my rock during the toughest moments. I am in awe of the extraordinary expertise of our analysts, researchers, and Bill Drafters, as well as the talented Clerks team, our red-coated gatekeepers and our pages, and especially the hard-working State of Nebraska employees. You are the ones who keep the wheels of government turning. Thank you all for your kindness, your patience, and your steady guidance. Your dedication to our state does not go unnoticed. It is deeply appreciated. Some of you may know that I volunteered for seven years at Mother Teresa House for Infants in Washington, D.C. through my parish. At times, I was entrusted with caring for the newborns while the Sisters of the Missionaries of Charity met with Mother Teresa. That experience left a lasting impression on me, and I quote Mother T. often. As a businesswoman, I have profound respect for her ability to build a global network of service and outreach, one that would rival any startup or corporation in the world. Her selfless determination and compassion uplifted so many, and continued to inspire. Integrity matters in this body. Honesty matters. Mother Teresa once said honesty and transparency makes you vulnerable; be honest and transparent anyway. She also said if you judge, you cannot love. I hope you feel that I have lived up to those ideals. I also made a commitment every day when I come here to work with anyone and everyone for the betterment of our beloved state. Nebraskans, I hope you feel that I gave it my best. I'd like to share some words from Minnesota Senator John Hoffman, who survived a horrific attack on him and his wife. His colleague, Representative Melissa Hortman, and her husband tragically lost their lives at the hands of the same gunman. Senator Hoffman's profound message stayed with me this session, and I believe it is the best advice I can leave with you. He said we must redouble our efforts and reclaim the reason we are all public servants. We can listen, and we can extend understanding even in disagreement. We can compromise not because it is easy, but because the people we serve deserve better than constant stalemate built on partisan egos. They deserve solutions. When we prioritize power over people, we lose our purpose. But when we overcome obstacles and return to the table, the kitchen table, ready to collaborate, we remind our

states and our nation what real leadership looks like. Colleagues, there is no doubt that fiscal challenges lie ahead. Each day, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, especially Senator Clements', and resources. It's not always easy, but it is a privilege to be entrusted with that responsibility. I know Senator Hughes had to leave, but I do want to thank Senator Hughes for her friendship, and for the most creative tribute ever, reminding us of the good times we spent in Cell Block 10, better known as the Tower. Speaking of good time, I am grateful for all the good time you shared with me, along with some bad. So, I plan to relish early release with no probation. It has been an honor to serve alongside you. It is with great joy that I look forward to spending more time with my wonderful granddaughters and family. Thank you, friends. I wish you all the best. And thank you, Nebraska.

KELLY: Senator Murman, please come forward.

MURMAN: Well, one of the earliest interests that I remember having as a young fellow, besides girls, sports, and farming, was politics. I remember my mother talking about growing up in a hotel and cafe in Louisville, Nebraska, with this-- I didn't think I'd do this-- severely disabled father and the political discussions that would take place there, as residents and travelers from Omaha and across the country would stop in during the Depression. Then later, after my mother got married, moved to Glenvil, she would help with the polls for every election, no matter how busy things were on the farm. Then, when I was in third grade, I remember the day President Kennedy was shot. And several years later, Reverend Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. These were public servants I greatly admired. So when-- so then, when I went to UNL for college, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, so I majored in agriculture, dairy option, but I did minor in political science. After graduating and coming home, got married and started raising family and taking care of 500 dairy cows, so I was way too busy to do much with politics. So, fast forward about 40 years, and I happened to be watching the late-night news, and I see announced on February 15 that John Kuehn was not seeking a second term from District 38. So, Kathy and I prayed about it, and we had two weeks to decide whether or not I'd have any chance. With the help and encouragement from many friends, relatives, and many I'd never met before that time in the district, but especially from my family, I decided to run. I've enjoyed almost every minute of it, and this is where the special thank-yous begin. I couldn't have been here without Kathy, my, my bride of almost 40, 40-- 49 years. And believe it or not, she still wants me to be home with

her and our darling-- or, our daughter, Whitney, more. And our daughter Whitney is disabled with Rett syndrome, and she is a joy to be around. And both she and Kathy can use more of my loving care-- uh-huh-- and help as we all grow older. Whitney was able to visit here a couple times while I was in the Legislature. Our daughter Kelsi and husband Grant and kids Carter, Calvin, Evie, Levi, and Landon would like to see me more, both in Fort Worth and on the farm in Glenvil. They were here the first day I was sworn in, and visited several times during the interim. But my son-in-law, Grant, also gave the prayer in my third year here, and Calvin was able to-- my grandson Calvin was able to shadow me this year. My son Chase would like to see me both here and in Texas, and I can maybe help him out by adding to his more than 2 million followers on social media platforms. I would like to thank my staff through the eight years. I've had many, but they've all moved up to higher callings, and they've all been great. My allies have been Liz [INAUDIBLE] Clark, who went to grad school and got married and, and started raising a family; John Adams, and he moved to the Department of Economic Development during COVID; Blake Aspen, I brought him here from Hastings, and he went on to law school, and he's soon to graduate; and Chris Nelson went into the min-- to ministry. And finally, I think over here, Ben Earhart. He's a real go-getter. He's in the National Guard, and in the last two years while he's been my LA, he's gotten married and started raising a family, also. The AAs that I've had, I'd like to thank is Dave Schulte. He is now Beau Ballard's LA. Jon Shipman, I brought from home, and he's now Rick Holdcroft's LA. And now, Shelley Schwartz. I was able to get her from the 38th District also in Bertrand, and she's been very friendly and welcoming to our office for anybody that visits. And also, I'd like to thank my research analyst from the Education Committee, and that's Jack Spray. And he is a-- as you all know, a master negotiator, and I was happy to inherit him from Senator Linehan. And finally, the legal counsels I've had. John Duggar has went to the Health and Human Services Committee, Kevin Langevin's went to General Affairs, and now I have Don Garrell, who I was happy to bring in from Kearney, and he's doing a great job, a young attorney here. Some of what I'm most proud of that we got done in the Education Committee is \$1,500 foundation aid, so it goes to all students regardless of their zip code, and 80 percent reimbursement for special ed from state and federal government. Also, banning cell phones during instruction time from-- for K-12, banning promotion of comprehensive sex education standards from the Department of Ed website, expanding scholarship offerings and emphasizing STEM fields, addressing the teacher shortage, encouraging school transparency and

parental involvement policies. My belief is that government has a responsibility to support the disabled, children, the elderly who can't support themselves, and the military to whom we owe everything for our protection. Legislation that I'm most proud of while I was here is age verification to access online pornography, strengthening the ABLE savings accounts for the disabled, and funding for the AgrAbility Program to help disabled farmers to keep working. Another top priority is to keep taxes, especially property taxes, as low as possible. I was privileged to carry the bill that funded community colleges from the state, and removed them from the property tax rolls. I also prioritized bills that established and protected property tax credits. My hope for the future is that you all can modernize our tax structure and broadening-- by broadening our sales tax base and lowering property taxes. In closing, it's been extreme-- I've been extremely honored and humbled to represent the people of Nebraska, and especially the 38th District. When I ran eight years ago, I said I would stand for the Christian values our country was founded on: limited government, lower taxes, especially property taxes, and individual responsibility. It's been truly a privilege. I will miss you all, especially those in the, the Wednesday morning Bible study. And don't any of you be strangers. And God bless you all. Thank you.

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

M. CAVANAUGH: Whoa. This is what it's like to stand up here. Hi, everybody. So, I wrote a speech, and I don't normally write speeches. I usually just kind of talk. And then, I-- as everyone has been talking, I rewrote it several times. And now, I've decided that I'm just not going to do it, and just give my remarks off the cuff as I usually do. So, as, as Speaker Arch said, it feels like what hasn't been said in eight years, probably you've said it. I haven't talked that much since I've been here, so bear with me, because I have a few things that I, I didn't say in the several hundred hours that I have spoken over eight years. I'm just kidding. I'm going to just mostly do thank-yous, but I will say the one thing that I tried to do the entire time I was here was to stay grounded in what I believe is right, even if it was uncomfortable, even if it made me uncomfortable or if it made you uncomfortable. I try to use my position here to speak truth to power and to elevate those among us that are the most vulnerable, and I hope that when I look back on this time, I will be proud of what I have done. But I want to-- I want to just move on to my thank-yous, because I think we've, we've heard a lot today, and I don't think we need to hear much more from me. So, I'm going to start with my staff,

past and present. Margaret Buck, who is also retiring this year. And she is not here today because she's on her honeymoon, so very excited for Margaret. And Saoirse Langlois, who was with me at the beginning. Thank you both so much for your work and your commitment to getting it right. And then, to-- please don't judge me too harshly. My administrative assistants, Madison Hurst, Molly Penas, Ethan Dunn, Melissa Cantu, Tanner DeBoer, Rochelle Golliday, Samantha Kavan, and Sam Bauman. Yes, that is how many administrative assistants I have had. I'm really a delight to work with, I think. I'd like to thank the Coven, the current and the past, people I like. My therapist, thank you for keeping me semi-sane. My parents, who are here, John and Kate, who have done an amazing job of raising eight children, and then an extended family of millions. And my service is a reflection on my upbringing, and I hope that I have made you proud. To my siblings, Patrick, Audra, Colleen, Darin, Maureen, John, Kakie, Mike, Pete, Stacy, Matthew, and Erin, I love you all so much. Thank you for the hours upon hours that you gave up to knock doors to get me to this really low-paying job. I'm not going to name all of my aunts, uncles, cousins, and nieces and nephews who also did that, except for my godmother, Kathleen Amdor, who is an amazing woman who has always been a champion for me. To my husband, Nick, thank you. I have a lot more written, but I can't say it. I just thank you for sharing me with the state of Nebraska. Thank you for keeping our children alive, and not just alive, but thriving and happy and joyous. And thank you so much. And they're not here, but to Della, Hattie, and Barry, I love you. And yes, Barry is the baby, and he is now seven, and I know it's, it's hard to imagine. OK, this is going to be really hard. It has been-- I have to read what I wrote. It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to serve alongside my brother, Senator John Cavanaugh, in this Legislature. We didn't always agree, but we showed up every day grounded in the same values, service, integrity, and a belief that government should work for people. There's something rare about doing this work with someone who knows you so completely, who can challenge you and support you, and remind you why you started when things get hard. John has been that for me. I will always be grateful that we had this time together serving the people of Nebraska. It is beyond measure. And for a moment of levity, my mom was really worried when we started working together that we were going to fight a lot, and we did, but we made up. I've given this job a lot, but I've also learned a lot. You can lose a battle, you can lose a vote, you can lose a bill, you can lose an argument, but you only lose the war when you stop fighting, and I never stopped. So, I'd like to finally leave the people of Nebraska and District 6 who sent me here with my last thoughts of: you

matter, you're loved, you're worth fighting for, and even though I'm no longer here, I will never stop fighting for you. Thank you so much.

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

BRANDT: Thank you, Mr. President. Before we start, I did ask the Speaker if we could pass out ice cream, and he said no. So, my record for eight years is still intact. I still hear no from the Speaker. Thank you. All right, let's get started. To every property tax payer in the state, we owe you an enormous debt of gratitude. Thank you. To the people of District 32, it has been an honor and the privilege of my life to represent you. Thank you for electing me and trusting me with your vote. Welcome to this magnificent cathedral of Nebraska democracy. I would like to congratulate the class of 2026. I stand before you today looking back on eight years of legacy we made together. Over the years, we have served with 74 other senators and survived COVID, rioting in the rotunda, redistricting, and a special session. If this class had a personality, what would it be? Steady, experienced, stubborn. So, what does it take to be a Nebraska senator? I believe you must possess a fierce curiosity to counter those that believe the Legislature is where imagination goes to die. You also need to be tough. When a bill dies here, it gets listed in the obituary section of the Unicameral Update. Being, being 66 years of age, I have spent the last eight years in public service, and now my time in the Legislature is over. When I arrived, I jumped feet-first into a system not driven by seniority. In the end, I served on five different committees, ending as chair of the Natural Resources Committee. Over the course of my time, our team introduced 92 bills and constitutional amendments for the benefit of the people. I stand before you as a fourth-generation Nebraska farmer. I know how to work, and work hard, and I look forward to returning to the farm. My wife, Sandra, who's up in the balcony, and I have been married for 38 years, and we took over the farm and raised a family after my dad passed away in 1991. Our children are Mariah, who's married to Derek [PHONETIC] and is currently stationed in D.C., is a major in the Air Force. Our son Evan operates a custom farming company, and is newly married to Darcy [PHONETIC]. So I ask you, who has it better than me? So, what's it like to go home on the weekends and back to the real world? Well, for one thing, the food and drinks are no longer lobbyist-free. Eight years ago, we ran an issues-based campaign on three points. Guess what? Issue one: property taxes are too high. When I started, the state provided \$125 million in annual relief; by the end of this year, the state will send back over \$1.6 billion

annually. I co-sponsored or supported every bill that got us there, and introduced four more this year. Issue two: more school finance needs to be provided by the state. I supported the passage of the Education Future Fund, where every public, public school pupil in the state is annually funded with state dollars to the tune of \$1,500 a child, equal to about 10 percent of the actual cost. In addition, we increased SPED funding from 43 percent to 80 percent, almost doubling the reimbursement rate to the schools, hugely benefiting all 243 districts in the state. Issue three: improving broadband in rural Nebraska. Our state was well on its way to solving the problem for the 30,000 unserved and underserved Nebraskans who desperately need fiber. That was until the current federal administration clawed back \$340 million in BEAD funding that was allocated to Nebraska. I can assure you that Nebraska's federal delegation is aware of this, and is working to rectify this wrong. We as a Legislature did invest ARPA funds during COVID to connect thousands of unserved rural residents through programs administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. Based on these numbers, we made progress for the people of the state in all three of these important areas. Our office was heavily involved and led the way on many issues, including infrastructure. We prolonged the county bridge match program. In Natural Resources, we protected our state's largest natural resource, water. LIHEAP, we increased the federal poverty level to help the working poor with utility bills. We established an annual report for the, the domestic violence death review team. In farm-to-school, established a method to buy local food for our schools. Right to repair: it was a failure in Nebraska, but it led to a national memorandum of understanding and a national solution. In renewable fuels, we sponsored biodiesel and ethanol legislation. LB324, we allocated \$10 million in ARPA funds to Nebraska meat lockers to help out during COVID. In the courts, we increased small claims court maximums to \$7,500 dollars. For the lottery, we sponsored any amount won over \$250,000 can be claimed anonymously in the state of Nebraska. Hemp, there's a good one. I prioritized Senator Wayne's hemp bill, leading to its passage in 2019. And of course, you know my greatest accomplishment, Czech license plates. While I take credit, everyone knows it's our staff that does the heavy lifting. I've been blessed to work with three great legislative aides, Camdyn Kavan, Matt Gregory, and Travis Waldron. And then, there's my administrative assistant, Beth Dineen, who has helped me for eight years. Cyndi Lamm, the Natural Resources committee counsel, and Sally Schultz, our committee clerk, your expertise made the committee work as it should. You all will never know how much I appreciate your hard work and professionalism. I would be remiss if I did

not thank my campaign treasurer, Gerald Schmidt, who played a large part in our successful election. I want to thank the Clerk of the Legislature and all the people here on the rostrum, along with all the people who work for us, the Legislature. To the press, your job is to hold us accountable. Do it. Democracy and accountability go hand in hand. To the lobbyists, you tell me you represent the people. When I ask which people, you said the ones who write the checks. To the public, don't like what you see? Do not complain; vote. Also, thank you for the 132,500 emails that I have received since I started through this morning. That's legit. To my colleagues, think clearly about the challenges ahead, and make sound decisions based on facts and reality. Do the hard things. Do the things you will never be thanked for. Remember, you are an independent branch of government. Act like it. I would like to point out there is a lot of knowledge in the Legislature. The freshmen bring little in, and the seniors do not take much away, so knowledge accumulates here. What do I see as my greatest accomplishment? Being a citizen legislator like George Norris intended, while working full-time outside of the Legislature. In closing, I would to congratulate the graduating class of 2026. Thank you for your public service. Well played.

KELLY: Senator Fred Meyer, please come forward.

F. MEYER: Thank you. My second time here. First of all, I need to thank my wife and my family, who took care of everything at home while I was down here. I really appreciate that from the bottom of my heart. I kind of made a list of things that, first of all, I would not miss, and I think most of you would probably agree with these just five things. First of all-- first of all is filibusters. I don't know who enjoys that, but if you are, you have a warped sense of humor. Secondly would be the late nights that we endured for about eight nights towards the end here, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. was-- those were tough. Number three was being away from your home and family, which all of you do all the time. And I would also be remiss to not recognize that the ones of you who actually ran campaigns and served for eight years is far different than what I've done in three sessions over two years. So, my kudos to you; I know the amount of work you did. Number four would be the end-of-session amending, where an LB becomes an AM, and everybody's not quite sure what's going on. Gets a little confusing, but we made it through it all just fine. And then, probably the worst thing for me, several people have mentioned it, but to go out there when there's a hundred people talking at the same time in the Rotunda. The drone in the Rotunda, it was, was not much fun. To

come back in here was nice and quiet, was pretty peaceful. Now, to go on to the things that I will miss. Very meaningful for me were the morning prayer and the Pledge, and that's a tradition that a lot of-- a lot of Nebraskans watch, and they know how we like to start the day, and I think that means a lot to them. Number two would be the friendships with other senators. It's an honor to serve with 48 high-, high-caliber people, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart. And also, feeling that, that you made a difference in the lives of Nebraskans. And number four is really a deeper understanding with all of the things that matter affecting Nebraskans. And I know that's true, because when I go home and I'll be talking about public power with somebody at the coffee shop, or a third-grade reading, or anything like that, after about 30 seconds, their eyes glaze over and I realize it's time to change the topic, because what we talk about in here is far advanced from what they understand in their lives. And probably fifth, the, the most enjoyable thing of all was coaching the Senator All-Stars. It really was. But going into that, there was, there was four things that I was concerned about, as all coaches usually are. First of all was who's keeping score. You know that there would be opportunity for shenanigans galore in a situation like that. But when I saw Carol keeping score-- I've heard the most meticulous person in the Capitol-- my worries were relieved. OK, next was who was officiating, and we know a lot of things happen there. So, the good Senator DeKay was one of the three, and he did a pretty good job. In fact, the Senator All-Stars were the beneficiary of two technical fouls on the lobby, and I'm not sure what they did, other than they were lobbyists. So, that deserves a couple of technicals. But out of those two fouls, we got two extra possessions, so that means we had four foul shots and two extra possessions, and we got one point. Yeah, so-- maybe it didn't pay off, but that's OK. The third thing I was worried about was the overall youth of the lobby versus the, you know, more mature senators that were signed up to play, and you know all the problems that could-- that, that, that, that could involve. And the fourth thing was gravity; it always wins. Now, we had four instances where we overcame gravity. We had Brandon, who was very good, and Beau, two of our younger players. They could actually jump and get their shoes off the ground and overcome gravity. The third one was Tony Sorrentino, who overcame gravity, but he was still the shortest guy on the court next to Senator Hunt. So, even with jumping, still not quite up to, you know, where we needed to be. However, I have heard that in Senator Hunt's previous game, she got called for a double-dribbling with two hands, so she gets the award from the coach for the most improved. She only used one hand to dribble with,

so we were very, very proud of her for that. And the, the third- or, the fourth, rather, person to overcome gravity was Senator Hallstrom. We're not sure-- I couldn't decide if it was a lay-up, or if he was going for a loose ball, but they had the ball in his hands, and he went horizontal. And that's when gravity won. And he came down kind of hard; maybe he had some black-and-blue spots, but he gets an E for effort for sure. The one thing that I would add to those festivities, though, is we have a couple people in the body here who have other skills. Senator Lonowski and Senator McKinney, I think halftime we ought to bring a wrestling mat out, and they could take all comers, and the senators would get two points for every takedown. How do they do that? Is that kind of how they do that at the wrestling? And I think that would maybe help our scores, because I've heard those are two very, very accomplished wrestlers. So, I think that would maybe give us a better chance. So, all in all, thank you once again for putting up with me on such short notice. It was a little tough when it was already the 14th of January when, when I came back to the body, but it's always an honor to serve the citizens of Nebraska, and I will always consider you friends. Thank you.

KELLY: Senator Ben Hansen.

HANSEN: Well, thank you, Senator Fred Meyer. I now have a list of grievances I have to address as Executive chair, so I appreciate that. Am I the only one who thought this eight years took forever? Felt like it. And I don't know what the press is going to do when our class is gone. I think we've had some exuberant times in eight years I've been here, from my class. A lot, I think, the press has the ability to write on, and so I hope you have as good a times after we're gone that you had with us. So, when I first walked into this chamber in 2019, I myself, I think, was 37. I think we talked about that. And I came not as a career politician, but as a chiropractor, a husband, a father, and a former Blair City Council member who believed government should work for the people, and not the other way around. I believed in limited government, personal responsibility, strong communities, and protecting the freedoms that make Nebraska special. Those convictions guided every vote I cast, along with the feedback from my constituents. We delivered somewhat-meaningful property tax relief. We definitely could have done more. We could have definitely done more property tax reform. And so, in the same spirit of Senator Brandt thanking the property tax owners of Nebraska, I need to apologize to the property tax owners in Nebraska, because I feel like we could have done more. We're on the right track, we're pointing the

right direction, but we need to take leaps instead of small steps. We cut away overbearing regulations that stifled small businesses and innovation. We stood strong in the defense of the Second Amendment and the right to life. We worked to make government more efficient and accountable, and through it all, we never lost sight of why we are here: to serve the people of this great state. None of this happened in isolation. I want to thank my fellow senators, both Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike for your vigorous debates and late-night negotiations, and the moments of genuine collaboration that moved Nebraska forward. This body works best when we remember that despite our differences, we all love this state and want what's best for its people. To my dedicated staff: thank you for your tireless work, your loyalty, and your willingness to answer one more constituent call or chase down one more detail. I think they're around here, maybe. Rose, who joined our team not too long ago, has proved to be more than competent in her job, and will do very well in the future, I don't doubt. Benson, my legal counsel for the last six years, has not only been the person I lean on when it comes to running my committees and legal advice, but is also one hell of a golfer. I've also had the privilege of being able to work with others throughout the years. Christina has always been willing to give her opinion and fight, fight for what we believed in. Bryson is probably the most knowledgeable person in this Capitol when it comes to not only legislative history and policy-- but Senator Moser might appreciate this, he knows a heck of a lot about the WWF. And now, I have to mention Carson [PHONETIC], since he showed up in my office not too long ago. He was-- he's one of the most ambitious and dedicated people to work with, and has a bright future indeed. And finally, I probably don't need to tell everyone about Ellie, who has been with me from the beginning, because many, if not all of you here, know her. She is probably one of the most personal people I've ever known, and genuinely cares about the people she talks to and their thoughts, no matter who they are, something I've greatly admired. She also has no problem correcting me, pushing me, and giving me a look after I say something stupid to make me second-guess my decision. You have made me look far better than I deserved. To the people of District 16, you honored me with your trust, not once, but twice. Whether at town halls, county fairs, or on your front porches, you shared your hopes, your challenges, and your common-sense wisdom. You reminded me daily that public service is a sacred trust. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. I've tried to represent you with integrity and courage. And my office staff, both in Blair and Omaha, they've dealt with a lot over the last eight years. And so, I want to thank them for their patience and their

willingness to go on this journey with me. And to my family, some of whom were here earlier today, thank you for allowing me to be here and forgiving me when I had to miss a birthday party or family event. I look forward to spending more time with you and continue doing my best to represent our family with honor. So, with the couple of minutes I have remaining, I would like to instill a couple parting thoughts. These are-- these, these are thoughts I've noticed the eight years I've been embroiled in Nebraska politics and my time in the Legislature. And no, Senator Ballard, I'm not going to talk about vaccines or fluoride, or the Perkins County Canal, in case people were keeping a bingo card. It seems the legislator-- Legislature would be better served by having a Ways and Means Committee. This committee would be responsible for such things as originating all revenue-raising legislation, handling taxes, social services such as Medicaid and unemployment insurance. But you may ask, how are we to incorporate this committee with the limited resources and senators to be a part of it? Well, that brings me to my second thought. And this might be a bit controversial, but as many of you know, that has not stopped me in the past. But we need to seriously consider the need to go back to a two-house Legislature. I understand this might raise eyebrows, considering our nonpartisan, unicameral nature, but to be honest-- and I'm sure many would also agree with me that we are not truly non-partisan, and probably never have been. I'm sure at one point, back in 1937, having a one-house legislature made sense and was workable, but with the shifting demographics, I feel this invariably leads to less representation for Nebraskans, especially in the western, more rural areas of our state. Not less representation based on population, but, but by distance. I represent four counties, and I've had the privilege of being able to attend many events in my district, meet with my constituents, and listen to their concerns and ideas personally. That is a luxury that many senators don't have when you represent 8, 10, or 12 counties spanning thousands or tens of thousands of square miles. Having those elected officials who are supposed to represent your interest and area you live in be closer is important to make sure we uphold a truly representative republic. This would not only improve government by providing checks and balances, but also ensure more thorough review and debate of bills before passage. So, in closing, as I leave this Chamber, I carry with me the lessons learned here: that Nebraska's strength lies in its people. The farmer who feeds the world, the small business owners who build our communities, the teachers and first responders who serve, who serve quietly, and the families who instill values of faith, hard work, and neighborly care. My friends, the work of building

a better Nebraska is never finished. I urge those who remain to keep fighting for lower taxes, fewer regulations, quality education, and the protection of our God-given liberties. Stay true to the principles that make this state exceptional. To my colleagues who are also departing this session: I felt like we served honorably together. To those staying: lead with humility and conviction, and always remember, government should empower people, not control them. So, God bless you all. God bless Nebraska. Thank you.

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

BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. President. It is my distinct honor and privilege to thank and recognize Senator Guereca for his hard work these past two years as E&R chair. It is thankless work, but on behalf of the Clerk's office, we do have your gift for you. Thank you, Senator Guereca.

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

ARCH: Well, thank you. It's kind of a lengthy announcement here, but I just want to give some final comments about close of session here. So, colleagues, we're coming to the end of our 60-day session. And while the, the second session of the Legislature is considered the short session, this session was definitely not short on extended debate. Good portion of the debate was our state budget, as we all recall. We knew coming into this session that the budget was going to be our focus, and it needs to be our focus, it should always be our focus. As I've said before, it's the-- it is the only action the body is constitutionally mandated to take, so it is absolutely the highest priority. I want to talk for a second to those maybe not in this room, but who are watching our final day of session, and I'm going to try to explain the process, because sometimes it can be extremely confusing if you're not in this room. Due to the time constraints of the session, there were other significant measures that were not heard on the floor this year. And I know that some of you are frustrated, and that's the reality of a short session. I experienced that two years ago. We have the same number of priority bills as a 90-day session, but we have 30 days less to debate them all. With the budget requiring several rounds to pass on Select File in particular, our time was pinched even further. So, as Speaker, I had to prioritize the bills to schedule, and I, I want to talk about my thinking on prioritization, and, and certainly as Speakers to come will maybe have a different process. But first, of course,

was the budget and related revenue bills necessary to balance the budget. Those were always at the top of my list to schedule. But right behind that came committee priority bills. I always felt as though the committee priority bills were important because you had many members that felt as though those were, those were necessary as well. Many times, those were packages, and so we could pass several bills at the same time that several members felt were, were very important. So, all committee priority bills that advanced out of committee were debated on General File this year. Two committee bills did not advance from committee; one failed to advance on the floor, and one lost a cloture vote. So, those were a high priority. So, those committee priorities were among the 107 bills that were designated as a priority this session. For comparison, that's four more priority bills than we had before us in the 60-day session in 2024. So, right after the committee priority bills, then came senator priority bills, and I would tell you that these were the hardest to, to decide what to schedule. This is where I asked for your vote cards. So, there was only limited time to debate a bill that would require a cloture vote, and if the votes were not there for cloture, then I did not schedule the bill, particularly as we moved into the middle and beyond in the session. Some of you remember-- may remember Speaker Scheer's solution. And so, he was Speaker when I first came in in, in 2019. He would limit debate to three hours, and then require a vote card that showed that cloture would pass before scheduling the bill for another three hours. Some people liked it, some people hated it. That was his-- that was his strategy. Future Speakers will always wrestle with the issue of priority bills and limited time, particularly in the short session, and perhaps they will have a different solution. Of the 25 Speaker priority bills that I considered good-government bills-- that's how I selected Speaker priority bills-- 24 passed as either a stand-alone bill or as an amendment to another bill, and one did not come out of committee. But keep in mind that all priority bills aren't created equal. So, out of the 97 priority bills that did advance from committee, only 9 were not scheduled for floor debate due to time constraints. In 2024, that number was 11. This session, those 9 bills represented 72 hours of General File debate, 72 hours we did not have to simply debate. 9 additional days of full debate. So, if we had a longer session, perhaps that would have been possible, but given the, given the 60-day session, there would have been 9 additional days just for General File debate required. 88 of the 107 priority bills this session were passed as a stand-alone measure or were amended into another bill, so that's 85 percent of our priorities that we didn't just debate, we actually passed into law, and I think

that's pretty good. If I would have scheduled the 9 bills that would have gone to cloture and failed, doing the math the opposite way, that means that about 36 other bills that did pass would not have been heard, assuming that they would have averaged two hours of debate. But we did get serious work accomplished, in spite of the time constraint of 60 days. 547 bills were introduced in this 60-day session; that's a total of 1,262 bills that were brought by the One Hundred Ninth Legislature. Of those, 167 were sent to the Governor this session, and in the 165 bills that the Governor signed or let become law, an additional 174 bills were amended into those bills. So, each one of those bills got amended, not obviously one for one, but approximately one for one. So, essentially, a total of 339 bills were passed this year. However, we weren't just successful in passing good policy, we were also successful in bracing a model of process for future Legislatures. And of all the things this session, this is what I am most-- what I am most pleased with. If the 2023 legislative session was this institution's low point, certainly for my Speakership, then this session was a high point, marking a return to the way the Legislature is supposed to function. For the most part, debate stayed on track, people were treated with respect, and opponents came together to hammer out compromises and move legislation forward, and I saw that on multiple occasions. Honestly, what impressed me most of all of this is the committee work. There was a-- there was much better committee work done in this session where, where compromise, where discussion was held; well, maybe if we improve the bill this way, would that pick up your vote? Let's talk to the opposition. The committee work. So, became-- before it came out to the floor, it already had a compromise established, and that was very helpful for debate. But I saw it here on, on General File as well, where we would debate for a while, and then suddenly, you'd look around the room and you'd see people talking, and, and compromises were being shaped in those discussions, and that is the way I think the Legislature should work. You worked tirelessly this session, sometimes late into the evening. You advocated fiercely for the policies you supported. You fought hard against those you opposed. You did the people's work, and I commend you. And while there will always be more that you want to do, we did fulfill our responsibilities, so thank you for your dedication. We've given a lot of thanks to people. I want to make sure that everyone that is on my list is covered as well. And so, I want to take a moment to thank all those who are behind the scenes. These are people who have a true commitment to this institution, and who work diligently to help us get our job done. And as I say your name, could you please stand up? First, I want

recognize the Clerk of the Legislature, Brandon Metzler. Brandon, please stand up. So, Brandon and I had an opportunity four years ago to have a, a chance of new beginnings. Isn't that right, Mr. Clerk? Obviously, that was the year that Patrick O'Donnell stepped down as 40-plus year Clerk; Brandon was new in the Clerk position, I was new in the Speaker position. As I recall, ahead of the 2023 session, we lost 40 senior staff members to retirement that year. And so, there was a lot of new people. And we were learning, and Brandon was a tremendous help to me personally. And, and together, we sort of grew into the job over these last four years, and I've really appreciated his help with that. And then, he has obvious key staff members, as well. Assistant Clerk Mike Hybl, and the Clerk's staff that's on the floor each day. We talked about Carol Koranda, Jenni Svehla, Morgan Wallace, Logan Walsh. The rest of the Clerk's immediate office who are here every night at least an extra hour after we adjourn, and here first thing in the morning. I want to give special recognition again to Carol, who's going to be retiring this year after 38 years of service. And so, thank you to all of the, of the staff of the, of the Clerk's office. The people in black and white that usually sit up front here are pages. Thank you, thank you very much. We are flying around the room often, and you are the support staff. As I sit in the chair and preside occasionally, the two pages to my right are always on the timer, and they're always pressing the microphone, and they're, and they're probably paying attention more closely than the presiding officer. And greatly, greatly appreciated all the pages for your service in the committees, on the floor. Everywhere you are, very much appreciated. Thank you for-- there's also a large number of people in the Clerk's office, which include the Office of Committee Support, our Bill Room, our Transcribers, the Unicameral Information Office, our Legislative Technology Office, our Office of Legislative Services, and I would say for those people in those offices, where-- you know, the, the, the public depends a great deal on the record that is kept in this room. So, so when it's, when it's time to say, "Now, what exactly did they mean when they were-- when they passed that bill?" It is an accurate record of all of those things, and these people are extremely important to make sure that the record is accurate, it is, it is-- it can be stamped and approved like this is exactly what happened here in this Legislature. Very important. So, to those people, thank you very much as well. Our Sergeant at Arms is always a presence in our room, and they, they-- we-- they have been led by Scott Black. We, we recognized him last week, which was his last day, and he's now moved into retirement. But all of our Sergeant at Arms, and, and especially Scott who was here for several years,

greatly appreciated. Thank you, thank you very much to the Redcoats, very much. Here late into the evenings and sometimes on weekends are the Legislative Fiscal Office with Director Keisha Patent, and the Revisor's office, with Revisor of Statutes Marcia McClurg. Again, special recognition to Marcia who is sitting under the balcony over here, who will be retiring after 42 years. We recognized her this morning, and, and for, for all the work that you, that do. It's been a-- in partic-- I mean, the Legislative Fiscal Office, with the budget as it was, was constant revision of numbers every time we-- every time we passed a bill, a new fiscal note was generated, and on it went. And so now, we see in our-- in the green sheet here, the work-- really, all the work that they did. So, thank you very much to the Fiscal Office, and to the statute-- the Revisor of Statutes' office. And if those members could please stand and get-- be recognized as well. Our Legislative Research Division is led by Ben Thompson, and I know he's up-- I know he's up in the balcony here. So, these, these questions of, well, you know, how does this particular state do this? You know, and how do they address this problem? And always there to, to help with our legislative assistants in the offices, help with the research that's being done. Thank you very much, Ben, and to your staff for the research that you provide to all of us. Thank you very much. I understand too that the Legislature's Accounting and Budget office, led by Shelley Reed, I don't believe is in the building. I think they're out counting something right now. But we want to-- we want to say thank you very much to them. You know, this past year as well has been a lot of change for our Ombudsman's, Julie Rogers, as well as the Oversight Division, Performance Audit Division, previously known as that, that's now led by Stephanie Meese. I want to thank them particularly for their flexibility of what we went through with LB292 last year. Their willingness to adapt to change, their, their input into the process so that we have and, and can grow in our oversight function here at the Legislature. So, thank you very much to the staff. Julie, Steph, I know you're up there. Please rise and be recognized. I also want to thank Nebraska Public Media for its coverage of the Legislature so citizens across the state can watch their government in action. I don't know if any representatives of NPM are here in the, in the room. Do we have any NPM in the room? But no, they're behind the cameras. They're, they're hidden away, making sure that they're focused on, on us as we, as we speak. And part of keeping the record-- now, of course, we videotape, and so all of that is available to the, to the public as well. I also want to thank the Nebraska State Patrol for keeping our State Capitol secure. There'll be some changes coming next year with that, and I know that they're

developing plans to upgrade us and help us keep secure. They're also the ones that, that help secure the building as thousands of visitors come through every, every year so that they can enjoy our wonderful State Capitol here, and, and we appreciate that. The Capitol Security team who is walking through the halls, and also the eyes and ears that are necessary to keep our, our, our place safe. Finally, but, but certainly not least, I want to personally thank my own team: Laurie Weber, Lisa Johns, Mandy Mizerski. I'd guarantee you no Speaker can function without a strong team, and they are absolutely the best. Lisa, Lisa has been with me for eight years; she started day one with me. Laurie Weber, I know, has been a tremendous support for many of you in the room, as we've worked through bills and tried to get process, how can we get this done within our rules and the process? And she has been an advisor, I know, to a lot of you as well, and that's-- and as it, as it should be. So, those are-- again, those are people that are absolutely essential. We stand here on the microphone and we're the ones on the camera, but without them, we just don't function. So, I want to thank my own personal staff very much. So, thank you again to everyone for your hard work. Enjoy your interim time with your loved ones. Listen carefully to this: and many beautiful days in your neighborhood. Bye, Legislature.

KELLY: Senator Riepe, you're recognized for an announcement.

RIEPE: Thank you. Thank you all. This is a brief piece. It's a little light of humor. It's a recognition piece, and all of you-- this is from all of us to Speaker. It's, it's a cowboy who is herding cats. And this particular piece has everyone's signature on her, with the exception of one, and that is the Speaker, but he can sign his if he wants to. I just wanted to point out, this Speaker has been very mature. He's very reasonable in listening to everything. He has the perfect temperature, or temperament, if you will, in dealing with numbers of people. He's never brought forward his own personal agenda. He's-- as we say in the military, this is a job that doesn't pay anything extra. It's like in the military, walking point, you know? And he's been there every day, and so he's taken a lot of criticism. He's been fair, he's been a person of his own values, he's never imposed his agenda over everyone else's. And so, that, to me, is a, is a great career attitude. And he's also, as he expressed this morning, his relationship with his faith and with Jesus, I've recognized that, and I appreciate that very much. I would also ask that at the conclusion, if we can, if we could go to the front there, I'd like to have us all get a picture maybe to kind

of commemorate where we're at. But here it is, and I will ask him to carry it forward. So, here we go.

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

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Is this a debatable motion? Can I, can I reconsider this motion? OK, just wanted to make sure I-- if I had one more chance to go up to Carol. I move that all bills not otherwise disposed of, excluding bills on Final Reading and vetoed or line-item vetoed bills on this date, be indefinitely postponed.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Dorn, you're recognized for a motion.

DORN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the chairpersons of all standing committees file with the Clerk of the Legislature all standing committee records so that a proper record may be made of the final disposition of all the bills.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Hunt, you're recognized for a motion.

HUNT: Mr. President, I move that the Legislature approve the preparation and printing of the permanent Legislative Journal, Session Laws, and indexes by Brandon Metzler, and that he be directed to send each member of the Legislature a copy of the permanent Legislative Journal and Session Laws, and that the Journal for the Sixtieth Day as prepared by the Clerk of the Legislature be approved.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Hansen, you're recognized for a motion.

HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session of the Nebraska Legislature, having finished all business before it, now, at 2:57 p.m., adjourn sine die.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. The Legislature is adjourned sine die.