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COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
April 12, 2005  
Confirmation Hearing

The Education Committee of the Nebraska Legislature convened on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 1525 at the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the confirmation of Joyce Simmons to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Ms. Simmons testified via telephone. Senators Present: Ron Raikes, Chairperson; Dennis Byars, Vice Chairperson; Gwen Howard; Gail Kopplin; Vickie McDonald; and Elaine Stuhr. Senators Absent: Patrick Bourne; and Ed Schrock.

CONFIRMATION HEARING ON  
JOYCE SIMMONS TO THE  
COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

SENATOR RAIKES: Good morning. Welcome to this hearing of the Education Committee of the Nebraska Legislature, convened specifically for the purpose of considering the gubernatorial appointment of Dr. Joyce Simmons to the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Dr. Simmons, are you there amongst the static?

JOYCE SIMMONS: Yes, I am. Good morning to all of you.

SENATOR RAIKES: Good morning, and let me introduce you quickly to the members of the committee. We have all but two here. The ones we have here are Dr...or, yes, Dr., probably, Gail Kopplin; no, I'm sorry, from Gretna; Elaine Stuhr from Bradshaw; Tammy Barry is our legal counsel; I'm Ron Raikes, District 25; Senator Dennis Byars from Beatrice, Nebraska; Senator Vickie McDonald from St. Paul; Senator Gwen Howard from Omaha. Missing so far are Senator Pat Bourne from Omaha, and Senator Ed Schrock from Elm Creek. I hope that the noise isn't quite as loud on your end as it is on this end, but we'll hope for the best in that regard. Let me begin by asking you to tell us a little bit about your interest in this position, and also a little bit about yourself, if you'd care to.

JOYCE SIMMONS: I am (inaudible), I hope you can hear. I am (inaudible), and my family actually ranches here in western Cherry County, so I came back from California (inaudible).

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(Laughter) (Inaudible)

SENATOR RAIKES: Can you hear me?

JOYCE SIMMONS: I can hear you.

SENATOR RAIKES: Yeah, go ahead. We can pick up every third or fourth word, so we'll go with that. (Laughter)

JOYCE SIMMONS: (Inaudible) in Nebraska. But I started college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and (inaudible) system as (inaudible) College of Dentistry with a specialty in orthodontics (inaudible). I guess (inaudible) since I am a beneficiary of the system (inaudible). I guess the thing I (inaudible) the system, and people (inaudible), had an opportunity for education (inaudible), and also just a (inaudible). (Inaudible) members are aware of (inaudible) system (inaudible) and the education office (inaudible). My (inaudible) generally (inaudible) experience in (inaudible).

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay, thank you very much. Dr. Simmons, you weren't by chance riding a horse while you were talking, were you? We were kind of getting a gallop through the (laughter)...at any rate, appreciate your comments. We did...we were able to hear part of it, and I also appreciate your complete application so that we can look at that. Are there any questions from members of the committee to Dr. Simmons? Comments? Okay, we have a quiet group this morning. I do want to thank you very much for your, not only your very strong record of public service, but also your willingness to serve in this important position. And thank you again for taking the time to visit with us this morning.

JOYCE SIMMONS: Well, I appreciate being able to do it by telephone, and this certainly helps. Thank you this much.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you again. Okay, we'll move to proponent testimony for Dr. Simmons.

LARRY SCHERER: Maybe I'll just say a couple of words.

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay. Larry?

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LARRY SCHERER: For the record, my name is Larry Scherer. I'm staff with the Coordinating Commission. Dr. Simmons would replace Dr. Helen Morton, who passed away last year, and as she said, she's an orthodontist from Valentine, and has a lot of experience in the Nebraska system. We're looking for her to...it's an at-large position, representing all of the state. She obviously has a medical background, which is very valuable for the commission, and we're looking forward to working with her. She has an interest...we've met with her in the office. She has an interest in extending higher education to all parts of the state, in places where it's hard to reach, obviously. So we're looking forward to working with her.

SENATOR RAIKES: Okay.

LARRY SCHERER: Okay, thank you. Any questions for Larry? Okay, thank you, Larry. Any other proponent testimony? Opponent testimony? Neutral testimony? That will close our hearing on the confirmation of Dr. Joyce Simmons for the position on the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Thank you very much, and thank you, Dr. Simmons.

JOYCE SIMMONS: Thank you very much, I appreciate the opportunity.

  
Chairperson

  
Committee Clerk