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Transcriber's Office

Education Committee
January 29, 2013

[LB47 LB116 LB162 LB254]

The Committee on Education met at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 29, 2013, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB47, LB116, LB162, and LB254. Senators present: Kate Sullivan, Chairperson; Jim Scheer, Vice Chairperson; Bill Avery; Tanya Cook; Al Davis; Ken Haar; Rick Kolowski; and Les Seiler. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Well, good afternoon, and welcome to the Education Committee. I'm Senator Kate Sullivan of Cedar Rapids representing District 41. Glad to have you all here. I'd like to also introduce the members of the committee who are here. The one strolling in to my far left is Senator Bill Avery of Lincoln representing District 28. To his right is Senator Les Seiler of Hastings. To my far right is Senator Rick Kolowski of the Omaha area; Senator Al Davis of Hastings...or Hyannis, excuse me. Ad my Vice Chair of the committee, Senator Jim Scheer of Norfolk. We have some able-bodied staff helping us: committee clerk Mandy Mizerski, my far right; and next to me is Kris Valentin, the research analyst for the committee. We also have two pages, I think, right? Phoebe Gydesen from Lexington, she's a student at UNL; and Sean Miller who's a student at the Doane Lincoln campus. You will see by the agenda that we have four bills that we're going to be hearing today: LB47, LB116, LB162, and LB254. If you're planning to testify, please pick up one of the green sheets in the back of the room. If you do not wish to testify but would like your name entered into the official record as being present at the hearing, there's a form on the table for you to sign as well and that will be made part of the official record. If you're planning to testify, please fill out a sign-in sheet and it's critical that you print so that we can read your writing, and please complete the form in its entirety, and give the sign-in sheet to the committee clerk when you come up to the testifying table. If you do not choose to testify, you may submit comments in writing and have them read into the official record. If you do have handouts, we need 12 copies of them and you can give them to the page for distribution. When you come to testify, please speak clearly into the microphone, tell us your name and spell both your first and last names again so we can get adequate record. And I would really appreciate and it's a standing rule in this committee that I'd like all cell phones, pagers, and anything else that beeps to be, please, turned off. I want everyone to be respectful of those that are taking the time to testify and we need to give our undivided attention to them. The introducers are going to make the initial statements, followed by proponent testimony, opponent testimony, and those speaking in a neutral capacity. Closing remarks are reserved for the introducing senator only. We also are going to be using the light system. You'll have five minutes to make initial remarks to the committee. When you see the yellow light, that means you need to wrap it up, and the red light indicates that your time has ended. And I would also caution, I don't anticipate this being a problem, but any displays of support or opposition should not be held in the committee. Okay. I think we are ready to open the hearing on LB47, and Senator Ashford, please come forward. [LB47]

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SENATOR ASHFORD: (Exhibit 1) Thank you, Madam Chair. My name is Brad Ashford. I'm from Omaha. I represent Legislative District 20. I'm here to introduce LB47. Imagine, if you will, an abandoned warehouse in the middle of the state that miraculously becomes a school. Not an ordinary school but a school where tenth-graders learn a twenty-first century trade that will enable them to find jobs upon graduation from high school. This imagination or the imagination that I refer to is real at the Grand Island career academy. Thanks to Steve Joel, the Chamber of Commerce in Grand Island--Steve, the superintendent of the Grand Island Public Schools--they have created a career academy, the first career academy that is a standalone career academy for about...for I believe 500 young people who can attend their high school in Grand Island, receive their diploma, and upon graduation receive a certificate that will enable them to find employment, and then quite possibly go on with their education either at a community college or a university. When I had the opportunity to visit the Grand Island career academy, I was literally blown away by the collaboration that occurred between the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Island business community, and Superintendent Joel and the Grand Island School District. It is one of the foremost examples of collaboration I've seen in my 15 years in the Legislature. And I understand now that Superintendent Joel, who's now at the Lincoln Public Schools, has announced and will develop in the Lincoln Public Schools in collaboration with Southeast Community College a new career academy with I believe potentially 1,200 students who, again in the tenth grade, can find their way to a pathway to a job after high school. Over 14 percent of Nebraskans between the age of 16 and 24 are unemployed. In our city in Omaha, 47 percent of minority teenagers are unemployed, one of the highest rates of unemployment of minorities in the United States. It is critical; it is absolutely critical that we connect these young people to jobs, and the sooner the better. And we need to do this with a very, very clear collaborative model with the business community and the public schools and the cities involved. Whether it's rural or urban, the need is there. I have this sort of vision. I visited--another vision, it's the Brad vision of the day--I visited the NoDo area of Omaha the other day. The NoDo area is to the north of Cuming Street and it's down by the Qwest Center or CenturyLink Center. And it houses...there's a building there called the Mastercraft Building which is an old, old building in the downtown Omaha area, warehouse building, that has been converted into an Internet entrepreneurial center. And there are young people there ages 18 to 25 that are building businesses like MindStream, the Silicon Prairie publication, which is underlining the successes of Internet entrepreneurial companies in Omaha. What I envision with this career academy idea is three youth technology centers across the state: one in Omaha near the NoDo area, one in the center of the state, and one in the western part of the state, where young people, again ninth- and tenth-graders, can learn about the new cutting-edge innovations in technology. And once graduating from high school, if they so desire, they can find a job working in one of these entrepreneurial companies that are springing up throughout the state. I think those of us who are here in the Legislature at this time in history have an incredibly important role to play. The world is changing by

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the second; and Nebraska, in order to be a global competitor, must be in the forefront. So I view this career academy as part of that milieu, so to say. The idea of Nebraska becoming an Internet technology center for the world throughout the state I think is possible to do, it is incredibly important that we do it, and I think the career academies play directly into that. I had an opportunity over the summer, and just confirmed today talking to the UP railroad, the number of jobs, welding jobs that are available at the UP railroad today: 80-100 jobs unfilled. There are not skilled welders. Welding is not the job it used to be 25, 30, or 50 years ago. It is a high-skilled job. Young people with a career academy certificate can go into those welding jobs and make \$50,000 a year helping to pull their families out of poverty. We in Nebraska do the right thing when we decide to do it. But when we do it, we really do it correctly and we do it in a way that's enterprising and that takes advantage of our commitment to education, our commitment to developing a vital diverse economy. I think a career academy is...a Nebraska-style career academy is critical to the future of our state. There are a number of testifiers and I've asked them not to repeat themselves, Madam Chair, but who have worked on this for over a year now. We've had meetings for over a year to develop this bill. I do want to thank my friend from my city, Cliff Levitan, who came to me a couple of years ago after...well, actually he had come to me several years ago and said, why don't we have a career academy-type option for students in Nebraska? And I kept putting him off because, you know, what the heck, he's just a constituent. But (laughter), eventually I listened to Cliff. And Cliff has been an inspiration to me and to this effort; so I believe Cliff is here and can talk about it. But this bill is not an expensive bill, it is not...what it does is it takes advantage of a collaborative model with the private sector: the idea of creating a board that advises these institutions and matches the kinds of curriculum that will be relevant to the job market where these career academies exist. It talks about three school districts coming together potentially with the community colleges, which I think is a model that Southeast Community College and Lincoln Public Schools are working on right now, and that Omaha Public Schools and the...or not Omaha Public Schools but the Metro Community Colleges in Omaha are working on in the Omaha area. So I also finally want to thank Chuck Chevalier who was the superintendent of South Sarpy during all of our troubles we had in this committee over...when our good friend Senator Raikes was the Chair and we created the Learning Community. And Chuck was always the guy who, even though he came from the smallest school district and had the most to lose in the way we funded the Learning Community, was always the guy who stood up and said, you know, we can make this work, we can do the best for kids in poverty and help them learn. And it's that attitude that Chuck exhibited in the Learning Community legislation that really was inspirational to this committee as we worked through that issue. So Chuck has sort of been the...has put this all together for us. We're working with the Department of Education, so I certainly thank him for those efforts. Thank you, Madam Chair. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Ashford. A couple of things if you don't mind a few questions. [LB47]

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SENATOR ASHFORD: Yes. All right. Make them short (laughter). [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: As you indicated in your opening remarks, there are career academies going on in several locations across the state. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yeah. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So we have a little bit of a structure already. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yes, yes. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And in some of what you're offering in your legislation, you're repealing what we have in statute and replacing it. So what is it do you feel that's not working that makes it necessary to provide...? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, I think it's working to a degree. I think that what this does is expands the opportunities for collaboration by enabling the three school districts...up to three school districts or more, to come together. It creates the separate board, advisory board methodology. It talks about the grant program, the up to \$1,000 per student to help pay the tuition. One of the interesting developments in this is when we started looking at what it would cost to put a young person through a career academy, what we found was the more--and I think there will be some testimony on this--the more that collaboration with the community colleges, the less the tuition is. So the \$1,000 or \$1,500 tuition for one student to go through a year at the career academy is a pretty good number. And that \$1,500 can be raised in the private sector and I suspect in some...many cases it will be, or it can be a grant from the Department of Education. And that's how it...so there's some add-ons to this. I know Millard has an excellent career academy piece within their school district, and I'm sure there are other districts that have the same. This really is an effort to focus attention on the career academies and to make it...to take the Grand Island model, the sort of standalone career academy, not necessarily standalone building but standalone as an institutional entity that is made of up of three or four school districts in conjunction with the community college, I think is the model that this bill is trying to address. It's not necessarily...it's not that you couldn't do it, but I think it sort of eases the pathway to getting there. And there is a cost. I think the \$1,000 to \$1,500 is probably realistic, based on our conversations over the summer, as a tuition. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions for Senator Ashford? Senator Seiler. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: The way I read your opening part of 79-777(1) is that you leave a school district standalone and then you set up the consortium. You're not intending to

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do away with, say, Hastings negotiating with Central Community College for a program. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: No. You can always do that. I think this expands and allows for and provides for this consortium... [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: ...because certainly Grand Island has...I don't think it goes beyond Grand Island Public Schools; maybe it does. But this would not expunge that option. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Anyone else? Senator Avery. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Senator Ashford, I know you've had a passion for this for some time, since we've had some conversations about it. You said that the need is there. Why is this need not being met by the public schools already? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Certainly, in Omaha...you know, I can speak to Omaha. When Tech High closed, what happened was that...and I realize there are some courses, technical courses, still taught at Tech at that TAC building or the TAC building, not at Tech. But what happened was there were a number of young people that didn't have the opportunity...or the number that used to have the opportunity when Tech was there, of training in these kind...automotive was a big deal at Tech and industrial arts and other things like that. When that closed, there really...and Rick can maybe speak to this, Senator Kolowski, better than I. But there really was a lack of option for young people that...options that wanted to take another pathway. And I don't know why OPS did that. You know, other states continued on with their programs and we didn't, at least to the degree we had. And part of it, it seems to me, and I don't know all the reasons, part of it there seemed to be some sort of stigma attached to industrial arts courses. But...and I know many people who went to...young people my age I played basketball against in high school, they were a lot better than I was at Tech who went on, didn't go on to college but went on to have plumbing businesses and became very entrepreneurial and did very, very well and are doing very well now; and I don't know why that was taken away from those kids and I think it was a brutal mistake. I think it's caused there to be a lack of options for kids that are living in poverty, for example, and it's not just them, but it's certainly had an impact on the city. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: May I ask another question? [LB47]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I didn't answer your question, did I, Senator? [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: Not quite. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: No. I just had something I had to say, so I... [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: (Laugh) Well, you did make a good point about Omaha. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: But let me ask you this on the funding of these academies. You have a pretty elaborate structure here and a formula for providing funding, and I know you're trying to get private grants. But don't we already provide funding in the school aid formula for these students, each student? I mean, the way we calculate the need is based partly on the number of students in the school already. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Correct. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: So this is an additional funding. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I think that's a great point. And we went around it, around and around that point, is that there is sufficient state aid generally for the student and the school district doesn't lose that aid. I mean, the aid continues to flow for that student. But there isn't...and the community college people can talk to this, but we gauge the additional money on what the tuition would be for a dual-credit student at the community colleges, in the first place. So we were trying to...and because those instructors are already there because these...many of these courses, pieces of them are already taught at least at the, you know, beyond high school age, that we felt that that amount...that there was an additional cost. We have to have instructors. Those instructors exist now in the community colleges. And that by having this small tuition that it would cover the cost. But you're right. I mean, they do get state aid for that student. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: And the community colleges also receive state aid partly based on students. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: They do, not as much as the public schools do. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: So I'm suggesting that... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: But I don't think that's enough though, Bill. [LB47]

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SENATOR AVERY: ...we already provide the money. The money is already there.
[LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Maybe. I don't think so. I think it's not quite there. I think it's almost there, but I don't think it's quite there. And I think the \$1,000...again I'm confusing myself, it's \$1,000 or \$1,500, but whatever it is, that that is the...would cover the administration of the program which would probably be administered by the community colleges, in most cases, if they're...and that that...and the other costs that that fee is probably reasonable, even though you're right, they do have the state aid to cover it.
[LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: The fiscal note shows that the Department of Education is expecting the cost to be in the first year about \$500,000. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yes. But I don't think that's much to pay if our youth unemployment is as high as it is. [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: And I would agree with you... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I mean, maybe there's a way to get the money... [LB47]

SENATOR AVERY: I would agree with you if we weren't already putting money into both the community colleges and the high schools. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yes. I understand. And maybe there's a way that--legal counsel is very good at these issues--he can figure out a way to do it, maybe there's another way to fund it. But I agree. There is money in the pot through state aid. Yep. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Any other questions? Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. You mentioned a statistic of 47 percent. That's after young people graduate from high school or... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: That's generally youth unemployment in the later high...16 to...I think it's 16-24 age group, it's 47 percent. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: It's deplorable. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah, it is. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LB47]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Senator, I understand you're not an expert necessarily in school finance, but on the... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, I mean... [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, maybe you are. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: No, I'm not. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: I actually shouldn't preassume, so. From carrying off of Senator Avery's point... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: ...it seems to me, and perhaps logic doesn't stand here, but if you're starting a program... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: ...and you have a high school curriculum that is already being taught, we're not talking about not teaching things that are already within the curriculum or those schools. Would that be correct? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Correct. Correct. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: We're talking about probably adding additional staff to that. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Correct. Correct. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: And so in view of that, it would seem somewhat reasonable that when you're starting more programs or more intense programs such as these, that there might have... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: ...an additional cost because you aren't doing... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: ...away with any expenses that you have right now. You're just augmenting the available programs to those youth that need those type of instructions. [LB47]

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SENATOR ASHFORD: Correct. I mean, these young people still will receive their diploma from high school and they must be taught those core courses. The key, it seems to me, that part of this is developing a curriculum around these clusters, whether it's...the Grand Island career academy I believe has five or seven clusters, and they sort of match up with an industry. And that industry...the model is the industry sort of helps develop the curriculum and even contributes money to the career academy to start that part of the program. I know in talking to the UP Railroad, they're interested in donating...if Omaha were to do something, donating the kinds of equipment that would be needed to fund a cluster for welding if that's what they need in their employment. When Omaha is graded against other cities for economic development, they're always...there's always a caveat, and the caveat is we don't have enough skilled workers to provide to these manufacturing businesses that come into the state. And there are so many young people I worked with at OHA, in high school, that were very, very creative, very smart kids who had an aptitude to--they were living in poverty, they're living in public housing--but had an aptitude and desire to be in things like automotive which is a pretty technical thing today and/or other kinds of jobs like that. And there was no place for them to go and there still is not any place for them to go. I mean, they can go to Millard and so forth, but that's difficult to do when you live down on 20th and Grace or something. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just to follow up then, do you agree with my logic that there might be some necessary additional funds transferred? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yeah. Your logic is correct in my view. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. And the second point that I...do you view this as really a statewide initiative or more pocketed installations, because I'm...and I don't know that I...I understand the limitations but as we go out in the much rural areas, one, because of just amount of student bodies, the numbers, and the industry or the facilities that would be available, how...? Do you envision it working in those areas? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yeah, I really do. And that's the idea of the three school district grouping together and being...and there's some state aid language in the bill that talks about not including some of these costs within the formula so that they can pay these costs outside of their formula expenditures. So I...certainly it has to work statewide for it...and again Grand Island, though it's not in a rural area particularly, was the innovator in this, so. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Senator. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Senator, one of the questions I have is, simply, this will not prevent or be a blockage to any present... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: No. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...arrangement of academies. Is that... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Everything that is existing right now could continue on as it is. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: One of my comments back to Senator Avery's question about financing would be something that I just picked up last weekend when I was talking to the education academy director in Millard. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Millard, yeah. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: They had almost twice the number of people signing up for the academy than they had spots. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: One of those things that you would look at would be the expansion of the program with the hiring of another teacher if you wanted to expand that program, and then it's a space issue within the school to try to provide that as well. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. And that's my understanding, Senator Kolowski, for in your district that there's such a high demand. We have some letters that will go out to the committee from the Urban League, from Tom Warren, for example. Tom, most of us from Omaha and many others know Tom as a former police chief and runs the Urban League. And part of what he does is job readiness in north Omaha. And he was on our committee throughout the summer and fall, and he said there just is nothing, nothing we could do that would be more important than to find a way for tenth-graders to connect with work, in their summer of their tenth-grade year, tenth and eleventh grade. And then it's just...when violence went to...I know this is not just about north Omaha or about Omaha, Senator Scheer, but I think it's relevant. I mean, two years ago and last year, when the jobs programs, I think we had 1,200 kids in the jobs programs in Omaha for six to eight weeks; violence went down. I mean, it does...but this is a much more systematic way to do it. This is a sustainable way to do it. It brings community colleges

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and the school districts together with the business community in a very I think substantial way, so....a significant way. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I just wanted to add that when the education academy was being formed when I was principal at Millard West... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...the relationship with Metro Community College and UNO for dual-enrollment purposes was outstanding. And I commend them for what we were able to do, and the students can finish high school... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...with 29 credits... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...of college credit in their pocket which is, as a parent, you start doing the math and that's \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year I don't have to send the student to university. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, I mean, and Senator Kolowski, you showed great leadership in getting that started. And it is...I can't think of any...that and housing and mental illness is something we're dealing with in the Judiciary Committee, is dealing with kids that have mental illness and finding out what those problems are early. I can't think of anything more important than adequate affordable housing and what you do at...did at Millard, have done at Millard. We could make...but the jobs have to be relevant. I mean, they have to be twenty-first century jobs, which I think you do, did, and have done at Millard. So that's the idea. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis, did you have something? [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: I wanted to ask just a couple of questions. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yeah. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: The first one is the existing career academies, the one in Grand Island and one in Millard system... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Right. [LB47]

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SENATOR DAVIS: ...how are those funded today? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, I think Millard--Senator Kolowski could answer it--Millard, I believe, is funded out of the state aid that they receive, plus the property taxes. It's right out of their budget. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Right out of our state budget. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: The Grand Island--and Steve Joel can talk to that, but I believe it was funded...he's going to have to answer this--but what's in my head is \$3 million from the private sector, and then the actual just came out of the Grand Island Public School budget. I could be off on that. And I think then there's an ongoing sustainable funding by these industries, these clusters that were developed in the Grand Island career academy. But I think that's close to correct. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: And this is just a comment, an observation, but knowing the issues in rural Nebraska and the distances involved, I really can't see much happening anywhere except in Omaha, Lincoln, and maybe the tri-city area, you know, because otherwise distance is just too significant of a problem for communities out where I come from to work together and make something like this work. I completely agree with you that we've let down our technical training at the high school level. We've all done that all across the state, and I think that's something that needs to be addressed. But that's just one observation. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, I think the challenge is to make this relevant to northwest Nebraska and north...you know, no question. And it's amazing what...well, you know, I mean, look at what Aurora is doing and it's just amazing what...to me how effective rural Nebraska is on driving economic development. And so I wouldn't put it past them to come up with a career academy. But I agree, I mean it's harder. Sure. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: One thought that occurs to me when you say this proposed legislation wouldn't curtail the career academy activity taking place now; however, according to the way your legislation is written, the funding stream would only go to those that are participating in a consortium. Is that right? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: That's right. Right. This funding stream would...I took the question to be the existing Grand Island...I don't think there are any, I don't know if there are any others, other than Grand Island and Millard. There may be others. But it may be that the Grand Island...and we could look at it, but it would seem to me the Grand Island career academy should be eligible for the same funding. We'd have to take a look at how to write that back into the bill. But I don't know of any other real, quote unquote, career academies existing in the state, but I could be off. [LB47]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Well, Hastings has a cooperative interlocal agreement with the community college. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Okay, okay. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Brad, that was part of my question earlier. Would Millard not be able to apply because we're in-house Millard only as far as the students that we're taking into the program for the most part? And that was my question about blockage of any existing current academies for the stream of funding or anything else that would take place. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: The idea is to create a single-source career academy, a place where students from one...three school districts could go, and that's the model that we're developing here. That's the model that has been developed in other states. How we grandfather existing career academies into that plan is certainly...it doesn't bother me if we expand it to that. But it seems to me the idea of promoting this collaboration and developing a place where these students can...there's another element to this that I saw in Grand Island and in looking at the ones...Phoenix has sort of the...kind of the EVIT program in Phoenix is kind of the...I think they're up to 10,000 students in their career academy there. But it...you develop a collegiality with your cohorts that are in these particular programs. If they're in Internet technology, for example, and then you have the students that are in that program at that building and they develop a certain collegiality about what they're doing, it also brings in the private sector because they directly see what's happening. They can go down and look at the cluster at this particular facility and see what's going on and help develop the curriculum. So I think there's a power in that. Now to Senator Davis' point, it's harder to do that in the rural areas. But this model, this sort of...it's not separateness but it's this kind of this program or career academy that's somewhat set aside from an existing school that has been powerful and very successful. You know, there are other ways to do it. In Phoenix, actually they did two. They did the EVIT program which is a separate campus, and then they meshed the career academies into an existing school like Millard has. And the finding was generally that the separate career academy was more successful. But that's somewhat anecdotal. But, you know, I think it just depends on how...the direction...I like the idea of having a program set up in collaboration with three school districts. It seems to me to be a very powerful way to go and to attract students from three districts. Millard could adapt theirs to that, it seems to me. It's sort of like the focus school discussion we've had over the years where we created a focus school mechanism. No one has used it, unfortunately, but I think it was a powerful model. And this is a little easier to do

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because it doesn't require this sort of funding...this sort of different funding mechanism that's in the focus school. So I think you have to look at the whole thing. But I think the model that works is a...standalone is the wrong word, but a facility that is a career academy unto itself with different clusters and different disciplines. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Senator Davis, did you have any other questions? [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: I was just going to ask...you talked about Phoenix. You're talking about the city of Phoenix? [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I think it's in Mesa, and it's called the EVIT program and it was...in fairness it was started because there weren't enough community college options at the time. And so it's a large, large institution of many thousand kids. But I think... [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: Essentially it's the community, the large metropolitan area of Phoenix, not the entire state of Arizona. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: No, no. This is an urban project and it's...you know, certainly I understand the point that it's easier to put something like this together where you have a larger urban area. I don't dispute that at all. I mean, it just... [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: You know, I like the concept of it. I'm just thinking maybe it's more a Learning Community-type project than a state of Nebraska project. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Oh, I...it might be. My view though is that the state of Nebraska is getting murdered by not having these kids in a career. We are killing...we, in my view, we have a lot of great kids going to the university and they're doing super. They're leaving the state, many of them. We're soon going to be in a situation we're going to have a decreasing population because the baby boomers, all except me, are going to be dying off in 20 years (laughter) and...I'm not going to walk across the street, Senator Avery, today. But, seriously, I mean, we're in a position...and 50 percent of the...at least in the urban area in Omaha, 50 percent of our young people are born into poverty. I mean, this is a serious problem. We are at a serious point, in my view. We are in a very, very, very much of a crisis situation in our state. Even though ironically our ag...you know, we're doing great in the ag sector and there's some great things going on, but we are losing children; we are losing them, losing them, losing them. And we have to, it seems to me, invest a relatively strong number of dollars in figuring out alternatives to pathways to young people who do not wish to go to the university or even to the community colleges out of high school. I think we're...I think our generation, the baby-boomer generation or whatever you want to call it, we could be the last generation to really see a lot of progress if we don't get something straightened out for these kids.

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Because there's a lot of them are falling through the cracks. And I don't think it's just a Learning Community thing; but I agree, I agree it could be set up in a Learning Community. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: And I don't disagree with you. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yeah. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: You know, I'm looking at a fixed pot of money... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I know. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: ...that's available for education. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Yep. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: My constituents in western Nebraska don't get much anyway. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I agree. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: And so anything we do that's going to restrict them is really going to reduce our ability to educate kids in western Nebraska... [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Well, this is good, though, because this is...nonequalized districts would get the money. You know, this is aid that would go to nonequalized districts like many of your districts that aren't receiving state aid. They would still get the tuition. So if you have a...and I should have mentioned that earlier on the funding issue. But the other part of this, the idea is to provide the tuition for districts that don't get state aid, because they...certainly Millard does and Lincoln Public Schools do, but many districts don't. And I don't know what the breakdown is now. I think, what is it, 100? [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: It's over 100 plus. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: A hundred plus. That's a big...that's an issue. So these innovative programs like career academies or whatever you want to call them are much more difficult to do if you're nonequalized. But if...with the grant program and with the tuition program, a least it addresses to a certain extent that problem, so. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any more questions? Thank you, Senator Ashford. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thanks. [LB47]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: We'll now entertain proponent testimony. [LB47]

CHUCK CHEVALIER: (Exhibit 2) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for letting me speak today. My name is Chuck Chevalier, and that is C-h-u-c-k, and the last name is C-h-e-v-a-l-i-e-r. I've spelled it before. Although I receive a stipend from Metropolitan Community College for my work on career academies, I really represent today a steering committee that, as Senator Ashford has been talking about, has been meeting since...I met, started meeting with them last summer. And our goal is to take a look and open a multi-district career academy in the Omaha area. That being said, you're going to hear from other members of that steering committee. And a couple of letters are included in my written documents that, one from Tom Warren, and then one from Frank McGree, both letters of support for LB47; and they're in the written information. In my brief time before you, I want to point out some reasons why I, and the steering committee I represent, support LB47. As state policy regarding career academies, this bill is really the next step. LB870 last year was able to define and legitimize career academies in the state. The word career academy actually got into state statute, state law after LB870. This bill I think takes the next steps in that. I'm going to blame Senator Avery a little bit on this part of the testimony. But last summer, at a hearing in Gretna, he asked somebody the question whether the state should simply pay for education expenses or should they really induce school districts to move in a certain direction. And I think in the funding discussion that you've had, you've got to see this on the funding mechanism is an incentive bill. This is really by providing grant money to students who attend a consortium career academy, the Legislature is persuading districts to make, number one, make career academies come into life more so, and to be collaborative ventures. Why the grant approach? You've asked that question already. Using grants rather than adding to the need side of state aid allows the money to go to more school districts, including unequalized districts and those districts that have their need stabilized. The grant money is open to all districts in the state if they meet the requirements. That makes it more open doors for those, more opportunities for those students. Why promote just consortium career academies? You've asked that question. First, adding a career academy is just more efficient if several districts do it together. There is a large startup expense with equipment for a career academy, and not many districts can do it by themselves. Encouraging districts to work together just seems to make sense efficiencywise. This will be a real incentive I believe for smaller districts to work together to form a career academy, and I've seen one of those in Iowa that I visited by Cedar Rapids. For students, a consortium career academy is more desirable. Students can spend time at their home school for a part of the day and the career academy for the part of the day. In the current setup, if you don't...you can do this with an interlocal, but the current setup, for example, if I have a student at DC West that wants to go to the Millard career academy, at this point in time that student would have to option enroll, and most career academies will start probably in eleventh grade. So I spend two years at DC West and I've spent my whole education career at DC West. I have to option enroll. By having a

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consortium, this opens the doors for more students to be able to participate in that without having to lose what's going on in their district. I recognize that additional funding on top of state aid may be difficult to find. But this is an opportunity for the Legislature to influence school districts to open a new door for many students, a new door that really will help a lot of students graduate and connect directly to a job. Supporting the growth of career academies was great last year and I think this takes the next step. However, and I'm going to quote Senator Jerome Warner during the LB662 debate in 1967, "If you aren't willing to put the money in when you make a policy decision, you've done nothing." So this takes that to the next step. My time is up but I'll be glad to answer any questions that you have. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much for your testimony. You mentioned that you had visited the career academy in Cedar Rapids. Does that include...did they include outlying districts or were those just... [LB47]

CHUCK CHEVALIER: It actually was located in Monticello, Iowa, which is a rural area. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB47]

CHUCK CHEVALIER: I think Monticello itself is probably about 1,000 people. But it brought in seven what I would say would be equivalent to C-1 districts in that area. And with Senator Davis, I'm not sure they were much more than 45 minutes away, but some were at least 45 minutes away. They came together, built a career academy in the middle of really on the outskirts of Monticello so they could come in and out. So Kirkwood Community College was really...they have the name on the wall of the building, but it's really a consortium of those six to seven districts that bring students every day into that program. And this is where I think it can fit. You could actually do, if you did an every-other-day kind of schedule where one day they were fully at the career academy, you could probably negotiate some distances longer than 45 minutes. You get into two hours, I think, Senator, you're right about participating in that. But you could develop...this is really I think a rural thing as well as...a rural opportunity as well as a city opportunity in my mind. Last year I brought up the Auburn situation with NPPD as an example where this could work in the rural areas. I would tell you, Senator Scheer, if I were the new superintendent in Norfolk, this would be one of the first initiatives. I think you could bring in Battle Creek, you could bring in Madison close enough to have a career academy where more kids could participate. If Norfolk tries to do that by themselves, I'm not sure they get that done. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Any other questions? Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. Just as kind of a curiosity, if you were to estimate in Omaha Public Schools, what percent of--and you had the ideal situation--what percent

of those students would be served by a consortium career academy? [LB47]

CHUCK CHEVALIER: We've always kind of in developing our plan, we've looked at 1,000 students which would be halftime students. So we would be looking at 500, you know, in the morning and 500 in the afternoon kind of students. I think that's low. Dr. Joel will testify here later. I think their estimate is higher without as many students. So I think we're probably figuring low at this point in time on what would participate. I think we've disconnected our education. Senator Avery asked the question about why we've disconnected what our education is with jobs. And kids are in the middle of that line because they're disconnected, as well, immediately to a job. And I think if we do that, I think you're going to have a tremendous number of kids involved in a career academy. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Chuck, thank you very much for your testimony. I think one of the things that you know in your past and I know from a high school principal's standpoint, the Skills program, the DECA, HOSA, FEA, FFA, we have the alphabet soup. You know, we've dealt with that all of our lives. Those programs are great training grounds for our kids and the skills and abilities they learn and apply to their lives and to their jobs in the future have tremendous impact. And we had a luncheon just about that yesterday and saw those kids in action again. I really applaud the academy ideas and what we're trying to do here and I hope we'll be able to put things together in a positive way. When I think of the medical career academy in Omaha that Virginia Moon sent a letter of support for as well as the zoo academy that we're familiar with in the Omaha area, the limitations are only because of space. Taking more kids would happen if they had more space for more kids over time, and I hope the expansion of the zoo and aquarium will provide for that and I hope the medical center academy will also have expansion to it in the future. There are students desiring those programs and we're not providing additional space for them at this time. [LB47]

CHUCK CHEVALIER: One of the things that I think this bill does, first of all, it provides for some flexibility. And some of what you talk about I have seen the draft career academy rule from NDE, I think NDE is going to fill in a little bit of the details that you may consider missing here. And that's really the way we would hope that it would go. But I would tell you that those...one of the steps this takes I believe, last year in LB870 the words were a school district could partner with, and then it listed some entities in developing a career academy. By defining the consortium part of this, I think it clearly sets up here's what we meant by partnering. It defines what that means. And we have some examples of that partnering going on, but this would better define what's in the consortium, what has to be. And there's really only two requirements in this bill on the consortium: one is that it have some kind of board of directors, and secondly is that some public entity hold the funding for it. As the funds come in from school districts,

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then some entity would hold the funds. The rest of it can be spelled out as needed. So a career academy in Hyannis area could be different than in Lincoln or Grand Island. We've allowed some flexibility for that in the bill. So I think there...it doesn't do anything to the career academies that are one district standalone. But it incents, it motivates those districts to form partnerships with other districts so that the doors open for more kids without having to option and open enroll. And I think, you know, if you remember when you were going into 11th grade, if you said, hey, I'm sorry you can't be a cheerleader anymore, you can't go to your school district's prom, you're going to have to option enroll to go into this career academy, you probably would have said, well, I'm probably going to stay where I'm at and go ahead and take some elective courses I really don't want to take anyhow, and so I'm going to go ahead and stay in that school. This just opens the door by the way we've kind of set this forward for more students to participate in it. And I applaud those districts. Omaha has a wonderful career academy in the TAC center. I visited that one. Millard has some wonderful programs going on. ESU 6 and Southeast Community College has one. They're all over the state, but this incents that you can open the doors to more students, and that's what I like about it and our steering committee likes about the bill. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions? Thank you, Chuck, for your testimony. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: (Exhibit 3) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. My name is Steve Joel, S-t-e-v-e J-o-e-l, superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools. First, just a point of clarification. While I was superintendent in Grand Island where the idea was hatched for that career academy concept, it's only under the able leadership of Dr. Rob Winter and his team that that's becoming an actual academic reality and will be on-line in the fall; and, quite frankly, it's part of the inspiration that we've looked to as we've began to talk about what we can accomplish in Lincoln with our consortium. Let me first tell you that I believe this is a game changer for our state and it is way more than anything that we can historically or traditionally point to as vocational and/or technical education. We were first approached by business and industry leaders in Lincoln about the vast array of twenty-first century skill employment opportunities that exist here in Lincoln and throughout the state of Nebraska. Unfortunately, in public education, with all that we have on our plates, students are limited in terms of how deep they can go with their studies that would lead to viable employment. From that conversation, we connected with Dr. Huck at Southeast Community College, surrounding superintendents of schools that would have an interest for their students in more of the rural areas, and the Department of Education. And we began planning, thinking and planning, what could a vision be if in fact we wanted to provide these kinds of opportunities for our students. Lincoln has a fairly high graduation rate, pretty good ACT rate, fairly high college going rate, average college completion rate, probably not unlike most districts in the country. What we envision with this partnership is a standalone career academy center concept on the Southeast

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Community College campus with a true 50/50 partnership with Dr. Huck and his team that would include six, seven, eight, nine career clusters that are unidentified at this time, although we have a fairly vague idea of what those might be. And it would be available for students, junior, senior year, half day, morning...might be a morning program, afternoon program, and we've even had conversations, particularly with our school district partners outside of Lincoln about an evening program. We would have a concentrated involvement by business and industry, Department of Education, Department of Labor, all the folks that have been at our table that have said it's time for Nebraska to move in this direction. We envision these students being highly competitive, wanting to connect to something that they're very, very interested in. And it will be our responsibility to craft curriculum and experiences that not only lead to academic rigor and an opportunity to engage and acknowledge themselves in terms of their academic potential, but also to have internships, mentorships, and summer employment opportunities. At the end of the day, we believe that these students, junior, senior years that take advantage of this program, will have a high school diploma, will have at least one year of college credit, and perhaps industrial or industry certification, and more options than they have today to go pursue academic, further academic opportunities, or employment opportunities, or do something entirely different. Again, we think this is a game changer. We think that LB47 will allow resources for us to address the things that I've written in my testimony that I didn't want to read to you. But in essence, we know that college tuition is something that will be a barrier for students. We believe that those resources could be used to buy down that college tuition and make sure that students have that access. Transportation provided to a central location, there will be a cost associated with that that's not covered through TEEOSA formula. Supplies that will be required to deliver that curriculum. Access to equipment that's up to date. We've spoken with business and industry folks. They're willing to do that. And then whatever licensure costs are associated with the program. So in closing, we just believe this is going to add incredible value to the state of Nebraska, and it will be open to all school districts, and it will be a game changer not only for our students but also for our employers and ultimately for the Nebraska economy. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator (sic). Any questions? Yes. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Superintendent Joel, you'd mentioned that your school district was partnering with the Southeast Community College. I have some question about the language of LB47 has excluded you for this reason. It mentions a school district, then it goes on to talk about a consortium, then it describes a consortium of three or more school districts. And then we have taken out the...or the author has taken out the language that a school district may partner with and taken out that language. And I'm concerned that that language takes your program out and I don't want it to. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Okay. [LB47]

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SENATOR SEILER: Did you pick that up when you were looking at the statute? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: You know, I didn't. But I will tell you the spirit of our intent is to keep it as I've described it... [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: ...and to not have it be exclusionary. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: So we shouldn't take that language out. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Sorry? [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Shouldn't take that language out to continue to allow you to do what you're doing. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Yeah. We want to continue to do what we're doing. And I apologize, I don't have the statute...I don't have the bill in front of me. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: It's line 12 through 16, Kris. Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Superintendent, short of having this legislation in place, how does that cramp your vision of what you might be able to accomplish with LPS and your neighboring districts in achieving a career academy? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Well, I think it's going to be very difficult and, you know, if not impossible because we are limited in terms of our resources. You know, we have six full-service high schools, one alternative high school. We try to do a little bit of everything in each one of those high schools, but we don't...we're not able to provide deep and enriching experiences. This gives us that opportunity to do that. When we look at what the cost that would be associated with having students be able to obtain college credit, have access to equipment and resources, there just isn't any way that we're going to be able to afford that within our existing levies. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions? Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, thank you. So will the existing shop classes at the high schools go away or will they remain in place? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Well, what we've discussed in Lincoln, Senator Haar, is that, you know, we have to continue to offer at the middle school and the high school level opportunities for students to sample what might be available. But what we'll probably be looking to bring to this concept are those programs that are advanced, that are specific to one,

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maybe two of our high schools. So what we want to do, we don't want to be...we don't want to duplicate a lot of programs. By the same token, we don't want Northeast to have a program, open it up to the entire city, but yet we don't have students that come in from around the city to go to Northeast, but they would at this career center if we provided transportation. And we have the kind of staffing that I know we are able to see in Arizona with the concept that Senator Ashford was describing. So long-winded answer to a short response, and that's, really, we're going to review what it is that we're offering. We're not going to duplicate but yet we're going to continue to offer opportunities for kids to whet their appetite. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: And then right now I know Lincoln Public Schools has the various magnet schools, whatever you want to call them, zoo school and so on. Is this another one of those or what makes this different? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: What makes this different is that those focus programs were designed several years ago. And, you know, honestly, with the exception of the zoo school and probably arts and humanities, they're not being utilized to the degree that they should be utilized. The partnerships we think can be strengthened and we're going to seek opportunities to move those focus programs in this academy concept. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. Good. Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: A couple of question. The first one is just a mechanical question because I come from a school board situation. In a small school, I know how scheduling works, so. How do you...if you're going to be taking kids out of school for half a day, how do you make that work for the rest of your student body in a small school? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: In the small schools? [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: If you've got five-day classes for everybody else, and the kids that go to the career academy aren't doing that, how are you going to solve that problem? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: I can't address that. Maybe one of the other superintendents can. I will tell you that we met with about 15 superintendents, Dr. Huck and I did. That was a question that floated. And the answer really was, you know, we can create a schedule to accommodate that. There has to be some travel time built in. But in reality, you know, these are going to be highly motivated students that will need to be back to their schools. But instead of...I'll just throw this out without having any basis of knowledge whatsoever: instead of needing to take a four-class afternoon, maybe they take a three-class afternoon. [LB47]

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SENATOR DAVIS: And then the other question. You talk about maybe the career academy taking the place of one year of community college, correct? So is that going to have an impact on the attendance or the number of students at community college down the road, first question? Second question, are these classes that come out of the career academy going to be dual credit then and useful for another institution? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Yes. Yes. And we've had that conversation. You know... [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: Including any K-12...any four-year university system. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Yes. Dr. Huck, I think can speak to that more directly, but Southeast Community College in our case has articulation agreements with universities. So we are looking at this as dual credit. We want it to be fully transferable. We want students to have options at the end of their two-year experience out there. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just for clarification, Steve, could you explain, your students, some of the students may be in your career academy a half a day. How do they reach or attain the graduation requirements being outside so that they still all meet the state standard as far as that or your district requirements for graduation? [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Thank you, Senator Scheer. Great question. The experience at the career academy will be dual credit, so students will be...in order to be eligible, they'll have to have their generals out of the way and they'll have to be students in good academic and social standing in order to apply. We anticipate this for about 1,000 to 1,400 students. We think it's going to be highly competitive. Once they go out to the career center, they will obtain high school credit as well as college credit, as we'll articulate that dual enrollment. So students will gain credits actually under this model rather than lose them. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: So some of these classes will fill in for either their science or other type of requirements in those core areas. [LB47]

STEVE JOEL: Yes. Yes. Yes. [LB47]

SENATOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you, Senator. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

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STEVE JOEL: Thank you. [LB47]

JACK HUCK: Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the committee. My name is Jack Huck, J-a-c-k H-u-c-k. I'm the president of Southeast Community College. And I want to thank Dr. Joel for setting me up for this testimony for you, and I'll be happy to answer any questions that you have in that regard. Again, we're trying to coordinate our testimony so that we don't duplicate information for you, so I'd like to concentrate on a couple of different points, and then see what questions you might have about this wonderful opportunity that we're trying to create for students across the state of Nebraska. I would share with you that about six years ago I was approached by a number of K-12 superintendents in our 15-county district, all from rural portions of our district. Our 15-county district is composed of Lancaster County, which is basically as you know a suburban county, and 14 rural districts...14 rural counties. Superintendents from throughout many of those other 14 counties from those rural districts, and the administrator at ESU 6, approached me at that time and said, you know, we're really not able to meet the needs of our current high school graduates, particularly when it comes to career training that in the past we've probably done a better job on with them in our own K-12 districts. I think they felt that pressure emanating from more attention being given to basic studies in their K-12 systems, more attention being given to perhaps assessing those K-12 outcomes, more attention from parents and the public in regard to those students being ready for college as they left their K-12 districts, etcetera. And it seemed that the traditional emphasis for technical opportunities was starting to fall by the wayside. And their question of me was, can't we partner with Southeast Community College to provide some of those career opportunities that we're not doing today? Our answer to them was yes. And for the last five years, we've been building a program where today we work with 32 rural school districts in our 15-county area who have formed their own consortiums, if you will. Those are defined, kind of sizewise, by they themselves. But we provide career academy experiences today and have for the last five years to students in those 32 rural districts. Dr. Joel has described for you our initiative to try and bring that same opportunity to students in the Lincoln Public School district. And we think that's going to be a powerful model not only for students in Lincoln but that will in many ways drive the experiences we're already creating for students in the 32 rural districts we currently serve. I also wanted to mention to you that the funding piece of this, the \$1,500 per student that's in LB47, is extremely important in terms of the opportunity it provides to pay for that dual credit, that college credit component of the academy program. One of the largest barriers we've run into in the 32 rural districts we're working with today is how do we pay for that college credit. And I will tell you they feel like they are using their current resources to the max already and they don't have the dollars to free up to pay for that dual credit. Why would you want to pay for that? In our case at the community college, tuition income is one-third of my revenue stream. Now I can't give up that one-third of my revenue stream when we're educating those K-12 students in those dual-credit programs. My other two-thirds are one-third property tax and one-third state aid. I need that tuition source to pay for those dual-credit

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courses, and that's why it becomes so important that we fund that. Lastly, I would share with you just a brief overlook of what national research says about these types of academy experiences. And I will tell you that our partnership with LPS is trying to build a model that can be emulated across the rest of the state in districts of all sizes. But the national research says that what this does for students is it reduces the dropout rates of high school students; it increases student attendance rates while they're still in their K-12 system; it increases the number of students who go on to college at all levels, both two-year and four-year; it increases the number of students who go on to complete their degree once they matriculate in college, so we're enhancing the completion rate of those who then choose to go to college; it increases the success rate for both ELL and poverty students in college and by being meaningfully employed; and it provides a more rigorous and meaningful educational experience for juniors and seniors by offering them both a college and a career focus. With that, I would conclude my remarks and be happy to answer any questions you might have. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Huck, for your testimony. One thing I'm a little confused about, you talked about the career academy activity going on with your rural school districts. [LB47]

JACK HUCK: Yes. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: How does that activity or going forward relate with...as I understood Superintendent Joel, there will be some coordination with rural districts and what LPS is proposing. So how does all that figure in together? [LB47]

JACK HUCK: We have invited the rural districts to participate in the discussions we've had with LPS, and I think it's a matter of choice for those districts. I will tell you that I think one of the biggest factors that will be involved there is probably distance and transportation. I can say to you that, you know, the folks from...as we've had these discussions, the folks from Seward and the folks from Syracuse and the folks from Palmyra, those districts that are fairly close to Lincoln, I think very likely might choose on a half-day basis or evening shift basis to participate in the program we establish in Lincoln. That just makes that consortium larger. I would also tell you that the folks in Fairbury and Hebron in the southwest corner of my district, it's unlikely that they would make that same commitment because of transportation; and, in fact, they're already talking about how do we use this model to perhaps develop an enhanced similar opportunity for students in that region of our community college district. So I think for those who are close, the model may work and they may choose to provide transportation or to drive in or whatever. I think for those more distant, they may choose to emulate the model just as we hope will happen in western Nebraska and central Nebraska and northeast Nebraska, that people will emulate this model and those consortiums can design the program that works best for them in their local region. [LB47]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: In your discussions on funding of these activities, why have you or maybe you have talked about tuition for the dual-credit courses? [LB47]

JACK HUCK: Currently, in the opportunities that we provide, we do have tuition for the dual-credit courses. Students pay tuition for those courses. And that is one of the largest barriers right now is how do we work with the local school district, the family, the college, how do all of us, you know, create a scenario whereby that can be affordable and accessible for students to participate. That's why the \$1,500 is so important to help pay for that piece. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. How does this dance with distance education or is this...are these hands-on kinds of things? [LB47]

JACK HUCK: They...well, they can be a combination. Again, we have found in our current experience that distance education can play a role, particularly for those pieces as you identify, Senator Haar, that might be classroom oriented. However, keep in mind that a number of these dual-credit courses are essentially the mirror image or they are the same course, they're not the mirror image, they're the same course of the early courses that are offered in our regular career and technical sequences. And the number of those courses are hands-on experience. And particularly those courses that are hands-on are the ones that really cannot be duplicated through distance education but will need to be, you know, face-to-face kinds of courses. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. Thanks. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chair. President Huck, on the question of funding and then of staffing, I wanted to ask you about how you saw the classes being taught at your centers as they would become formed and running. Do you see a combination of just your teachers or also teachers from the various districts also coming to the center and splitting time in that way? And then that asks the question of how the funding gets divided out on this tuition basis for dual enrollment between the combination of teachers you may have under your roof at one time. [LB47]

JACK HUCK: Great questions, Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB47]

JACK HUCK: And again we've had some experience certainly to date in that domain. I

would tell you that it's not so much which person is providing the instruction as it is the qualifications of the person that's providing the instruction. When we're talking dual-credit courses, what we're really saying to you is those courses must be of the same rigor and be of the same content and taught by a person with qualifications that meets our college-level standards. And so there...currently, there are high school teachers out there. There are probably middle school and elementary school teachers out there who meet those higher education credential standards that we have. We also have college instructors that meet those credential standards. So it's really a matter of finding people who have the right credentials and then really figuring out, you know, the remuneration or compensation arrangements related to them. I will tell you some of the tactics we've used so far. We can, at the college level, we can certainly if they're already our employees it's a moot point; if they're not our employees and they're a K-12 teacher, there are options. We can hire them directly and pay them on a part-time basis; we can use their time from the district and then send that compensation back to the K-12 district. And there are...those are probably the two ends of the spectrum, and there are a variety of opportunities in between for how we work that out. But the reality is, what we found is there are no barriers there; it's just a matter of putting the right details in place to make it work. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. Also, do you have division of the finances as they come into play here? You were talking about the payment of the tuition of the students in the dual-enrollment situation. The high school credit, of course, comes with a high school diploma and all the rest that goes with that, paid through property taxes and other sources. But for the extra payment of college credit so the student starts a college record of grades and accumulated credits over time, are you...help me define that. Are you talking about helping the student pay for that credit through this funding source? [LB47]

JACK HUCK: Yes, we are. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Totally or partially or a combination thereof? [LB47]

JACK HUCK: I would say to...that the idea of the amount in LB47 is to allow for the...if the money would flow to the district, let's assume, it would allow the district to pay for the tuition on behalf of the student. And it's likely, I mean, we've done some projections about what that might mean from a budgetary or a cash flow kind of standpoint. I think it's very likely that there also might be some funding available, again if the consortium agrees upon it, to use that money for student supplies, to use that money for some pieces of particular capital equipment that might be necessary for one of the technical fields that you're training in. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Sure. [LB47]

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JACK HUCK: So I think that money could be used for a variety of opportunities, but certainly the payment of the tuition on behalf of the student is a major component. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you very much. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Huck. [LB47]

JACK HUCK: Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: I should mention, you'll perhaps see some of us senators leaving this committee, myself included, periodically because we have bills being introduced in other committees. So it's not that we're getting tired of listening to you, it's just that we've got some other responsibilities. [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Senator Sullivan and the Education Committee, Randy Schmailzl, S-c-h-m-a-i-l-z-l, president of Metropolitan Community College. It's a pleasure to be here today. And as you can see already, in career academies there's a number of questions, and they're detailed questions and they're good questions. And this is a consortium of not only the high schools but the community colleges working with the high schools. And this allows us to maximize our revenues not only as community colleges working with the high schools, but also as the high schools working with the community colleges. The current Metro Community College career academies are started and work with the local school districts in our four-county area. I'll use Millard for an example. Millard and Metro have worked together to come up with a number of not only career academies in the trades, but career academies. And Senator Kolowski discussed the education career academy. It doesn't require a lot of equipment but it does require a great deal of teaching and discussion and visitation and mentoring of students to become teachers. And the idea is that you could start in high school, you could also go on now to Metro Community College for your first couple of years and transfer to the University of Nebraska-Omaha and land up in a teaching college there. And it's worked out for many of our students. In fact, one of the first ones that came through there is employed at Millard South as a teacher now. And we're very proud of him. He's a graduate of Metro Community College. And so the idea on career academies, although we've talked today mostly about the trades, it certainly involves other activities. And it really involves the customization of the local school district and how if you're a small school district and you have a need, you can get together with other school districts if they're within a reasonable distance and come up with your own career academies for your own need, for your own area of the state. So the laundry list at Metro is a rotating list of about 20 to 25 career academies. The other day, Dr. Ken Bird, the retired superintendent of Westside, and I did a tour of the college and we visited the welding career academy at the south campus. And it's limited to ten students--and the reason it limited to ten, we only have ten spots in there for the lab

during this time--and 40 students applied for the career academy this year for the winter quarter. If you go through our career academy, at the end of the year you have a specialist diploma in MIG welding. And that would allow you to get a job at Valmont right away out of Metro, or go into our program, or if you decide at that point welding is not your niche, move onto some other career trade. But you've also finished your math classes, some of your English classes along the way, so you're ready to go to college and you're college-ready. In the program of ten, there are students from six different school districts. So in that career academy, a student from Millard may be able to get to get out in the afternoon and take the course along with a student from Gretna. And we've opened up our career academies in the HVAC program out at Elkhorn for any school district that wants to participate. And so we've not limited it to three; we've limited it to as many students as we can take. We have between 250 and 400 students annually that take a career academy at the college, and they've been a tremendous opportunity for parents, students, teachers, and educators, and the businesses to get together to see how career education will work. I would like to mention the need to expand career academies. Currently, as I said, we have 20 to 25. But equipment needs, computer needs, if you're going to have career academies that are further away from your community college campus, you may also have to have mobile equipment needs to go on site to those other high schools. We need to think out of the box on career academies. This is an opportunity. This isn't the end of the story. This is the start of the story. Certification for our community college instructors, the Nebraska State Department of Education allowed for classes to be taken on-line that we developed. And once our faculty complete those classes, then they're eligible to get a teaching certificate to teach high school students. It's the same curriculum in our career academies as we teach to our regular students that are at the community college, so we do not water down the curriculum. In the end, community colleges have access to Program 99, which in short is the Nebraska Community College Student Performance and Occupational Education Grant Fund. And that grant is set off to the side of our funding formula, and LB47 adds career academies to the list of these purposes that we can use that money for. So in the future, if money comes to the community colleges for grants, for whatever, we can use that for career academies. I'd like to stop with that. There's many others behind me yet, and I'll answer any questions in terms of Metro Community College, career academies, or this concept. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Randy. How does this legislation or would it alter what you're currently doing with your career academy activity? [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Initially, it's not going to alter. It's going to supplement and increase our ability to offer more career academies. As Dr. Huck stated, the real barrier for us is tuition paid for by the high school student. You're not able to get federal financial aid as a high school student. So if your parents, if someone cannot pay the tuition, then you're left out. And at Metro we've had to discount, we've had to offer classes for \$25, we've had to go out and recruit money for scholarships just so

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everyone that wants to be in a career academy has an opportunity. This makes the playing field even for the students, and it also professionalizes the word career academy in the state of Nebraska as a substantive educational method. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Of those 40 student that applied for the welding program, how did you select the ten? [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: We ended up selecting the ten based on the first ones that applied for the program. And maybe that's not the best way, but it was the fairest way because when you looked at all 40 students, they all deserved it. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions? Yes. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Madam Chairman, thank you. President Schmailzl, just the fact that we're able to have this conversation and put this piece of possible legislation before us is fantastic. And I think back a couple of decades in a different job as a secondary director, we had great difficulties in having those conversations. And the openness and the larger picture view of what we're trying to do for all students across the board is so refreshing and so proper. And as it was mentioned earlier by Superintendent Joel, the game-changer aspect of what we're doing right now is truly a readiness for the future of our students and our districts and all of education. This is true P-16 discussions going on and I thank you for that. [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Thank you. And ultimately this will lead to jobs. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yes. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. Is this funding open to, like, kids who are being homeschooled and so on, or not? [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Excellent point, Senator Haar. We open our career academies up to homeschool students. Yes, we do. And, you know, the parent would pay tuition normally. Now I don't know if this funding that we're talking about here is available to homeschool students. But I do know in our Metro career academies, in Omaha and Bellevue there's somewhat of a hotbed for homeschool activities. And so if a parent pays for it, we're able to take the student in. So I don't know if this pays for it though. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: And then what about parochial schools or...same deal? [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Same deal, and we have a number of parochial school

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participants. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Randy. [LB47]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Just out of curiosity, how many more will be testifying in any capacity on LB47? [LB47]

ANDREW RIKLI: (Exhibit 4) Senator Sullivan, member of the committee, my name is Andrew Rikli, first name is A-n-d-r-e-w, last name is spelled R-i-k-l-i. I'm the assistant superintendent at the Omaha Westside Community School District in Omaha, Nebraska. I'd like to speak briefly from the metro perspective. The question has come up from the committee a couple of times about what's the value added, what does LB47 offer that perhaps isn't currently offered under statute or practice. I would offer two specific examples that I believe LB47 expands upon that are not currently in statute. The first has to do with the budget exception. When you look at the metro schools, they are largely low spending and high taxing; that is, they are spending at the \$1.05 and in many examples they're spending far above the \$1.05 because of bonds, because of levy overrides or other such efforts. So by building in a budget exception, this gives school districts, particularly in the metro but other places as well, the ability to spend the dollars that are necessary to expand these critical programs. And we think that that's a very important part of the legislation that really hasn't been touched on perhaps as much as it should. The other issue that I would bring to bear is that collaboration in the metro is absolutely essential. To be perfectly blunt, Westside is not the frontrunner in career education in the metro. We've talked about some other programs that are far more innovative than what we're doing. We've heard about the zoo school in Papillion-La Vista. We've heard about the career academy program in Millard, some of the wonderful things that are occurring in the Omaha Public Schools. So my point being rather than reinventing the wheel, having a three-member consortium will allow us to learn from one another. There's no reason for Westside, for example, to reinvent the wheel. By joining with other school districts that are already far ahead of the curve, I believe we could leverage our efforts and really speed up the process. I would lastly add that that type of collaboration that LB47 envisions is certainly not unprecedented in the metro. Senator Ashford spoke of it briefly in his opening. But the metro schools, as the committee may be aware, collaboratively formed a focus school at Underwood Hills. It was a collaborative effort by the Elkhorn Public Schools, the Westside Community Schools, and the Omaha Public Schools. And it was a wonderful model of collaboration where we shared resources, we shared staff, we shared curriculum expertise. Again, we're all stronger when we pool our resources, and I believe LB47 is an example of whereby pooling our resources together we can build stronger career education

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programs. With that, I would happily answer any questions that the committee may have. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Any questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

ANDREW RIKLI: Thank you. [LB47]

MARSHALL HILL: (Exhibit 5) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan and members of the committee. My name is Marshall Hill, M-a-r-s-h-a-l-l H-i-l-l. I'm executive director of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. I'll take 20 seconds of my allotted time to let the new committee members know that we're providing you a one-page cheat sheet on who the Coordinating Commission is, what we do, and assurance that we're not a peculiar Nebraska invention. But 28 states have an agency exactly like ours, and the rest have something very, very similar. I'm going to be very brief with you today, mainly call to your attention that two years ago this committee asked the Coordinating Commission to do a study on dual enrollment and career academies, and we did that and provided this report to you in December of 2011. Especially, new members of the committee, we'd be very pleased to make that available to you. I think one thing I'd like to assure you of is that LB47 takes steps and would move us in directions that are fully endorsed by the study that we did. We had participants from public schools, parochial schools, community colleges, four-year institutions, and other organizations. What our study does is summarize national practice and Nebraska practice based upon surveys that we sent to public schools and to colleges and universities here in the state, and then provide several recommendations. While LB47 picks up on some of those recommendations, it does not pick up on all of them, and there's a lot more work left to be done for career academies. There are at least 7,000 career academies in the United States. Nebraska is a bit late to the game. I'll finish just by reiterating a point that Dr. Huck made and expand it by saying that when you're talking about students who attend career academies and students who participate in dual enrollment, they do things you want students to do. They stay in high school at higher rates; they graduate from high school at higher rates; they go to college at higher rates; they come back for their second year of college at higher rates; and they graduate at higher rates than similarly positioned students who did not participate in those programs. Last comment: We mentioned today the challenge of enabling students who take advantage of these opportunities to pay the tuition. The Coordinating Commission runs a program called the Access College Early Scholarship Program. It's been a favorite program of the Legislature. We started with \$50,000 about five years ago. Senator Harms introduced a bill to start the program. Now we spend about \$700,000 a year on that. It's to pay the college tuition for high school students who, basically, are on free and reduced lunch if they take dual-enrollment courses. The money that we provide comes from state appropriations and from federal funds that the Coordinating Commission has obtained from the federal government. So main point is

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to call this report to your attention, to endorse LB47, and salute the steps that it takes forward. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Marshall. Any questions for him? Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

MARSHALL HILL: Thank you. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: (Exhibit 6) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan and members of the committee. My name is Rob Winter, R-o-b W-i-n-t-e-r. I'm the superintendent of the Grand Island Public Schools and just come before you in support of LB47. There has been some discussion already about the work being done in the Grand Island Public Schools as it relates to a career academy, and I think the important things for us to share with you is that this career academy is really driven from the need within our community, within Hall County, business and industry saying that there are certain areas within their work force that they cannot find the necessary employees or the employees that they need to be able to continue to grow and move forward. And so, as Dr. Joel alluded to earlier, that started in 2008. So, as you can see, this has been a rather long process for us to get to where we are today. But in August of 2013, we will open the doors to the Career Pathways Institute. We anticipate having right at 160 students start there that first year, and then we have room to grow that program and anticipate doing so. There will be five different pathways at the academy, and those pathways will complement a number of pathways already in place at Central Community College and also on the campus of Grand Island Senior High. A little bit about the Grand Island School District. We are a district that is a minority-majority school district. We have a student population of 64 percent free and reduced students, so the opportunity for our kids to be able to go and take a pathway that will give them that opportunity to step out of their high school career with certificates that make them or provide them the opportunity to be immediately employable at a livable wage. One of the things that I have said long and hard is that I want our kids to be able to step out and earn a livable wage and become a contributing member to the community, and our pathway, we believe, will do so. We purchased a building. We are "retroing" the building now, and we're very excited about that opportunity. There is little question in my mind that a four-year institution is not for every child. I think every child deserves an opportunity, though, to continue their education and be able to come out with a skilled trade that will allow them to raise a family, that will allow them to be able to buy a home and do all the things that we want for all of our kids. By having the pathways and the academies we accomplish that goal. Not every child in Grand Island, just as not every child in Omaha or Lincoln or any other district, is going to go to a four-year institution and be successful. Those of our kids that do, we wish them well and we're very proud of them. But we have a population of students that really, really need this opportunity, and so that is where we are with that. LB47 provides us...and there has been a fair amount of discussion already regarding the tuition piece. But with 63 percent of my kids free and

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reduced, that tuition piece is significant. I have handed out before you...it was not my goal to kill every tree in the area, but I think it's important to see what our learning plan is, who has been involved with it. The interesting thing about our program: it was a grass-roots movement. And the individual that will speak following me will talk to you at greater length about the number of manufacturers and educators that are at the table working on this together. And there are, as I call them, some heavy hitters in Hall County. It's Chief Industries; it's Hornady; it is Global Industries; it's Case IH. Those folks are the ones that have come to the table and said, we need help and collectively...and together we've addressed that. So I'm running out of time, so I will end my comments and answer any of the questions you might have regarding the Grand Island program. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Before I take questions, could you please respell your name? [LB47]

ROB WINTER: Sure. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: The clerk didn't quite get it. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: Rob, R-o-b, Winter, just like the season, W-i-n-t-e-r. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: Sure. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Any questions? Yes, Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. So LB47, though, designs this whole idea of a collaboration or consortium idea. Yours sounds pretty much standalone. Will you adapt to a consortium, or how does this fit in with your plan? [LB47]

ROB WINTER: Senator, that's...I appreciate that. We are inviting and have been working with Northwest High School, with Doniphan, with Wood River, with Central Catholic, and you'll see, in the information that I've provided you, those people were at the table as we developed this. We've gone through our first round of applications for next fall, and we're going through and picking up a second round. And Wood River and Doniphan and Northwest and those all have been invited, so it will be a collaborative effort for Hall County and those school districts within Hall County. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: Yes, sir. [LB47]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we kind of want to thank you for your presentation, and also...my question is, if maximized, how many students would be involved in all the programs if they were all filled? [LB47]

ROB WINTER: In all the programs for... [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yes. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: ...throughout the...our career pathway or just at this attendant center, sir? [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: At the attendant center, let's start with that. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: 400. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Four hundred there, okay. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: And then we had heard testimony earlier. I am absolutely enthralled with the idea of running that...we pay our lights. The building is heated. There is no reason, if there is the need, we can't run a session from 4:00 in the afternoon until 7:00 or 8:00 at night, you know, so. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely, absolutely. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: And we're working very closely with Central Community College on that. And so, as that need arises...and I truly, sir, I truly hope it does. I would like nothing better than to come back to you and say, we're running, essentially, three sections with that. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: That would be great. Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Any other questions? Thank you, Rob. [LB47]

ROB WINTER: Cool. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Appreciate it very much. [LB47]

TONJA BROADWELL: Tonja Broadwell, spelled T-o-n-j-a B-r-o-a-d-w-e-l-l. Thank you, senators of the Education Committee, for hearing our testimony today. First, let me give you a little bit of background on myself. I am chief operating officer for Kelly Supply Company, which is an industrial wholesale company with fourteen branches in three

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states. Most of those branches are in Nebraska; 110-year-old company, family owned. I've been employed there for 16 years. In about five years we're going to lose 30 percent of our work force due to retirements and whatever else life may dish out. I spent the last six years as a board member on the Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce. I was part of the design team that developed the learning plan for the Grand Island Public School system. I participated in the Arizona site visits in 2009 and the Oklahoma site visits in 2012, and I am currently serving on the executive team for the newly established CPI, the Career Pathways Institute. I'm in my third year of service on the board of education for the Grand Island Public Schools system. And, truth be known, my involvement with the chamber and the CPI is really why I took an interest in becoming part of the board of education. I am kind of passionate about this project, so I've prepared some notes. So if you can endure my reading, I'm going to try and stay on point and read my comments. Where we are today with CPI is the result of a grass-roots effort to satisfy the work force demands of our area employers. It goes back to 2008 or so when welders were in short supply. Business and education worked hard and deliberately to meet that need with the expansion of Central Community College welding program. Building upon that success, we had to look at more career pathways. We have studied hard, we have engaged the minds of many, we have collaborated, we have been resourceful, creative, and diligent; and in the fall of this year we will fill a new building with students who will be engaged in career-linked curriculum. The pathways offered in that building are work force driven, with the present and the future in mind, from data released by the Nebraska Department of Labor, the Nebraska career education model, the Battelle study, and employers themselves. And the building itself was designed with flexibility inherent, which is vital to the rapid pace of the change going on in our world. We recognize that our approach may be a bit different than others before us, and we are still feeling our way. It is our hope, however, that our experience can help shape the way for others in our state. As a representative of the business community in central Nebraska, we feel strongly that career academies provide both a pathway for career-ready workers and a jump-start for college-bound workers, and that is how we can keep our talent around. This is how we provide a quality work force. This is how we grow and compete. Stealing workers from each other and hiring the unqualified is not. This bill is business friendly when it supports collaboration and flexibility. Working together toward purposeful and deliberate outcomes is key, and time is of the essence. And I just want to leave you with a couple of things from an article that showed up in American School magazine, published in September of 2012, called "Working It." It was by Naomi Dillon. Increasingly, school districts are joining forces with area businesses who are finding that they need schools as much as schools need them to build a successful future. And the last line of this article says, we could ask businesses to do 1,001 things, but asking them to do something that not only benefits students and teachers but comes back to help them in the long run, it's a no-brainer. So with that I will conclude my remarks and answer any questions you may have. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you very much. Are there questions from the committee?

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Seeing none, thank you very much. [LB47]

TONJA BROADWELL: Okay. [LB47]

TROY LOEFFELHOLZ: (Exhibit 7) Good afternoon. My name is Troy Loeffelholz. That's T-r-o-y L-o-e-f-f-e-l-h-o-l-z, and I'm the superintendent of Columbus Public Schools in Columbus, Nebraska. A little bit different...we are not, obviously, in the Lincoln-Omaha metro area. We are out in rural Nebraska. But we look at this...when we look at career academies, we at Columbus Public Schools looked at LB870 as an opportunity to improve the high school experience for the students in and around Columbus Public Schools. We do support one or more academy programs, and we do this in order to strengthen and improve students' success in their postsecondary endeavors. Our academy development project does involve business, industry, staff, students, and parents in the planning. Over the last three years I have visited several of the manufacturing plants in and around Columbus. Columbus is known as the "city of power and progress," and some of the high-profile organizations and companies within our community are: NPPD's corporate office; Behlen Manufacturing, the world-class steel fabricator; BD Medical, a leading global medical technology company, and they have two large facilities in Columbus; ADM, a world leader in agricultural processing and corn processing plant, as well as ADM Alliance Nutrition; and Vishay Dale, which is a leader in the global electronics business. When touring these three facilities, it was amazing to see the products that they produce. While they're in the developing and building world-class products, so are we in the educational field. We need to develop college-ready students who have a focus, goals, and purpose in their education. We should just not be developing a skilled work force but lifelong learners with twenty-first century skills and technology and, what we term, soft skills--communication, collaboration, problem solving, etcetera. One of the first things that most employers around Columbus said is, if you can teach them to be on time and here every day, you've covered half the battle. These plans need to include a four- to eight-year plan. And I think you probably have heard the term P-16. I've heard the term...does it correlate with the Nebraska state standards? And I would tell you yes, because all the academies you have heard today really have a term that's out there, kind of a buzzword, STEM academy--science, technology, engineering, and math--which do correlate to the Common Core standards. And what I've been told is the NeSA standards are more rigorous in some aspects than the Common Core. But all of our students need to have a four-year plan when they enter high school. I know at Columbus Public Schools and many other school districts we do the EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT. We're one of the pilot schools for the Department of Education. So we take those correlated scores and those career cluster wheels and find out where our students want to be and what they want to become, and we use that data as a part of their four-year plan. Our goal is for all of our students, when they enter Columbus High School, is to have a four-year plan and which direction they want to go to, either in a career, towards a certification, or to a two-year or four-year institution. If done right, many models across the Midwest and

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Plains states you'll see improved scores in testing, higher graduation rates, lower dropout rates in these schools, and greater readiness for postsecondary education. Again, we need your help to make these dreams possible for the students of Columbus and across the great state of Nebraska. The superintendents within the ESU 7 area, serving Boone, Butler, Colfax, Merrick, Nance, Platte, and Polk counties have approved the concept of a STEM academy in Columbus, Nebraska, which is probably one of the only ones up in the northeast part of the state. LB47 is a good first step in assisting school districts and students to afford these necessary changes. And, I would tell you, Columbus Public Schools has a free and reduced rate of 50 percent; and, like Superintendent Winter, it is a challenge for a lot of our students. We have a high Latino population that, for the most part, would be first-year or first-generation college students. And I would contend that community college would see increased enrollment because of the dual-credit opportunities afforded in high school working towards that community college degree. And I'd answer any questions. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Go ahead. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you. Are there any questions? Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes. After listening to testimony today, it almost sounds like one thing you'd want to be saying is, get out of our way; but you're saying, help. Is the help really just the money aspect of it, or...because it sounds like so many good things are happening already. [LB47]

TROY LOEFFELHOLZ: There are many good things, and that's a great question, Senator Haar. The difference...and I think Senator Sullivan asked the question: What's the difference between the academies we have today and the academies that you are hearing about, possibly, in the future? [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Um-hum. [LB47]

TROY LOEFFELHOLZ: And I think it's the involvement of the community. I think it's involvement in industry. I think it's involving hospitals. You've heard of healthcare academies. You hear of manufacturing academies, engineering academies. I think the difference you see is in the old academy structure they were standalones and they worked with the issues with a group of schools. What you're seeing now, and I think what you see in the movement, is the movement towards involving more industry, more healthcare, more education, and it becomes a triangulation of help for those students so that they can succeed. It's not all about the money. But I would tell you, for many of my students, just like Superintendent Winter, \$1,500 goes a long way to pay tuition. Now I would tell you, in Columbus Public Schools, I think the students should be on the hook for a little bit of that tuition because they do seem to appreciate it more when a little bit of it comes out of their pocket. But it would be tuition assistance. [LB47]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Any other questions? If not, thank you very much. [LB47]

TROY LOEFFELHOLZ: Thank you very much. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for filling in. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity. My name is Cliff Levitan, C-l-i-f-f L-e-v-i-t-a-n. I last appeared before you a year ago last January on LB1144. And I am a business person. I'm in the construction management business in the Omaha area, and I bring the passion. I'm the guy that, 28 years ago, started beating on people's doors and telling them it's embarrassing not to have career academies. We all know not every kid is going to college. Some of them just don't know where they're heading. We need to provide the opportunities. I've wanted a meaningful career academy for so many years that that's why I keep arguing with people, convincing them that we have to have it. And I am on the steering committee in my particular area, finally got enough people around me that thought the same way and, hopefully, we're heading someplace. We need a better skilled work force. In the construction business I can walk onto any job site, and the first thing that gets me is the amount of gray hair. And I'm only talking about my industry. And I've been in this industry a long time, and I've earned my share of gray hair. But the skilled trades are aging, and the career academies we're talking about in LB47 are not just construction trades or welding or anything. We're talking about healthcare and information technology and a lot of doors that could be opened for the kids in our communities. Support is building. You've heard how support is building all over the state. I can't tell you how many businesspeople in my area have called me up, leaders of large industries and businesses, and said, what can I do, what do you need; you need money, you need equipment, what? So I tell them, just wait, got some planning to do, we'll be back. How are we different? A lot of things have been talked about this afternoon. The business and industrial tie-in with potential internships and so forth, that's key. That's a big thing. We're going to have curriculum advisory boards to keep...from the business community in our particular area that will keep the curriculum fresh and new and say to the educators, we need a little more of this and a little less of that, and keep everything alive. We've even talked about, in our area, having not just guidance counselors in the school system but a jobs coordinator who does nothing but match the kids to the jobs. They need that guidance. The interlocal agreements you've all heard about, there's a lot of unique things. There's a lot of flexibility in this bill. LB47 opens a lot of doors that can make things really happen for the state, for the kids. It has my full support. Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Levitan. Can I ask you a couple questions?
[LB47]

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CLIFF LEVITAN: Certainly. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: First of all, has your business, up to this point, participated in any of the career academy activities in the Omaha area? [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: No. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: Interestingly enough, though, the way I got involved in this...I've been in construction for 50 years. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: But my degree is in industrial arts education. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Oh, okay. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: My degree started me out as a shop teacher, but I just can't spend all day indoors. And I'm in construction, and that's the name of that tune. But I, back in my earlier years, I worked with...I was a member of the Metropolitan Omaha Builders Association. In those days I was chairman of the architectural awards committee. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: I got to know, and some of them are friends of mine to this day, almost every industrial arts teacher in Omaha, so I'm familiar with what's in all the schools. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: I've been to a lot of them. I've seen them operate, except that the schools are now so focused on getting that child to college that it's...there's other things out there in the world. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: Some kids can't; some kids won't. They need to be exposed to something. Getting kids in the classroom in eleventh and twelfth grade, exposing them in ninth and tenth, and even introducing it in seventh and eighth, it's a step. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: How do you see your business participating in an academy like what we are talking about? [LB47]

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CLIFF LEVITAN: I would love to be on a community advisory board because I have contacts in all kinds of industries. I am personally a one-man company. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: That's me. I represent owners and manage construction projects for people and get all the interested parties--the contractors, the architects, and everybody--focused on my client. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: So this has been something I've been begging for, for years, and finally got some people like good Senator Ashford to finally listen to me, and that's how this thing has moved forward. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: So for the rest of my life I will be involved in whatever way I can be of help, and that will even be down to fund-raising from all these business leaders... [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: ...who have said, how can I help? And I can now call them up after the bill has passed and we start structuring and say, here's how. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Any other questions? Yes, Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, thank you. Mr. Levitan, this sounds almost like apprenticeships that go on in the unions. Have...in your experience with this committee and so on, are the unions involved in these discussions? [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: Not directly with me, but they all know about it and there's no conflict at all. They've got schools. The different trade associations have schools. The community college has schools. This is a venture. This bill can allow people to work together. The idea of the business community, educators, community colleges all sitting down at the same table is... [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: It's revolutionary. It's happened in other states. What I saw out in Grand Island, boy, I wish all you guys could go out to Grand Island and see what

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they've actually done out there. It's brilliant and it's so needed. Like I say, with me, you get the passion, not the educational facts and statistics. (Laughter) [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Great. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: But that's my role in this thing. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Um-hum. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: And I want your support, and I thank you very much for the opportunity. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Any other questions? Yes, Senator. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Levitan, thank you for your passion. I think it's extremely important, and the superintendents we've heard from today, the zeal that you're bringing forward is extremely important. From a number of us who have spoken to our communities over the past years, when we had reductions in the industrial arts areas and some of the other hands-on, job-related directions that our kids could be going, it's good to see it...we've...we're moving away from that. They all need the reading skills. They all need the math skills. There's no question about those things, and those will be there. But to back off and reduce our focus on the students that won't be going to two or four years or a graduate college, it's extremely important that we have those options available to them. And I thank you for what we've heard today, and you're a capstone to that. Thank you very much. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: I thank you for your attention. And this is a start, and this is something we really need. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

CLIFF LEVITAN: Thank you. [LB47]

JOHN SKRETTA: (Exhibit 8) Good afternoon, senators. My name is John Skretta, that's J-o-h-n S-k-r-e-t-t-a, which, for the transcript, will be much easier to get correct than Loeffelholz. (Laughter) Obviously, given the voluminous testimony you've heard already this afternoon related to the graying and soon-to-be-retiring work force, there is a clear and present need for healthcare academies. My name is John Skretta. I'm the superintendent of the Norris School District. First of all, I just want to thank you for your service here on the Education Committee, and I'm here to encourage your consideration and hear the case, which you have received some talking points from the Norris School

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District perspective. I'm representing a smaller district. In terms of Nebraska, if you think about NSAA classifications, we're a mid-tier, Class B district, okay, so I'm representing a smaller school voice. Even though we have over 2,000 students, we're a fraction of the size of some of the districts you've heard from today. And I think you've heard some very compelling testimony related to the importance, in the metro areas, of career academies. I'm coming at you from southern Lancaster County, part of northern Gage County, and a sliver of Otoe. And I also gave you a copy of our annual report, just so you have a little bit of context about the district. We've been a charter member of the Southeast Nebraska Career Academy program. So we've been in it since its inception and are proud to have partnered with SCC and some of the other ESU 6 districts in that endeavor. That has proven, time and again, those career academy experiences to be almost uniformly hailed by the students who participate in them, and they've benefited from experiences that have equipped them with technical proficiency and job skills in the areas of health, business, info tech, education, etcetera. Career academies are not, as you have heard today, some kind of old-school, retro version of dismissing the duds and banishing kids from campus. I know that's been a stereotypical misconception about them, and I want to utterly refute that notion by equipping you with just some very basic data that I think is really compelling from a local level. Norris students perennially outperform national and, typically, state ACT averages. And a higher percentage of our students are college ready in the areas of math, science, and English than elsewhere, for the most part, even in our great state and its substantial high averages. Amazingly enough, the students who seem to do the very best are the kids we serve who have career concentration areas, wherein they have taken multiple courses, both beginning and advanced, within an identifiable career sector, and the Nebraska career ed folks can talk to you about those sectors. And, if you think about it, it makes a lot of sense. Students who are engaged in their education and view their classroom experiences as relevant and on a trajectory for a future pathway they want to pursue, they're more likely to really invest themselves in their learning. So I believe LB47 makes good sense. Our district believes it makes good sense. The partnership configuration works, SENCAP, in place right now. But the thing is providing these students these uniquely tailored educational experiences that mesh with career pathways is not an inexpensive endeavor. There are real costs attached to providing these students the resources, and that includes things that we haven't talked about earlier, such as basic things like ensuring that students obtain their CareerSafe OSHA certification or providing the transportation for students in small groups to get from our campus into Lincoln or other job site experiences. I thank you for your attention to this bill and thank you for your attentiveness to me this afternoon as well. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, John, for your testimony. A couple of questions. How long has the career academy group in southeast Nebraska been operating, and how long... [LB47]

JOHN SKRETTA: We've had the SENCAP thing going for about five years now. [LB47]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: And of your student population, what percentage participate in it? [LB47]

JOHN SKRETTA: Relatively low percentage total. We have about 600-650 kids in the high school year to year, and we have somewhere between...we've had as high as 50 kids a year participate in the career academy, and we've had lower numbers than that. I think this year we've got 20 participants. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: All right, very good. Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

JOHN SKRETTA: Thank you. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: (Exhibit 9) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. My name is Rich Katt, R-i-c-h K-a-t-t. I'm the state director for career education with the Nebraska Department of Education, here to testify on behalf of this legislation in support from the department and the State Board. I'll forgo testimony because I think you've heard everything I was going to say, so I will not repeat. But I would like to make a couple of points. Please understand that when we talk about the career academies that you've heard about this afternoon, they provide greater depth of instruction, knowledge, and skills than we typically get in a 50-minute classroom period in a career and technical education. And so those require more equipment, more instructional materials, because we do get to that greater depth of instruction, so that's one point. Another one I'd like to make is...Chuck Chevalier talked about the incentivizing of collaboration of schools. We've been in conversation with several school administrators over this last year about how, in small rural schools, they might share programs rather than...it's very...it's impossible for a small rural school to offer all of the different kinds of career programs that are available. So the conversations have been focusing around what if we could coordinate our schedule so that students could receive core instruction, perhaps, in the morning. And then, in the afternoon, if we could arrange this, students could go here if they wanted to major in a health/science academy. They could go here if they wanted to do a manufacturing academy. And could we arrange something like that for schools that are within a distance that that's feasible for? The barrier we've come up against time and time again is the cost of transporting students. And so I think that as...they wanted to let you know that those conversations are happening and that schools are looking at ways that they can continue to serve students and to meet their educational needs by doing some collaboration and some unique thoughts about how to think outside the box. One of the conversations was about perhaps it's a four day and a one day. Day five becomes the career...who knows? We don't know where this could take us, but we're starting those kinds of conversations. The last point that I would make that hasn't been addressed very much in the testimony that's given: This bill does talk to industry credentials.

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Nebraska, unfortunately, really lags behind the nation in the awarding of industry credentials, especially for students leaving high school. That really is because of the fact that we don't get to the depth of instruction. Our career and technical education is found in comprehensive high schools. So we have a 50-minute class period typically, or if you're in block maybe you have a 90-minute period. But we don't...we're not capable of giving the depth of instruction that provides the knowledge and skills so students could sit for those industry certification exams. A career academy opens that door because you have the bigger block of time and you have the ability. So those industry credentials are something that are a value add for that student as they walk into an employer, that they have an actual credential. Be it a certified nursing assistant or their AWS certification as a welder, the logistic certification to move into that industry, those are valuable credentials from a prospective employee's perspective, that bring value to them as an employee. We would love to see that program grow in this state, that we provide more industry credentials through our programming. I think that's a win for students, and it's a win for the state. So with that I want to thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts this afternoon. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Rich. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: At least once today there was mention of the student leadership organizations and the skills built in those. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Right. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Is there any linkage or conversation around the role that those organizations can play in this whole mix? [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: As we've written and worked on that rule for a career academy, one of the components is that there would be career student organizations connected to that instructional program--so SkillsUSA for the industrial, I mean, it...right down the line, because they bring that other side of the employability skills and some of the value add. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: They're an essential component, we believe, to an effective career academy. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. Okay, thank you. Any other questions? Senator Seiler. [LB47]

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SENATOR SEILER: The way the statute is written in LB47, that if a consortium or a school district, they have to get your approval, is that correct? [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Right, right. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: And that was true before this change. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: That was true. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: So if a school district at McCook entered into an agreement with Southeast Community College, or Southwest, that would be approved by you before it could operate? [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Right. In the process...and we're into the final stages of writing that rule right now, and it will go through the public hearing and so forth. But there is an application process that is in there where they define. [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: And it was written directly from what was LB870 last year, so those components... [LB47]

SENATOR SEILER: That was my next question. Thank you. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Right, it aligns perfectly. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB47]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. I heard a term, for the first time, used: an industry certification exam. Do many of these programs...do they have to result in some kind of exam, or is it...how does that work? [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: They do not, but there are many of the programs that we would look at, at a typical career academy, that do result. As we toured other states and we looked at other models that were there, that was one of the value adds that a career academy really brings to a student is that they get...a lot of them have a number of hours of instructional time you have to meet, or you have to do the demonstration of the skill in order to get the industry certification. And so, as we've looked at developing and the conversations we've had in Lincoln and Omaha, Grand Island, Columbus, that is priority for us, that, if possible, we want to make those industry certifications available because it really is a credential that the student can carry to an employer. And it's at least an indication to the employer of what that student knows and is able to do, so it brings value both ways. [LB47]

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SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chair. Rich, good to see you again. And just to piggyback on Senator Sullivan's comment, I know every student that's a member of the Education Academy at the Millard schools, at Millard West, is also a member of Future Educators Association. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Educators, that's correct. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: So we have automatically done that. Every student coming into that program is, without question, also a member of FEA. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: That's great. [LB47]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: You bet. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Rich, in listening to all the different testimonies from the different career academies, would you say one of the strong points of this part of high school education--because that's what we're talking about is the high school and not beyond, and that maybe speaks to Senator Haar as far as the labor unions--they wouldn't start as young in their educational process as we're talking about with the career academy because we're really trying to get the youth in the high school level so that really, when they get to the point that they would go to a union training facility, they would be much farther ahead and better educated into those programs so that they actually maybe could move them farther along in those unionized training programs. But back to the point of the individuals. Would you agree that it is no two academies probably would look the same to the extent that each of those academies are operating under the needs of their area so that they are producing well-educated, technical-savvy future employees for that area and responding to the labor needs of that particular area? [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: That is correct. One of the aspects, as we've worked with different groups that are considering career academies, we always bring up...let's take a look at your regional work force needs, economic development needs. Where are the jobs? Where are the jobs for the future of the state of Nebraska in your area? That's paramount in our mind about why we should be creating the type of career academies

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we should be creating, so that we really are educating and creating that talent pipeline that becomes the skilled labor for our next generation of employees here in Nebraska, and entrepreneurs. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: So, in other words, what we're really talking about is economic development. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Absolutely. I think the sites that we visited that had really effective career academies, you could sense in the conversations the enthusiasm of the employers and the growth and the expansion and the...I mean, it really is. It's absolutely about economic development. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Rich. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Thanks. [LB47]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Senator. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Rich, for your testimony. [LB47]

RICHARD KATT: Thank you very much. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes. [LB47]

JAY SEARS: (Exhibit 10) Good afternoon, Madam Chair and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Jay Sears, J-a-y S-e-a-r-s, and I represent the 28,000 educators of the Nebraska State Education Association. We are in support of LB47. I have written testimony for you, so I won't go over that. I'd just like to remind you that we also were here last year and testified in support of LB870. We thank Senator Ashford for bringing the next stage of the career academies to you for your consideration. And then one other announcement--that just reminded me, as Senator Kolowski was talking about the career academy of educators that comes out of Millard--is our board of directors on Saturday gave me the permission to spend budget money to be a partner with the FEA. And we're excited about helping support one of the career student organizations as they kind of get off the ground and elect their state leaders and then go on to national leadership. So again, NSEA supports this bill and would encourage you to get it out on the floor and get us going. So with that, thank you very much for the opportunity to testify. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Jay. Any questions for Mr. Sears? Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

JAY SEARS: Thank you. [LB47]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Is there any further proponent testimony? Is there any opponent testimony for LB47? Anyone that would like to speak in a neutral capacity? [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: (Exhibit 11) Good afternoon. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Good afternoon. [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: Thank you for this opportunity. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: And thanks to Senator Ashford for introducing this bill. My name is Dan Shoemake, D-a-n S-h-o-e-m-a-k-e. I'm administrator of ESU 6. And, in 2007, I was given the opportunity to write a grant that started the first multi-district career academy program in the state, and you've heard about that already. The SENCAP program originated with ESU 6, and it started with our 16 districts and quickly expanded to 20 districts. We picked up some from ESU 2 and a couple from ESU 3 in the Omaha area that participated in that academy. And while we lost the state funding to continue that program two years ago, we were fortunate to partner with Southeast Community College; and Southeast Community College has carried that program forward with funding that they have. So we've had good partners with that program. I registered to testify neutral, but I'm actually very passionate about career academies. I only have one problem with LB47, and that is that I would like to see at least more permissive language for ESUs to be a partner in the process. And the original draft that I saw did not have any provision for ESUs. But Senator Ashford did redraft it, and there is some specific mention of ESUs in there now. The reason that I advocate for a more active role for ESUs: The whole bill talks about multi-district collaboration, and that's what ESUs are all about. And we found that it was very successful, from our perspective, because with career academies you're talking about actually the most successful model of high school reform that exists. If you review the research on high school reform, career academies are very successful because it brings relevance and real-world education to the high school setting. Kids who may be disengaged prior to having career academies suddenly find out why they're taking an algebra course or why they're taking an English course. All of those things become relevant when it's viewed in the perspective of a career. And ESUs are K-12 focused; we're talking about K-12 kids. And we think that, since collaboration is what we stand for, that it's a natural for the ESUs to take a lead role in putting career academies in place in the state of Nebraska. So, besides that, I've provided some support to you. You've heard a lot of the background of the SENCAP program. It remains a very, very successful program. It does serve primarily rural schools. We heard some concerns earlier about small rural districts being able to use career academies successfully. My 16 districts have had very much success in using career academies. And I can tell you that it works for them, if they're willing to buy in,

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and my districts were very willing to buy in. And with that, I'll allow the support information that I gave you to stand and answer any questions you have. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much for your testimony. Short of writing that initial grant that created the career academy, what role did the ESU have in that academy? [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: We were the administrative agency, and we hired the staff to run the program because, really, you're talking about...most of the community colleges already provide a lot of dual-credit courses. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: And that really is the main component, you've heard, of career academies so far. But career academies really have so much more than dual credit. You have to have other components, like career shadowing or job shadowing, where students can spend some time with professionals on the job where they can see exactly what's being done. We have regional coordinators that go into the schools and teach support courses like medical terminology courses for the health careers and, you know, how to interview for jobs, how to...you know, basic job seeking and keeping skills. Those aren't covered in the dual-credit courses. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum, um-hum. [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: So we use those regional coordinators to actually teach high school courses for credit, and we hired the people who did that. And I think, in no small part, that really contributed to the success of the program because you have to have more than just the dual-credit college courses for the students for them to be successful. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So, going forward, you perhaps would think that ESUs could continue to serve that kind of role in future academies? [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: I think that we're in the best position of any organization in the state to do that, really. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: I see. Okay, all right, thank you. Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LB47]

DANIEL SHOEMAKE: Thank you so much. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. Any other neutral testimony? [LB47]

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SENATOR ASHFORD: Very briefly. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Very, very briefly. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator. [LB47]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thanks for all your patience. I think this really is an issue of there are good efforts out there, but we need to change the system to make it more collaborative and coordinate the activities across the state so that we can juice this up. There are many career academy pieces out there. But what we have now is the opportunity to change the system. It's much like what we're trying to do in Judiciary with the juvenile justice system. There are many good things going on with kids, but it's not coordinated in a systematic way. I don't know, you know, if we don't do it, we're going to...I think we're going to get nice efforts going on out there, but we're not going to have that coordinated, collaborative effort that can...with industry, as has been suggested. So I appreciate all your time and would urge that this bill be advanced. Thank you, Madam Chair. [LB47]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Ashford. Thank you. That closes the hearing on LB47. (See also Exhibits 12 and 13.) We will now move on to LB116. I'm looking for Senator Harms. Oh, there you are. (Laugh) Welcome, Senator. [LB47]

SENATOR HARMS: Sorry. Thank you. All right? [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes. Welcome, Senator. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: (Exhibit 1) Thank you very much, Senator Sullivan and colleagues. My name is John N. Harms, H-a-r-m-s. I represent the 48th Legislative District. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come today and to visit with you about this particular legislative bill. Senator Sullivan, there is ongoing evidence in Nebraska and nationwide that dual-enrollment courses which allow students to earn both high school and college credit are key strategies in addressing our future economic needs, which are increasing every year. Most states see the potential benefits of dual enrollment. Other programs have been provided in recent years and in the past legislation that encourage early access in this great state. This bill would provide standards that I think are needed that higher-educational institutions would be required to follow and would be things like: the same rigor; the same course syllabus; approved course textbooks; the same course outlines; and, finally, the same student assessment as compared to college courses offered at a campus of a postsecondary educational institution and taught by an instructor possessing, at a minimum for academic transfer courses, a master with 18 hours of graduate credit in the field of study and the course content area

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and core technical education courses. The postsecondary educational institution shall have the equivalent faculty hiring requirements. Dual-enrollment courses offered by postsecondary educational institutions approved by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education that offer such courses shall follow the dual-enrollment standards which would be approved by the commission and the Department of Education. Any dual-enrollment course that is not following such standards would not be transferable to the public postsecondary educational institutions in Nebraska. It's important that we put these requirements into law so that the quality of instruction and the standards of excellence will be consistent with the other course offerings and by the college. The evaluation of the quality of instruction for college credit courses offered to a high school student at locations other than a college campus will be consistent with the practices that each college has in effect for other college credit courses. Senator Sullivan, I think these standards are extremely important, and I would be in hopes that we could have a really good discussion about these particular standards. And this really completes my testimony. It just simply centers around the standards that we believe we should have in higher education when we're teaching in the high schools. Now the amendment that I have given you makes a correction to make sure that everybody understands that this is a master's degree in this field of study not above and beyond the master's but in its course of study, okay, and so that...I wanted to make sure that that was corrected because when you read it the first time and the way we had it here, it would eliminate half of our high school teachers who don't have a master's degree plus 18 hours in a course of study. So this is included in that master's degree. So I'd be happy to answer any questions. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Harms. Senator Haar. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. Senator Harms, this sounds a lot like it could also apply to on-line courses. Do you... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Could it? Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: You don't extend it to that. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: No. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: But do you see the same kind of...I mean, it's...this is another whole field that we're getting into and... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, it's an emerging field, and I can tell you that the number of people taking classes over the line are growing rapidly from all over the world. I mean, even for community colleges you have international students plugging into those programs. And, you know, the interesting thing about that, Senator Haar, is that when you really ask for an analysis on when these people really plug in, it's amazing. It's like

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after midnight, 1:00 or 2:00, 3:00 in the morning, 6:00 in the morning, because it meets their needs. It's...you know, it meets their...what they have to have in their life at the time, to be a working mother or father or, you know, whatever it might be, and I think it gives colleges a lot of flexibility. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: But do you see this applying to...I don't even know if we have any standards for on-line courses. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I think each institution has its standards that they have established in regard to that aspect. What this does here...the...what I'm talking about here is when you actually go into the high school and you teach a class. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: You hire a teacher who is probably...well, is employed by the high school or the public schools, wanting to make sure that they have the same credentials, they're using the same course outline, the same syllabus, they have the same requirements off campus for that class as they have on campus. And the one thing I'd like to point out to you, this is really about students. It's not about the institution of higher education. This is about kids, making sure that we don't shortchange them. We have a lot of students who are enrolled in dual-credit classes in high school and college, and what a great opportunity for some of these kids. Some of them don't have the support from home. A lot of young people don't even know for sure whether they can be successful taking a college credit class. And the beauty of this is not only do you have the college, but you're still under the public school. And you come together, you can counsel the student, you can help the student in regard to doing better in their life and getting an education where they can provide for their families in the future, starting them early in their careers. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Now when you say the same course outline and the same...you use the word "same" a lot. You're not saying it has to be identical but comparable. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: No, I'm saying that it's going to be...that you're going to teach just exactly what that course outline is, what that syllabus is. Now as...when you get into academic freedom, then you have a little bit...a way to be able to approach that. But these are the...this is the contents that we want you to follow. Now how you get to that content, that's really up to you because that's academic freedom. You can't go in, at least in higher education, you can't go in and tell the teacher, this is the way I want you to teach. We just simply spell out very clearly what we want and what we expect. So this is the outline, you're going to follow that outline basically. And the course content, we don't want you deviating from that course content. But how you teach it, as Senator Avery would tell you, is up to you. I mean, it's your academic freedom. [LB116]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Senator Harms, I've got some confusion and possibly some concerns, so I wanted to just run through those. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: For the dual credit, those school districts that would be having a staff member, a certified teacher that is teaching a dual-credit course in the high school to students--biology, physics, whatever it might be--under this, those folks would have to have master's plus...or with at least 30 hours in that? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Only if it's academic transfer, only if it's the academic side. On the vocational side that's a different story, but... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: So if you were going to take an English class,... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: ...we'd want you to have a master's degree, and in that master's degree at least some...the amount of appropriate hours in that field of study. If you were on the vocational-technical side that's another story, and that story is it's kind of hard sometimes to get a bachelor's degree in welding. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: You could probably get an associate's degree. But probably what's more important for the student is that you have ten years of experience in the real world, industry, and teaching them. So those requirements would be different, and that's up to the institution to decide that. This is dual credit, where you're having...actually, in the liberal arts side, you're actually doing transfer education; you're getting ready to go on to college and maybe go to the university or one of the state colleges. We want to make sure that when we're...everyone is teaching these classes, that they're teaching what's being taught on campus. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay, but your bill, to me, seems to put more emphasis on the educational level of the instructor than the educational outcome of the student. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Not really. I wouldn't want to argue with you. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, let me expand. [LB116]

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SENATOR HARMS: But what it would just say and what it just requires are, these are the basic credentials you have to have to teach. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, but let me expand. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: There may be...you can have a master's degree with 30 hours of that subject matter and still not be a great instructor. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, that's really correct. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. And so from the vantage point of your bill, it doesn't address at all the educational outcome of the students from that instructor. It's just talking about the requirements of that instructor's educational level not his ability as a teacher. Whenever we start doing that, that's always a concern for me, as well as you have schools that are providing dual-credit courses now in the high school. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Those teachers may or may not have a master's. The programs are approved. Those classes have been approved for a long time, and you only get the dual credit if you pass the standardized test that is a national test. So, to that extent, if the students have shown the ability or the practicum of that class, why wouldn't we want to accept that in our higher education for those students to move farther and quicker? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, I don't know if we're on the same sheet of music, but let's just go back and back up here. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Let's say we're taking English 101, okay? [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Student enrolls, dual credit, we expect the teacher to have the same credentials, whatever those credentials might be, as we establish those credentials, that would be on campus. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. [LB116]

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SENATOR HARMS: We expect the student to be able to meet the requirements or the objectives that we've created and the teacher to follow the syllabus and those sorts of things. They're not taking a national test. They're simply taking the test that has...that they have been given on the subject matter that they are teaching, okay, so... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: But I would venture to say...I understand that. But they also would have attained the same educational block that they might have from...if they were on the campus of Lincoln or Southeast. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: That's correct. That's what we're hoping. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And so from that vantage point I'm not seeing the relatively...the tightness of the instructor's educational level base versus this. I...two things, and you can respond to them. I would venture to say that, although you talk about a syllabus...and education has changed a lot, higher education has changed a lot since I was back there, a long, long time ago. But talking to friends that would be going to either the university at Kearney or UNO or UNL or to Wayne or to Chadron, all of those schools would have had an English 101 or whatever the entry level of English might be, or math 101. But I would venture to say that each one of those probably used a different syllabus and a different book, and all of those classes would have transferred within the educational system in Nebraska. And I'm afraid we lose that flexibility with this. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I don't think that you really do, Senator. For example, let's just say that they go to Southeast Community College, and I'm sure that Dr. Huck can probably touch bases on this, or any other president that's here. If they're taking an English class from Southeast, I would assume that every English teacher who is teaching English 101 is going to use basically the same book, going to use the same course outline, use the same course syllabus, do the same kind of evaluation at the end that they would expect. And, see, the key to this whole thing is to make sure that our students come out with a quality education. Let me just give you an example. In my previous world, okay, small college at the time, small enrollment--and we probably were some of the earlier people to get into the public schools and start doing this--we didn't have these particular requirements at the very beginning. And what we found was that a student...there's a tendency when you're in the public school system to teach at that level. There is a difference. And what we found, by not being very strong when we first started, that the kid who left, the student who left English 101 or maybe college algebra was not prepared appropriately for the next level, so we really failed that student. And today, what I'm saying to you...that a lot of people now understand that, and we then changed our own requirements, then saying, whoa, that's not right, we're seeing what's happening and the end results, it's not fair to the student, it's not fair to the parent who is paying for the dollars. And so it's important for us to make sure that we're providing exactly the same kind of quality education that you can get on campus, off campus, in that classroom. And that's what this is all about is making sure that that student doesn't

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lose by taking the dual-credit class. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I agree. I'm not trying to diminish that. But on the same hand, and perhaps we just have a difference of opinion here, but I truly believe, at this point in time...you talked about Southeast and their syllabus, and probably every instructor at Southeast does use the same syllabus and does use the same textbook. But I don't know that you can say that is the same at Northeast or Central or... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, it doesn't make any difference. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, certainly, it does. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: No, it doesn't; no, it doesn't. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just a minute, just a minute. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Go ahead. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just a minute. Because you are requiring...you said before that it had to be the exact same, and that's a concern. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: But it's of that institution. That's where you're missing the point. It could be Northeast having a different book from Southeast. It doesn't make any difference. That... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: But what if that district, whatever the school district is, would choose to utilize a dual-credit course, not necessarily from one of the institutions within the state of Nebraska, but the outcome would still be the same? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, we hope it would be. I don't know how to evaluate that if it's a... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Are you...well, how would we provide a buffer for that under your legislation? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, if you have a buffer for...you're talking about somebody from out of state teaching the class or from... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Perhaps, I mean, for long distance. I mean, going back to Senator Haar's, you know, comment, you know, the on-line, I don't know that it necessarily would be on-line, but it certainly could be a video-type deal and they could be based in Kansas City or they could be based in Minneapolis. [LB116]

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SENATOR HARMS: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: So how do we...and the class material could be coming from there, so it's not necessarily one that would be identical to one utilized in Nebraska. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: No, and the point is that it's up to the institution. What this is about is to make sure--I don't care what college you're in, in Nebraska, for example--that we want you to use exactly the same criteria that you would use on campus, and that's what this is about. So each institution could have a different requirement. University of Nebraska might have a different book. Chadron State College might have something different. Some of the private colleges might have something different. So... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: But aren't we then accepting ten different things, it's just dependent upon going back to just that educational level of that person in that institution because if what you're accepting is okay as long as this is a Northeast syllabus and instructor and book that they use, or something from Southwest or Central or Southeast, all those, you've admitted, would possibly be different. So what are we gaining here? Because every one of those may be somewhat different in the final destination. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: But that's up to...that's...the argument for that would be: That's up to the institution to determine. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: But you're...you would be forcing all in-state institutions to accept that and... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: No, I'm not. No, you're...what we're just asking them to do...when you teach the class...don't misunderstand this. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay, maybe I did. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: When you teach the class, we're just asking that you meet this criteria. For whatever class it might be, for your institution--university could be different, the state college could be different--that's just...yeah, and that's what it is in higher education. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay, so what is the benefit, though, if the kid, the student, takes this class and it meets all the...your requirements as far as the equity of the instruction? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: But if we aren't...if there's no catch on the other side, if Southeast

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or the university system or the state college system, no one has to accept these credit hours, what have we accomplished? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, what do you mean they don't have to accept these credit hours? [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: If they don't accept them...and I'm...by virtue of accepting them...I know a lot of the facilities will accept them, but they accept them just as "gen-eds," not necessarily towards a major. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, I have... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And, you know, if we're going to be this specific and this enticing, as far as what we are going to allow or disallow, there has to be something on the other end for the student. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Yeah, I think that's something that you could fix pretty easily just in this legislation. You could amend this to fit the...you know, that aspect of it. But what we're trying to focus on here, Senator, is that we want to make sure that the student is getting... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Absolutely. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: ...the right education, and I think this goes... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I just...but, I mean, they are paying for it, so I want to make sure that they have that as well. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Yeah, I agree, and your questions are going beyond what we have in this bill. And, you know, if you want to go further, it's a whole other story. For example, if you wanted to have English 101 all the same across the state of Nebraska or college algebra all across the state of Nebraska or chemistry, whatever it might be, across the state of Nebraska, then you're going have...that's a whole other story where you have to...you're getting then into the standards of the university and other colleges where you're going to have to bring them all together and sit down and say, we take 101, whatever it might be, that's exactly what you're going to get all across the state. Each institution has had its own right and its own purpose to provide that quality that they think is quality and the course outline and what they want to teach in that aspect. It's different, to a certain degree, when you try to get into the high schools. What we're trying to prevent from this is that...making sure that, if it is a high school teacher--I'm not being critical of a high school teacher; some of them are wonderful--that they have that same credential and they follow the same course outline in the syllabus that we expect on campus. That's what this is about. I don't know what else you can do with it. We

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can... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay, thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I mean, it's just a philosophical difference, I guess. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Again, Senator Harms, I certainly see your intent here that what...if kids get it from high school then they should...it should really be the same kind of education. Do you...would you put the responsibility then of this...let's say that UNL got a student from Norris, and Norris had based their English 101 on Doane or something like that, then it's up to UNL to decide whether the same, whether that works. Is that what you're saying? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Yeah, that's basically the way it would be, yeah. And without, they're going to accept the transfer. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: You can usually find out real quickly if the student didn't get the quality education when you go to the next level. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: And that's my biggest fear that they're...I think that we have is when you're in high school you just don't want the student to enroll after they graduate from high school and have 12 hours, whatever they might have, and be deficient. And this is about the student and making sure that we have treated that student appropriately. We could argue philosophically about a lot of different things, but it gets right down to the student and having the right kind of instruction and having the same class that he had off campus versus on campus. That's what it's about, so. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: Senator Harms, I guess I'll ask you just what part of this legislation is the most important to you, the master's plus 18 or the standards or...? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: The standards, that plus the master's plus just the actual standards that we would want and the course outline, syllabus, and all that fits in with a master's degree. [LB116]

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SENATOR DAVIS: And where did the initiative for this come from, from the community college system or the state college system or...? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, I've had an interest in this for a long time because I've been in the business for a long time. Actually, this came from the community colleges,... [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: ...which I find kind of interesting because of the research that I've done. In most states this has come from four-year colleges and universities saying to us, saying to the state, these are the standards you have to follow, and this is what we expect from you. And I find it interesting that the community colleges are the ones coming forward and saying, you know what, we need to have some standards here, and we expect all of our students to be able to be...if they're going to take dual credits, that they can be equal and equivalent to what's taken on campus. So, yeah, they have. But I've had an interest in this for a long time because I have experience with, as I said earlier, the end results, and so it's important to have it. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: And so is the primary part of the problem that you have with the way things are today is that there are some high school teachers that are teaching dual-credit classes that really shouldn't be doing so because they're not meeting your standards? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, they don't have the credentials to do that, right, and we're wanting to make sure they have the master's plus the hours in the field and that we're using the same course outlines and syllabus. To be honest with you, it's really up to higher education then to make sure they placed it themselves. So they're going to...if they're going to hire that teacher or pay part of their salary--and I don't know how they work that; some schools will allow that, and some will not, how they handle the payment of that sort of thing--it's their responsibility to make sure that the teacher is evaluated the same way, making sure they file all their course outlines and syllabus. And most institutions, I'm sure, would have someone from the English department that's...teacher is going to teach English for the first time, you sit down with them and walk them through exactly what you want them to accomplish so that the end product that comes out has the same skills that we would expect if they were on campus and got to go to English 102. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: I have several letters from constituents in my district who are...have a working relationship with one of the state colleges, and they're very concerned about this legislation because they think it's going to damage the relationship that they have with...and it's Chadron, you know, Chadron State College. Would you like to address

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that at all? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I don't know how it will damage it. I mean,... [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: Well, I think they think that the current collaborative efforts will be disabled or dismembered by this. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I don't know how it would, Senator Davis. I don't see that, and you have to be able to work together. So what makes the difference? If you meet these credentials or these requirements--and you're at Chadron State College or whoever you might be, and you're certainly asking them to follow this--I don't know how it would damage any kind of relationship. The only fear that I would have, the only concern that I would have is that maybe the teacher doesn't have the credentials that you want. And so if you're going to team teach it, then it's another story. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Senator, thank you for your caring about quality and excellence, because I know it's a coordinated effort to try to put these things together. I have a comment, but also I have a question for you. Much like the advanced placement programs across the country, I think what might help clarify a little bit of this is the standards most of the school districts have would be a person with a master's and X number of hours in the content area to have a person teach in the AP arena. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And then they go through advanced placement course training as well, the selection of the book, these...the materials, and toward a national test, so that's sort of what you're talking about, Jim, when you think about some of the things that we're trying to coordinate here between a high school and a college location. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum, um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: My question for you is the second paragraph of...or, excuse me, the requirement of the Coordinating Commission receiving approval from them as far as the okay of this course and the person teaching it. Is that directed toward for-profit schools versus state schools from... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, the way this was written, it wouldn't make any difference. But I don't think...well, I think Dr. Hill is going to...is here, and he'll probably testify on this. They may not have an interest in doing that, and you'll have to talk to him about that,

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because if you had to prove every class, that could be thousands of classes, so.
[LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Just wondered about the for profit versus state supported.
[LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Um-hum, yeah. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I don't...I think, for profit, I don't think that there's any difference here. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Okay, thank you very much. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: That would be my views. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: We sort of have these cultural views of levels of education, and so I think the same question might come up from UNL to somebody who received English 101 at the junior college. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: So let's say that somebody takes a high school course, gets credit from Southeast Community College, and then wants to transfer that to UNL. Is that also covered by this, then it's still up to UNL... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: ...at that level and Southeast Community College at that level to maintain these standards? Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: That's why it's so important to have articulated agreements, you know, where you have an articulated agreement...and we do have articulated agreements. I don't know whether--it's been a while since I've been in that system anymore, whether they're following that. But you just take...you negotiate out in advance what you're going to accept for college classes, whether it's going to be in their field or they're going to use it as an elective. And we went through that many years ago through the...with the Coordinating Commission, and everybody signed off on that. And I don't know where that is today, but through an articulated agreement, by maybe rejuvenating that, it might be important to do. [LB116]

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SENATOR HAAR: Well, that's what's hanging me up a little bit, yeah, and that term is probably a good one, an articulated agreement,... [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: ...because if I...let's say if I'm a teacher at Lincoln High School, I don't know where this kid might go if they take English 101. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: So that's where, I guess, we...would your bill point that then to the Coordinating Commission? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, they would have some input on that aspect, but that's going to be up to them to decide whether they want to do that or not, so. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you, Senator. Will you be here for closing? [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Yes, I will. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: And thank you very much for the questions. That was fun. I enjoy it and...and maybe philosophically we're not in the same place, but it's okay with me. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: The point is you've just got to get it discussed and laid out. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: And then you decide what you want to do and however you want to finish this thing out. But I just, in closing, would say this: Make sure you remember that this is all about the student. It's not about the college. It's not about...it should not be about competing students for enrollment. It's about the student and the making sure that when they leave the high school on dual credit that that kid has exactly the tools he needs to be successful in 102 or 103, whatever it might be. That's what this is about for me. Nothing else makes any difference to me. And you can carve it up however you

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want if you decide to bring it out. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Um-hum, okay. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: But that's what I have an interest in. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Yeah, you're welcome. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: We'll now hear proponent testimony on LB116. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Good afternoon. My name is Todd Holcomb, T-o-d-d H-o-l-c-o-m-b. I am the president of Western Nebraska Community College. I am also the elected chair of the Nebraska Community College Association's CEO Council, representing five community colleges. LB116 is about rigorous standards and enforcing those standards across public institutions of higher education in the state of Nebraska. Adhering to high standards ensures that students and parents can trust that the end product will support the students' transition into college and upper-level college classes. Dual, or concurrent, enrollment has accelerated over the past decade to meet the needs of outstanding high school students who are searching for additional academic challenge or vocational interests. Dual credit is primarily taught in the high schools but is also taught on college campuses and on-line. These classes must have the same standards as all college-level work. As such, teachers who teach college courses must meet the academic requirements for faculty and instructors teaching at any postsecondary institution in Nebraska. You may hear later in this hearing about lead teachers, or teachers of record. These are only substitutes for the direct engagement between qualified instructors and students. LB116 will help prevent the credential shopping of teachers by high schools who are trying to bargain with colleges to select faculty that do not have at least 18 hours of graduate preparation in an academic discipline. While these individuals may be outstanding teachers in their own right, that does not mean that they meet the accepted standards for teaching transfer-level courses. We should recognize that rural high schools lacking teachers with a master's degree in an academic discipline and spotty Internet service are particularly vulnerable to the lack of standards in the delivery of high-quality college courses. There's a strong desire by parents and high school administrators to promote access to dual enrollment for a broad range of students. Yet there's also a need to maintain academic standards and ensure that only students ready for college-level work participate in college success. LB116 will begin our standardization process so that students and parents can guarantee the quality they expect from institutions of higher education in the state of Nebraska. We recognize the low levels of master-certified teachers in postsecondary education and have begun discussions with high schools on innovative ways to increase the credentialing of teachers. We know from research that dual-credit students have higher

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high school graduation and college attendance rates, have higher GPAs in college, and persist and graduate from college at higher rates. It is important we put these requirements into law so that we ensure the successful transition of students into college. The Nebraska Community College Association's CEO Council strongly encourages and recommends passage of LB116. Thank you, and I'll take any questions at this time. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. Senator Haar. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. I'm struggling still with there seemed to be two parts to this. One is same syllabus, same textbook, and so on, and then the credentialing of the teacher. So as somebody who's involved in accepting some of these dual credits, how do you evaluate it if this credit is coming from Omaha, from Lincoln, from wherever? How do you decide whether...I mean, you could certainly tell whether the teacher has the master's degree and that. That's the easy part. How do you tell this other part? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Well, I think what you're looking at is you're looking at, let's take an English 101. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: What you're hoping is that the instructor for that English 101 class is teaching a college-level course. That course only becomes dual credit if the high school so deems it appropriately. This is a college-level course. And what we're saying in the bill is that the faculty member teaching that English 101 class should have at least 18 hours within the academic discipline to teach that course. Now, we know that English 101 could be different at Wayne State College, could be different at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Even within the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, there could be 30 sections of English 101. And we know that there's different syllabuses. But you would hope...here's the critical, you would hope that the English instructors at the university, at the colleges, at the community colleges, have at least 18 hours within that academic discipline. I would be disappointed if somebody with a master's degree in educational administration decided to then teach English 101, and you were not able to discern, or really for that student and that student's parents, whether that instructor was qualified to teach that class and prepare them for the next section 102 in English. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: So you would look at the credentialing of the teacher at the high school level as the most important because it's up to you at the junior college to decide whether to accept that credit or not. So is that the main thing you're going look at then? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes, that would be correct. You know, when we certify...when a high

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school comes to us and asks us to teach a dual-credit class, we certify those instructors. And we have told high schools, no, we will not accept that instructor because that instructor does not meet the minimum standards that we as the Nebraska Community College Association, five community colleges, have set as the minimum standards for the state of Nebraska. So we look at that. We certify that instructor, and if they have 18 hours within that discipline, preferably a master's degree within that discipline but at least 18 hours, then we certify that instructor as a college-level instructor. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: And I certainly go along with what's being achieved because we want academic excellence obviously. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: That's correct. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: But if somebody in Council Bluffs, Iowa, high school offers, do we receive...do we do dual credits with other states or only Nebraska? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: No. I'm assuming that other colleges, for example, Scottsbluff is only 28 miles away from Wyoming, so we have students that have taken dual-credit classes that come to us from other states. But we review that academic...transfer that transcript to make sure that it meets our standards. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. So really this is done on an individual student basis, not...you know, if you get five students from the same high school you could ask the same question. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: But, I mean, a lot of this then is just on a one-student basis figuring this out. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: For us as a small rural community college, yes. I'm sure the University of Nebraska-Lincoln it would be a different process. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: And just sort of a comment. When I took English 101 at the university, I had a grad student who (laugh) I wasn't so sure was a good teacher at all. And I think maybe on some of these we might find better teachers at the high school level. You know, just my personal experience. I'm just saying we find good teachers all over and it doesn't necessarily depend whether they are a college teacher or junior college or high school teacher. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yeah, and I think there are really good high school teachers. My concern is though that high schools bargaining with colleges to accept, let's say, an

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individual that has a master's degree in educational administration to then accept that individual for teaching an IT course or an English course or a history course. It's difficult for me to imagine that even though that individual might be a great high school teacher, that they are a great academic discipline teacher in every subject. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: That's why in talking here it has to be in that course content area as well. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Avery. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: Thank you, Madam Chair. This only applies to junior colleges and high schools, right, because you're not talking about UNL having a dual-credit arrangement with Southeast Community College. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: My understanding is the university...this would impact all public institutions of higher education. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: But the language of the bill doesn't suggest that. The language of the bill suggests that we're talking about an arrangement between junior colleges or postsecondary institutions and high schools. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: That would be any college or university within the state of Nebraska. That's how I read the bill. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: Well, you'd have a real difficult problem I think if you try to get dual credit between Southeast Community College and the English department at UNL, because they might have 15 sections of English 101 taught by 15 different people using 15 different textbooks and 15 different syllabi and outlines. I mean, that's not workable. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Well, and that's why for me the emphasis is on the credential of the individual teaching that. And I think the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Southeast... [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: I can agree with you on that. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yeah. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: Yeah. Because I know a lot of people who teach at community

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colleges who have maybe a master's, maybe not, J.D., which is really not a graduate degree. It's another baccalaureate degree is what it is. It's baccalaureate training in law. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: You ought to go through that system. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: It's baccalaureate training in law. It's not a graduate degree. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: I disagree. (Laughter) That's your own opinion, Bill. It's far from the truth. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: It used to be an LL.B. That was correct. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Senator Seiler, did you have something? [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: I do. I just want to play a little semantics with you so I get to understand what's going on. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yeah. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: In the original bill it says a master's degree and at least 18 hours. We have an amendment to change "and" to "with," and then maybe it was not completed. You kind of used the term "just 18 hours." [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Which one is your criteria? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yeah. Actually... [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Master's "or" or is it master's "and"? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: You know, our preference is that an individual have a master's degree with at least 18 hours within the academic discipline. Most graduate degrees, most master's degrees are 36 credit hours, and the Higher Learning Commission says that there should be substantial experience in the academic discipline. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: The chief instructional officers for the community colleges have looked at "substantial experience," and what they have determined is at least half of those hours, 18 of the 36 hours, should be within an academic discipline. [LB116]

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SENATOR SEILER: And a master's degree both? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Well, it's a master's degree... [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: And within that 36 hours, 18 hours... [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Eighteen hours. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. Okay. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yeah. I think how the original bill was written is that for some people it looked like a master's degree plus 18 hours on top of it. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Right, right. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: We're not saying that. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Senator Scheer. [LB116]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you very much. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. At your institution, do all of your staff that are teaching in their disciplines have a master's degree with 18 hours of that endorsed subject? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: To my knowledge, yes. They're teaching academic transfer courses. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And that would include any adjunct staff member as well. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Is that true of all the community colleges? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: I do not know. I can't speak to that. Should be close, yeah. [LB116]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Okay. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: The community colleges have set a standard and have enforced that standard at least in the time that I've been in Nebraska, and I've been in Nebraska for three years now. And there has been a collaboration, a cooperation among the six community colleges, and particularly among the five community colleges that make up the NCCA. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. I'll just play a little devil's advocate with you. Per your testimony, the master's is 36 additional hours over baccalaureate. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Um-hum. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. If I took 18 hours of math, I took the first 18 hours of math, I'm going to get my master's with a math endorsement. I'm now working on the next 18 hours. Based on this statute I still would not be qualified to teach a dual-enrollment class. Would that be correct? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: What has occurred is that we have looked at provisional opportunities for those individuals that have at least 18 hours and working towards the completion of a master's degree. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I can appreciate that, but this does not give provisional endorsements; this states specifically. This is statute. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: That... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: So that is why I'm asking because you have some specific language and I'm looking at a specific alternative. And, again, I'm not in education but I'm thinking of things logically. That person has the amount of education in the field of discipline that he or she would be teaching that additional course in, yet under the statute would not be by just the virtue of the other 18 hours of additional coursework. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Our preference would be for a master's degree with 18 hours within an academic discipline. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. But this isn't preference, this is statute. So I'm asking you, would that be acceptable to you right now if a person was working towards their master's, had 18 hours in that discipline without having the master's degree. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Would that be acceptable now for us? [LB116]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Would that be acceptable...could you live with that rather than the master's in this terminology? [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Could I live with that? [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, could your association. You're speaking on behalf of your association. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: I would say that that would not be our prerogative. Our preference is to have a master's degree with 18 hours. But if there was a provision that would allow an individual that had 18 hours in a content area and working towards a master's degree, yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: And I'll give you an example. We had a real-world experience with our college in a school district. The individual was working towards a master's degree; had at least 18 hours within that academic discipline, but then eventually stopped working towards the master's degree. We repeatedly asked that individual to complete the master's degree. They did not, so we ended our relationship with that instructor. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Just out of curiosity, it wasn't the lack of his ability to teach that course or the children's attainment of education in that course. It was just the fact that he did not have the letters after his name. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: It was the fact that he guaranteed us that he was going to be working towards a master's degree and then failed to fulfill that promise to the college. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Understood. But I mean if he had the 18 hours...I'm having a really hard time. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: It was that simple. It was that simple. When we made the arrangement with that school district, the person gave their word to us that they were going to move forward with their education. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. So your scenario is much like that with the Department of Ed where they would give a professional as long as...in some discipline as long as you

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were working towards that endorsement. So that would be sort of the same rationale with you. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: I don't know the Department of Education that well. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Fair enough, fair enough. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Senator. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Avery. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: I just have to clarify something. I'm reading from the green copy of the bill, Section 3: a dual-enrollment course when taught to a high school student or when taught to high school students. This refers to high school students and arrangements with postsecondary institutions. It's not to postsecondary institutions for dual credits. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: That's correct. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: That is correct. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: Yes, that is. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: Okay. But I was under the impression you were suggesting that it did involve agreements between two institutions of higher learning. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: What I may have misspoke about is that there...the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the state colleges, the community colleges all have dual-credit arrangements with high schools. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: Right, right. [LB116]

TODD HOLCOMB: And those dual-credit arrangements could be different. [LB116]

SENATOR AVERY: Got it. I think this addresses a problem. I really do. I'm not suggesting that it's not a problem, just not sure if it's the solution. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. Welcome. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan and committee members. My name is Susan Fritz, S-u-s-a-n F-r-i-t-z. I have the privilege of serving as the interim executive vice president in provost for the University of Nebraska. I'm here to testify for the University of Nebraska in support of LB116. We support LB116 with Senator

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Harms's amendment that you heard earlier. The amendment of LB116 requiring teachers offering dual-enrollment courses to have attained a master's degree with at least 18 hours in the content area is congruent with the comprehensive statewide plan. Additionally, this language is congruent with statewide conversations about this issue that University of Nebraska administrators have been participating in for at least ten years. If the amended LB116 passes, this law would elevate the impact of what are now voluntary standards in the comprehensive statewide plan, and contribute to ensuring that dual-enrollment courses are offered by high school teachers with sufficient content preparation to provide quality educational experiences for students and equivalently rigorous courses upon which students can build their academic programs. Additionally, ensuring that dual-enrollment courses are quality offerings also was important to our faculty who accept these courses for credit toward undergraduate degree attainment. Lastly, dual enrollment is an efficient means of transitioning students from high school to higher education, and one of several strategies emphasized in the P-16 initiative which is our statewide effort to improve student success and boost Nebraska's economy. Passing this amended bill is a public statement about the expectation of this body as it relates to the quality of dual-enrollment offerings in Nebraska. Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer questions. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Ms. Fritz. Any questions for her? Yes, Senator Haar. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. Right now, does UNL have an agreement with each high school in Nebraska or how do you decide right now whether to accept a dual-enrollment course? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Dual-enrollment courses are set up between the various departments. So if you were talking about English 101 I heard earlier... [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: ...so which, you know, a lot of conversation about English this afternoon. I'm impressed. (Laughter) At any rate, English 101, that syllabus would be presented to the English faculty who would consider whether it would be an equivalent course, if that syllabus was sufficient, would consider the credentialing of that teacher. And then there would be a dual arrangement, enrollment arrangement put in place. Now I don't know that we have that at UNL with regard to English, so that may not be a good example. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Right. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: I would say that there isn't a great prevalence of dual-enrollment courses across our university system, not like you might see with the state colleges and

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the community colleges. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. So really again it might boil down to looking at one student's transfer and who taught that course and the syllabus for that course. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: It is more likely that that course would be considered when it would be transferred in from the community college or from the state college by a student that it would be a dual-enrollment situation by and large. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. So and this is kind of new information for me. Really right now there aren't that many dual enrollments that UNL gets from high school directly into UNL. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Our four campuses, by and large, I would say our dual enrollment is not the most action that we have, yes, not compared to the community colleges and the state colleges, no. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. Thank you. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: But we do have them. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator... [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Yes. Oh, I'm sorry. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I guess I understand that you would on a total number of hours you would accept more credit hours from the community colleges. I think that would go without question. But I know there's a great number of high school students that are taking dual-credit courses that will become freshmen at the university system not going to the community colleges and those credits will transfer as well, will they not? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Yes, they will transfer, and there are agreements that have been worked out by the university with those departments and with the...through the university... [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Sure. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: ...to the community colleges and the state colleges. So at that point if we're back to English 101, that agreement would have been worked out between the community colleges, for instance, and the university, not between that student and the university. [LB116]

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SENATOR SCHEER: I understand. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Sure. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And I'm not talking about the student. I'm just talking about the students and those attaining credit hours as a freshman in the university system. I know there are some. So I just didn't want that...the assumption to mean that all those students that took a dual credit actually ended up or were doing so with the community college system versus a university system. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: It's an increasing phenomena. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And aside to the English looking at the math, take math for an example. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Okay. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Would it make as much sense in relationship to this legislation...to me the education is less important to me, the person teaching it, because everyone has different abilities regardless of educational level. And that's my own perspective so I'm not trying to pick an argument with anybody. That's just sort of where I'm coming from. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Noted. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: To the extent of what the child or what the student learns in that class. So if you were to take whatever your final exam is for your first level math class at the university, if a student that was taking a dual-credit course could pass that final, wouldn't that be a reasonable expectation that the student had the correct amount of knowledge to move forward even in the university system? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: I would say hypothetically that would be interesting. What we rely on heavily is our faculty and their faculties' opinions. And so we would look to the math faculty and we would ask them how they would prefer to handle that. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. On the university system, and I apologize because I don't know ours but I know in some across the state you have placement exams. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And when you come in math, science, foreign language, whatever it is, you have the option to take those placement exams, and you may, via

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your scores or how well you do or however many you take, may end up in a second semester or third semester, we'll use Spanish for example. And for whatever amount, sometimes it's a discounted rate for those hours, you would get credit for those hours that you had passed through the placement test. Correct? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I'm sorry. You have to say; because they can't write down "nod." [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Yes. Sorry. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And I don't mean that derogatorily. I just want to make sure because this is a record. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: That's fine. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And so that knowledge base in some cases came from a high school instructor. High-quality high school instructors that provided that education may have not been involved in any dual credit but took the placement test at the university, and based on that they are getting college credits by taking the placement tests and paying the fee for those hours. Would that not be correct? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Well, actually not, because if the student hasn't taken the credit hours and took the placement test, what they have done is they've actually freed themselves some hours within their 120 credit-hour program to use on something else. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, but they do get credit for those hours, do they not? They will not attain...it does not functionally go towards their grade level but it will go towards their gen-eds or whatever and will show as hours earned, will it not? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Not if they have not actually earned the hours. It will show that they have met that requirement, but they wouldn't get hours for that. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: They cannot pay for those hours that they passed through and those would not be part of their transcript. [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Right. It would say they met the requirement, but what they have done if they have tested in and let's say they haven't had a dual credit, dual enrollment, okay. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Um-hum. Yeah. Right. [LB116]

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SUSAN FRITZ: So they tested in. What they've done is they have demonstrated proficiency. So we've said, fine, you have met the requirement, but that frees up those credit hours that that requirement would have had within their 120 credit-hour program for them to use on something else. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I'll have to get more information. I think we might be talking about the same thing but maybe not, so. And I'm not...I don't... [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: I'll give you my card. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Perfect. Thank you so much. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I hope this will help, Mr. Scheer, in the sense that with...high school counselors also talk to students about placement in colleges in a very important way, especially if they're taking AP courses. If you're taking an advanced placement course, some schools you'll be able to go to that university and receive those credit hours toward your 120 hours that you need for that particular degree. Others simply give you the ability to advance place. You don't get any credits for what you've taken, but you move up to the second and third level of that particular course within that department. That's why it's called advanced placement. So you can get credit in some schools, other schools don't give you credit because they want you to take all 120 hours on their campus and pay for them on their campus. So there's a difference. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: In all fairness to the testifier, let's direct any questions to her and then we'll save this for Executive Session. [LB116]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: This is a question I probably should have asked Senator Harms, but is there anywhere in state statute where the state Legislature dictates how many hours of postgraduate education you have to have to meet certain criteria or how many hours you have to teach it to teach at University of Nebraska or at any community college? I mean, isn't this a little bit of micromanagement? Can't the colleges make these decisions on their own? [LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Senator Davis, I'm not aware that there is anything in statute with regard to that. You may want to check that out with Marshall Hill and others. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions for Susan? Thank you very much.

[LB116]

SUSAN FRITZ: Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other proponent testimony? We will now hear opponent testimony. [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, my name is Stan Carpenter, S-t-a-n C-a-r-p-e-n-t-e-r, and I am the chancellor of the Nebraska State College System, and I'm here today in opposition to LB116 which puts me in an unusual position because I normally agree with Senator Harms and most of his educational policy points. But today we have to go our separate ways on this bill. We are very supportive of dual enrollment. We've been involved in dual enrollment for quite a long time. And we believe we have a very rigorous and challenging program in our dual-enrollment courses. This year, we will offer about 7,500 student credit hours in dual enrollment across the Nebraska State College System. And we work closely with the high schools who are engaged in that program. And oftentimes those high schools come to us and ask us if we can present or provide a program for students who are interested and capable of taking college work while they're still in high school. Peru has been involved in dual enrollment since 1974. The State College Board of Trustees just in the last several years passed a special tuition rate for dual-enrollment courses that it's now \$50 a credit hour. Obviously that goes to helping those students who take the courses and are successful to get a jump start on their college career. We know that if students take 3, 6, 9, 12, 15 credits of dual credit, they are much more likely to be successful in college when they get there. And I'm sure I don't have to go on and tell you all the good things that happened with dual enrollment. But we are also diligent and very passionate about offering high-quality academic offerings at a reasonable cost, and that applies to our dual-enrollment programs as well. I think the program that we have in place meets all the requirements that this bill puts forth in terms of worrying about the quality of the educational services that we provide to high school students in our dual enrollments. And as you know, the big debate here has been today about the 18 credit hours and the content field. We think that that kind of requirement would severely limit access to dual-enrollment courses to high school students, and especially in the areas that we serve in rural Nebraska. We think...we don't think, we know that our dual-enrollment courses are comparable for rigor, they're comparable for the syllabuses that they use, they're comparable for course outlines, they are comparable in student assessment methods, and as all of our courses are for our on-campus offerings as well. And there was discussion before about a difference of an English 101 course at, let's say, Wayne here where they have two different faculty teaching the course. They could very easily use two different books, two different course syllabi, two different assessment tools. What's important in this is that the same student learning outcomes are what we look for, whether it's a dual-enrollment course or that it's a course on campus. That's the important thing. Is the student learning outcome the same? And we

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would posit to you that it is. The way we come at our dual-enrollment courses basically is that we have a team approach. And I wouldn't say team teaching, but a team approach where we use what we call a content expert at the institution, at our colleges, generally a faculty member. Could be a dean. Could be an administrator who has expertise in a content field. They work then with what we will call a pedagogical expert or the high school teacher who we think is a good, quality teacher who can convey the information in a way that the students learn it. And we think that that criteria or that method really exceeds the criteria that we're talking about in this bill. But this bill would not permit us to use that kind of method to assure that we could continue our dual enrollment, particularly in the rural areas, and provide that high-quality kind of education. I want to turn to just another issue that we have here. And that is, you know, we are setting the standards for our coursework and our credentials and our faculty and hiring of staff across the Nebraska State College System has always been the responsibility of the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State College System. And I think that this takes some of that away if the Legislature imposes these kinds of restrictions. And I guess I would be remiss that if I didn't say that I think that this does impose upon the governance authority and management authority of the board. This legislation in essence would dictate who we can hire. It would dictate who we can hire, and I think that's a pretty slippery slope for the Legislature to get into in terms of our colleges and our board of trustees' authority at who we think can do the right job for us. I also have some concern about Section 3(2) of this bill that talks about dual-enrollment courses, and it says, "shall follow the dual-enrollment standards approved by the..." Coordinating Commission of Postsecondary Education. In Article VII, Section 14 of the Nebraska Constitution provides that the commission has certain powers and duties, and I quote again, "as long as such powers and duties do not invade the governance and management authority of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska and the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State College" System. I think the bill's requirements are so specific in this case that it would eliminate all the discretion and authority on the part of the board of trustees of our institutions as to how to perform their duties in terms of governance and in terms of management of the institutions. So I know I'm over time so I'll stop. But in closing, let me just say that we are always looking to cooperate with our brothers and sisters in higher education. If there is a problem, we would like to sit down and resolve that. But from our perspective, there is no problem statement that affects us as we see it. We believe we provide high-quality educational opportunities for dual-enrollment courses across the state of Nebraska and especially in rural Nebraska. And I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Any questions for Stan? Senator Haar. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. Okay. I've been looking at this and I haven't actually read the bill itself but just the overview. You're looking at this as imposing requirements at your level for the teaching of dual courses. I've been looking at this in terms of the

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qualifications requirement at the high school level. [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Well, that's really what I'm talking about, Senator, because what we do is when we work with high school and dual-enrollment courses, we go and we say: Professor Avery at the high school or faculty member Avery or teacher Avery, would you be able to teach this course. And we look at what his credentials are. [LB116]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: And we would expect a master's degree but we don't expect 18 hours in all circumstances. And so we find out that teacher Avery is a good teacher, that he's able to communicate and impart the knowledge that we want. And so he works with one of our folks at the college to design the course, to design the syllabus. And somebody was talking about exams before. Every exam that goes into our dual-enrollment program is either approved by or created by somebody at our institutions. And at Peru, each of those exams from every student is on record so anybody could go and take a look at those to see what kind of quality there is in those testing instruments. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So when you mentioned that the focus is on the outcome of the student... [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ...so what kind of dialogue takes place between the campus and faculty member and the faculty person in the high school to make sure that there is the appropriate outcome that you're... [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Well, as I understand it, I'm not part of that dialogue but as I understand it there is communication between what I'll call the lead person at our institution or the content expert with the high school teacher where they set forth what the syllabus is, the course outline, the information, and what outcomes they want, what student outcomes, learning outcomes should be in place when they are done with that course, so that there's a clear understanding that what has to start at A comes out at Z, and that's what the college content expert expects those students to know when they're done with that course. I think there's clear direction there. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Senator Davis. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: Are the state colleges, the community colleges, and the university capable of making these decisions on their own? [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Well, I would like to think so. I mean, I think we've been making

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those decisions for quite some time. And if the community colleges want to impose on themselves this particular criteria, good for them. But I think, you know, we are three separate organizations constitutionally created separately and we should have the authority to figure out how we want to handle these courses. It is clear to us that we have had, as far as I know, no trouble with our courses transferring into anyplace else. And the community college dual-enrollment courses transfer to our institutions without question either. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: And are you aware of any state statute in which the Legislature dictates to the colleges educational requirements of their staffing? [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: I'm not aware of any of those statutory requirements, Senator, no. [LB116]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thanks. [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes, sir. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Okay. Thank you, Stan. [LB116]

STAN CARPENTER: Thank you. [LB116]

JAY SEARS: (Exhibit 2) Good evening. Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the record, my name is Jay Sears, J-a-y S-e-a-r-s, and I represent the 28,000 educators, members of the Nebraska State Education Association. And NSEA is in opposition to LB116. Started out the day, was going to testify in support because there are some good things in this bill. But then I had a moment of *deja vu*. I can take you back ten years or probably even further where we've sat around with a number of these gentlemen and ladies and we've talked about dual enrollment and dual credit and who gets to teach them and what's the rigor. And not long ago I think we set that record and we solved the issues at the Department of Education level where we came up with how we can certify higher ed instructors to teach high school courses and also give dual credit and vice versa. But now we have legislation that changes that agreement. To say that I'm disappointed that NSEA was not involved in any of that conversation after working for ten years to come up and solve the problem, because we support dual enrollment and dual credit because it advantages our students and it advantages families. So I guess you can read through my written testimony. I had to modify some of it because it's great to set standards and be able to accept and transfer credits across; but to be broadsided by one of the higher ed groups to come up with and require 18 hours and a master's degree I think disadvantages our students in the K-12 and the educators that have been providing dual credit. One of the things that NSEA would hate to see is a lessening of the access for our students in K-12 to the dual enrollment and dual credit that's there. So it'll be interesting to see what public policy the Legislature

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may set around this. Again, I thought we had that solved. I thought we were all working together and kids were getting the courses that they needed and were being engaged at a high level and I don't know what's changed. But thank you for the opportunity to testify. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Jay. Are there any questions for Mr. Sears? Thank you for your testimony. [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee, for the record, my name is Brian, B-r-i-a-n, Halstead, H-a-l-s-t-e-a-d. I'm here representing the State Board of Education in opposition to LB116. The opposition of the State Board is only to one particular part of this bill because they saw great value in the other parts. As Mr. Sears indicated, the master's degree and at least 18 hours of graduate-level study exceeds what the State Board promulgated in the certification rules back in 2009 when there was the ongoing discussion with the community colleges, the state colleges, and the university about how do we issue certificates to college faculty so that they can teach high school courses, because this Legislature has set the standards for high school teachers. And at that time, the compromise amongst them all was a master's degree plus 6 graduate hours in the subject area for which an endorsement is sought. To date, no one has come to the State Board saying there's a problem with that area, so they were a little bit surprised with the graduate having to have 18 hours beyond that. They're concerned about the students who have now taken dual-credit courses and the instructors may not have that. But the way the bill is written, those credit hours are no longer going to be acceptable or usable at the postsecondary level. Maybe that wasn't intended by Senator Harms because I think he truly is trying to provide some clarity in this whole area. But if I'm a student last semester and I took a dual-credit course but that instructor doesn't have the 18 hours, if this bill gets enacted that course is no longer valuable to me once I move on to postsecondary education. The other suggestion the State Board would have with the bill is over on page 5, because sentence 1 talks about the enrollment standards approved by the commission and the State Department of Education. The State Board clearly recognizes it does not have any authority or expertise in postsecondary education. That's not the role of the State Board or the department. So the "any standards" would have to be either by the Coordinating Commission or whatever entity a postsecondary has that. The State Board certainly would look forward to working with those entities and providing recommendations on any standards. So maybe the sentence should end at commission, and then if you want the State Board to be involved or the department, request that the commission receive the advice and recommendations from the department on any standards they enact. They felt that would be a better role for them than inferring that the State Board has any authority over postsecondary institutions in this state. And with that, I will end my testimony. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you, Brian. Senator Scheer. [LB116]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Senator. Brian, the portion that you're talking about, is that a Department of Ed rule or is that policy or what? [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: It is in our certification rule. It is a dual-credit teaching certificate that a faculty member at a postsecondary institution can obtain so that they hold a certificate to teach high school students in dual-credit courses. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: That had always been the problem in the sense of those faculty members at postsecondary generally don't go through the teacher education college, don't have the pedagogue courses. And this Legislature for decades has set minimum standards for what the K-12 instructors needed to have, but the requirement they all hold a certificate if you're teaching K-12 students. So in that regard, the State Board saw the value in making sure that we can make sure we have quality instructors working with students so they can get both the dual credit. And that was worked out in agreement with all of the postsecondary institutions at that time. And we're not opposed to looking at the issue. If that needs to be raised, then the State Board is certainly willing to be part of that discussion. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: So, since 2009, since the last change, no institution or association has contacted you in relationship to any problems they're having or concerns about any of the educational value of the classes being taught. [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: We haven't been approached by any problems. But the State Board meets next Monday and Tuesday, so if they want to come over and present their concerns, I'm sure the board will listen. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: And previously all parties had been engaged, reaching some resolution satisfactorily to the rule or... [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: That was our understanding before the bill was introduced, so...but that's not...again, that's not a fault of Senator Harms. Absolutely not. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: No, I'm not saying it is a fault of the senator. I'm just trying to get... [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: Right. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: ...on record that the system has been in place for a long time. I has been continually updated over the years and there was no attempt to even try to work through the normal process of that particular area that truly is controlled via the

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department in that accreditation portion rather than providing legislation to what I would consider circumvent that ability by the Department of Education. [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: Yeah. We have not been presented with any concerns. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Thank you. Thanks. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Brian. [LB116]

BRIAN HALSTEAD: You're welcome. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (Exhibits 3, 4, 5, and 6) Any other opponent testimony? I would like to read into the record that we do have four letters of opposition on this bill. One from Caroline B. Winchester, superintendent at Chadron Public Schools; from Jerry E. Mack, M-a-c-k, principal at Chadron High School; Carolyn Hinrichs, student liaison at Chadron High School; and Terri Haynes, Board of Education Chadron Public Schools. We'll entertain neutral testimony now. [LB116]

JOHN BONAIUTO: Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, John Bonaiuto, J-o-h-n B-o-n-a-i-u-t-o, registered lobbyist representing the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. And we decided to testify in a neutral capacity about this bill sharing concerns with the field. And you, Senator, just read some letters from some of the folks in the field that we had heard from. And I have had conversations with Senator Harms about this bill, and I can say unequivocally that Senator Harms's intentions are very honorable. He has a strong belief in what he's trying to accomplish. But when I listen to the testimony and hear people talk about how specific this is, then another phrase comes to mind that I hear on legislation sometimes that when you try to put this kind of an intent into law that all of a sudden I hear people talk about unintended consequences, that we had good intentions, but trying to translate that into something in statute is very difficult. Let me just say as an example, when you get as specific as it is in Section 3(b) and you're talking about the qualifications for the instructor, whether it's in the green copy or the amendment, when you're putting something like this in statute, I would think you would want to take a look at having language that says whatever the requirement is of the accrediting institution for that higher education institution that is working with the high school on the dual-enrollment class because those requirements may change. They may not be as rigorous or as great as what is in statute. They may be changed to being greater than what's in statute. And so, you know, I think that although the bill has good intentions, it may go beyond what really the institutions and the people in the field are ready for without having some conversation. With that, I will conclude my testimony. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you, John. Any questions for John? [LB116]

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JOHN BONAIUTO: Thank you. It's late, I know. [LB116]

JON HABBEN: Long afternoon. Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, my name is Jon, J-o-n, Habben, H-a-b-b-e-n, executive director of Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association. Just a couple of quick points. The afternoon is getting long. The discussion of rigor and quality and assuring them is excellent. If I'm a parent--I am a parent--and my kids are taking these courses, I want to know that. I think that's an excellent discussion to have. And as a practitioner having spent 25 years as a principal and a superintendent arranging these courses, I worked at asking and trying to get assurances on those very issues. I didn't want to bring a course to our students that was less quality passed off as quality. Never wanted that to happen. So we always took the time to work on that every single time. And I think that's true in high school after high school after high school. Nobody is looking for less. Everybody is looking to do it well on behalf of their kids. So I think the discussion of rigor is great. The reason we're testifying neutral is simply because that institutions have their own requirements. They're not going to step out of their own requirements, accreditation or otherwise. So when you're working with that institution, your assumption is they are in the right place with what they are putting their name on the line to try and do. If you find out that you've arranged a course or you're trying to arrange a course and its only use is to go to that institution, then hopefully you learn that and you decide whether or not you want to offer that to your kids. If you're looking for a dual credit that is transferred beyond that offering institution, then you work on that discussion with the individuals representing that institution. Our assumption is the discussion of rigor--excellent. But we felt that in working with the schools that we worked with as an administrator and others have talked about working with as an administrator, they felt that they were getting the right discussion about the right things within the rules with those institutions they were discussing. Any time you want to have the discussion about rigor--great. But I think this might crowd that working relationship in some way, maybe unintended, with the institutions that you're building the dual-credit opportunities with. That's all I have. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you, Jon. [LB116]

JON HABBEN: Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any questions for Jon? Thank you very much. [LB116]

JON HABBEN: You're welcome. [LB116]

MARSHALL HILL: (Exhibit 7) My, it's been a long afternoon, hasn't it? I'll try to be brief. Marshall Hill, M-a-r-s-h-a-l-l H-i-l-l, executive director of the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. There's a lot to understand about dual

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enrollment and career academies. There's a fair amount of overlap, but it's confusing because it crosses the boundaries between high school and college and it crosses the boundaries between different aspects of postsecondary education. As I mentioned earlier, the Legislature directed us to do a study of dual enrollment and career academies in Nebraska. And as part of that study, we assembled an advisory committee. I've provided you some information that came from that study, including a listing of the people who were on the advisory committee. The Coordinating Commission through that report made a number of recommendations about dual enrollment and about career academies. We made them in the context of really not having much data. Most everything you've heard today frankly is in the matter of informed anecdote. We don't have data which tells us how well students in Nebraska are doing who take dual-enrollment courses. We don't have data to know how many of them are accepted by postsecondary institutions and how many are not accepted in transfer. We don't have data as to whether they are accepted just toward degree graduation requirements or whether they are accepted as part of the major. New members of the committee are hearing this song for the first time but old members have heard it many, many times. Nebraska is very much at the tail end of states in terms of having a data system which can inform policy, very much at the tail end. We did ask...we did a policy survey of Nebraska institutions on dual enrollment. We got reports and responses from all public institutions and a number of the private institutions. We surveyed the high schools. Fifty-two percent of the high schools responded even though our requests for survey responses went out twice over letters signed by myself and Roger Breed. So we did not get a very good response from the public schools on this. We tackled all of these issues you've heard about today and more, and more. Nebraska has a long way to go on this. We are one of only five states that has not wrestled these problems to a solution at a statewide level. And the reasons are that we are a strong local control state. And that local control philosophy has applied to postsecondary education as well as to K-12 education. But it puts us in the position of having a number of our institutions not accepting dual-enrollment credit when the student and their families have taken those courses in good faith. I think the greatest policy goal we should have is to ensure that institutions will accept responsibly offered dual-enrollment courses. So that gets you to discussions of standards, and we're largely standards averse here in Nebraska. But here are a few points. On this issue of the requirements of faculty, the recommendation as amended is consistent with the recommendation of the advisory group we put together here. Dr. Korinne Tande was a member of that group. She is an employee of the Nebraska State College System. She advanced their contrary view at that point and everyone acknowledged that we have a difference of opinion there. But the overall finding of the group was to support that project. I do need to address Section 3(2) which refers to the dual-enrollment courses offered by postsecondary educational institutions approved by the Coordinating Commission to offer such courses. We currently don't approve institutions to offer dual-enrollment courses. They decide whether they're going to do it or not. We don't have any role in that. If the Legislature were to decide that we are to have a role in that, I would want the

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language to be much more directive about that here. The only courses we approve at all are when a college wants to offer a course outside its designated district, it's geographic area. Some of those may be dual-enrollment courses, but most of them are not. I'll hurry. Another clarifying point is it talks about dual-enrollment standards approved by the commission. The commission indeed, as part of the comprehensive plan, does have a list of standards. They are voluntary standards. They have no force of law. We have no ability to enforce them whatsoever. They're somewhat outdated right now, but that's the standard for them. And then lastly on the issue of the acceptance of transfer credit, I believe this would be the first directive in Nebraska statute about the ability of Nebraska institutions to accept or reject transfer credit. I personally believe that they should accept responsibly offered credit, but I believe we have a long way that we could go before making this a stipulated requirement. We first saw this bill when it was introduced and we'd be pleased to work with Senator Harms and others on refinements and possible modifications. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. Any questions for Marshall? Yes, Senator Scheer. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: I apologize but thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: That's fine. That's fine. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just one quick one. At some point in time assuming in the future that we did change statute and wanted you to be involved in this as far as the approval and so forth, there was no value based on the bill. So I'm wondering do you have a guesstimate what...any idea what that cost would be? [LB116]

MARSHALL HILL: What? The fiscal note for our involvement? [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Yeah. [LB116]

MARSHALL HILL: We would...basically no, but I can concoct one for you. We would go through a public rule-making process, of course, if we were to do that. That's always an expense to us of a few thousand dollars because of publications and notices. I'm not sure how we would go about this. We could develop rules, regulations, and then approve institutions that asserted to us that they met those rules and regulations. That's one way we could do that. But we don't have anywhere near the horsepower to do any verifying of that. We have 10.5 staff. We're the smallest agency of our type in the nation. We don't have the responsibility, the authority to do that. We don't have the horsepower to do that. And worse, regardless of how many people we have, we don't have a data system which would allow anybody to do it no matter how much money you gave us. [LB116]

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SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you. [LB116]

MARSHALL HILL: You're welcome. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Anything else? Thank you, Marshall, for your testimony. [LB116]

MARSHALL HILL: Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other testimony in a neutral capacity? Then we'll have Senator Harms to close. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Senator Sullivan, colleagues, well, thank you for giving us the opportunity to at least address this issue. And I think that there was good dialogue both for and against and it's really now up to you to decide whether or not you want to move on this as a policy or not. I would just say in closing that for me it's all about students--nothing else. It's about making sure that they are treated appropriately and they have the same skills they need to have when they leave the dual-credit class and go to the college credit class. And that's what that's about. I thank you very much. You look tired. I understand that. I've been on the other side more than once, so I appreciate that. Thank you. [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Senator. I just wanted to end though, I wanted to make sure and clarify, I have the highest respect for you. I do know that your concern is truly on the educational attainment of the students, and I don't want anything that I said misinterpreted or pointed towards your thoughts or your desires. I appreciate what you're trying to do. Like you said, we may have a difference of philosophy, but certainly your intent was certainly well-meaning and do respect that your knowledge-base is extreme. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: Well, Senator Scheer, you shouldn't have to worry about that. I was a college president for 33 years. (Laughter) Are you kidding me? [LB116]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, I do. [LB116]

SENATOR HARMS: I know. I understand. I don't have a very thin skin. So these are the kinds of things you have to place out in front. You've got to have that discussion. I think Dr. Hill really put it well. We have a long ways to go. And we are short on data and that sort of thing. And I think that eventually this will come back some day, not while I'm here, but I think it will come back. And I thank you very much for your kindness. And I know you have another bill, so I'm going to get out of your way. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Harms. [LB116]

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SENATOR HARMS: Thank you. You're welcome. [LB116]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. That concludes the hearing on LB116. We'll now open the hearing on LB162. Senator McGill. [LB116]

SENATOR MCGILL: Okay. I will be brief and I will encourage anyone testifying for or especially against my bill to be brief. (Laughter) Good afternoon, committee. I'm State Senator Amanda McGill, that's M-c-G-i-l-l, and I'm here to introduce LB162, a bill that will help Nebraskans further their education and make the most of their college credit. Many students begin college at a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution to pursue their bachelor's degree. LB162 would allow transfer students who complete a sufficient number of credits at that four-year school to transfer their credits back to the community college and receive an associate's degree. The issue I'm trying to address is that more and more students are choosing to go to, say, Southeast Community College to get some credits, transfer them to UNL to pursue their bachelor's degree, but then don't finish that degree for a number of reasons. Maybe it gets too expensive. They have something else going on in their life. And they're left with no degree whatsoever. And so trying to solve that problem of, okay, well, then how do we alert the community college that they've hit the number of credits that would be needed to get that associate's degree and then they would have a degree of some sort which will help them financially in the long run. As we continue growing our economy, it is imperative that we provide our students with all the tools that they need to succeed and join the work force. Obviously, a college degree is critical to the success and we must think flexibly about removing any barriers to degree completion. This bill proposes to remove some of those barriers while recognizing the hard work of the student and the investment of financial resources in postsecondary education by both the student and the state of Nebraska. LB162 proposes that the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education shall develop a process to facilitate the award of an associate's degree after the student has left the two-year institution. The bill provides a basic structure for this process. First, if the student is attending a four-year school, that school will notify the student if that student is potentially eligible for an associate's degree. The two-year institution will also be informed of this. Second, the student can then request that the two-year institution review their transcripts and look to see if the courses they've been taking would even be applicable to the associate's degree that fits in their area of study. And, third, the student can then request that the two-year institution award them an associate's degree. I appreciate your consideration and would be happy to answer any questions. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator McGill. One thought that comes to mind, where does the student's responsibility in... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: And that's where the university would flag if they've hit 70 credits or

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whatever, you know, that number is, and let the student know, and then it's the student's responsibility to follow up with the community college and say, hey, I would like to get this associate's degree. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: But you'd still want the institution to do the initial flagging, so to speak. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah, yeah. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. All right. Senator Scheer. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: Just real simplistically, just so I've got...what I think what I understand from this and I want to make sure it's your understanding as well, student goes to Southeast or Northeast or one of the community colleges and is in whatever type of associate program. They need 60 hours to get that associate degree. I transfer then to the university or another institution and I was short, we'll say, 6 hours of English. After a year, I have achieved those 6 hours of English and so at that point in time if I wanted, I could have the university system, whichever one it would be, contact Southeast, Northeast, whomever and say he has now fulfilled that. He has now received an additional 6 hours, so that gets him to the 60. So he would be eligible for your associate degree. Is that the substance of what we're talking about? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And if it's not as clear in this language, I'm always open to ideas to make it better. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: I just wanted to make sure I was understanding it. Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Or say, you know, you go and get some of those basic credits and maybe a few nurse techs sorts of things. And then, oh, I'm going to go to the university and try to become a nurse. For whatever reason they stop that pursuit, but maybe they've earned enough credits to become a tech of some sort or get an associate's degree in that field. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: Okay. Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, Senator McGill. Life often changes. What if you have somebody who is enrolled at, let's say, UNL and whatever happens in their life and they can't continue but yet they could get that associate degree? You know, they have the credits for the associate degree. Is that the same as this or not really? You're just saying only if they start at the junior college level. [LB162]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Well, since they were never enrolled in that community college I'm not sure what that relationship would be or there probably would be some sort of additional relationship that isn't in this statute. This is if they attended that community college first, that two-year college first and transferred out of it, that that college can be alerted by that four-year institution that, oh, this former student of yours... [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Continues. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah. And so if you want to pursue that student you can, or but the student, it would be on them to make the actual formal request. But that community college could follow up and say, hey, you're eligible for this and, you know, follow up with the student as well. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: And then obviously you had somebody approach you at least where this had happened to, or is this a theoretical? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: No. Actually I learned about this through other states. Colorado passed a very similar bill last year unanimously through their legislature and I think more and more states are just concerned about making sure, just seeing the growing gap between how much you can earn in your life based on if you have a degree or not, just trying to make sure more young people are actually getting those degrees. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Seiler. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: Do I understand you to say that you're having the university flag that? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Um-hum. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: How are they going to know where you're at? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Oh, well, it's while you're...well, as you're leaving the university. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: No, you're gone, remember? You're gone. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: That is...yeah. And the university is...yeah, yeah. But how to flag. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: I think the...I mean, I agree with your philosophy except the student ought to... [LB162]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Well, oh, okay. Here's the situation. Once...you're not necessarily gone. Okay. So you're attending the university and you had been at Southeast first. They just flag it when you've hit that 70 credits, say. And so even you're still in enrollment, it would just flag and say you've reached enough for...hmm? [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: What if you're not? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: What if you're not what? [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: In the enrollment. You've got your 6 hours but you... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Well, you wouldn't have finished those 70 hours if you weren't there anymore. And so it's just...it's along in the process. So whenever you get your grades, for instance, at the end of a semester. In the one of which you've surpassed the 70 credits, my thought would be it would say that on the form. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: Don't you think the student ought to take some responsibility? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Well, yeah. Well, for sure. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: Yeah. Why the university? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: I don't know if every student is sitting there during college, adding up all of their credits for... [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: If it makes that much difference in salaries, sure as heck ought to. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Were you in college once, Senator Seiler? And all the things... [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: About seven years straight. Yeah. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: All of things that young people are thinking about, they're not always looking out for themselves in all those ways. I know even going into my senior year it's like, oh man, what requirements do I need again to finish my degree in this area? Have I got all of my bases covered? And so I think this would be helpful, helpful to them. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Senator Davis. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: Senator McGill, I understand the intent here and I kind of think it's a

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good idea. But I'm wondering, supposing somebody comes in from an Iowa community college or a Minnesota community college and it's going to be the responsibility of the University of Nebraska to notify that college in the other states. Are you looking specifically at Nebraska's community colleges? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: It doesn't say specifically in this language that it's only if they're coming from another Nebraska institution. That's something I can explore and develop a better answer to how that would work. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: And so you're saying that this would not take place until they had 70 hours... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: ...at the university. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: That would not include any hours that they had...that would include the hours they brought in from the community college. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: That had transferred with them. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: Okay. Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB162]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Senator McGill, the issue of coming from a lot of different community colleges and the standards in those community colleges, different states were mentioned. And to suppose that a registration service or a department or aspect of the college would be knowledgeable of all the backgrounds where those students might want to pick up a community college associate degree from. How burdensome does that sound to the university system to have counselors or registrars work on that particular task? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Well, the four-year university wouldn't be responsible for looking at where all those credits were coming from and if it fits into the... [LB162]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Well, a random selection of 70 hours doesn't mean you've... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah, it doesn't. [LB162]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...you've met all the requirements of that community college.
[LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: You're correct. Yeah. You're absolutely correct. And that's where it goes back to the student and that's where it takes on the student's role. Okay. I have these 70 credits, but do they match what a community college would want me to have? And that's when they can go and talk to their community college about whether or not these credits they've gotten at, say, UNL would qualify them for this program at...
[LB162]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: But they might not have attended that community college but they have to go seek it out. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: This would be the community college they originally went to.
[LB162]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Oh, okay. Then I'm misunderstanding. If I start at UNL...
[LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Oh, I'm sorry. This... [LB162]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...and I'm three years along and I have over 70 hours but I may not be... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: No. This isn't for students who start at the four-year university. It's for students who start at the two-year. [LB162]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. That clarifies it. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Okay. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: To use an analogy, it used to be when I got my driver's license, it was valid for four years. If I didn't show up to renew it, it was my fault. (Laugh) But now I get a notice in the mail. So that's kind of the difference here, right? Now the students would get the notice that they had reached that, that's the difference. Okay. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Yeah, yeah. I think that's probably an accurate thing. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: I always got mine on time, but. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Seiler. [LB162]

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SENATOR SEILER: Just one follow-up. The \$100,000 figure... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Fiscal note. Yeah, I just saw that, so. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: It's a little... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: I don't really have a comment on it yet since I haven't had a chance to look at it. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: Okay. That's fine. I looked at it and said, wow. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: I know. And I knew that, you know, I'd kind of had some discussions with the university. And, you know, it would be pretty simple to flag I think how many credit hours a kid has. But then on the community college end to go in and, you know, as students are coming to them, the staff time of seeing whether or not their credits apply to a degree, this maybe is what a lot of that is for. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: So all the responsibility will be on the four-year school, but are there going to be requirements and responsibilities of the two-year entities to appropriately file these people and make sure that the student... [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: No, no. I mean, that's where it becomes the student. The four-year university will alert the community college in case for some reason the community college knows that we need more people with this particular degree and this kid might have that. And so, you know, they could potentially do that if they wanted to, but there's no "shall" in there about a community college then reaching out to that student. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other? Thank you, Senator. Are you going to be here for closing? [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Sure. Yeah. (Laughter) And thank you for your questions. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: It could be another three hours. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: I know. I'm afraid. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Proponent testimony. [LB162]

DENNIS BAACK: Senator Sullivan and members of the Education Committee, for the record, my name is Dennis Baack, D-e-n-n-i-s B-a-a-c-k, executive director of Nebraska

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Community College Association here to support LB162. Some of the same questions that have been coming up here came to our mind when we looked at this bill, and part of it is student responsibility I think. I think you do have to put a little bit of responsibility on the students. I don't want to...you know, I don't think we want to overburden our four-year institutions with this. I mean, that's not something that we're looking to do. And the same thing came up with the 70 credit hours. When we saw that, we said well, yeah, but not all 70 credit hours fit necessarily within our associate's degrees. But it seems to me that, I mean, there's nothing to preclude us from doing this today. There really is nothing in statute that would stop us from doing this today. So if we can get together and work it out, I mean we can make it work I think. And I think if we got our collective minds together, we probably can get it into a pretty good shape where we can make this work fairly simply for all for all the institutions involved. It's going to be a matter of the four-year institution notifying a student when they have at least those 70 credit hours. The credit hours they transferred in plus what they've taken at the four-year institution, they've got at least 70 credit hours to notify that student that they've got...they possibly might be able to get an associate's degree. Then that student would then have to contact the community college, and the community college would do an analysis of their record, which I don't think is overly burdensome, to see if they match up with an associate's degree. And if they do, we can award them an associate's degree. And I think it's important. I mean, I think this is a really good thing and it's something that's happening nationally. There's a number of states that are looking at this same thing. Texas is looking at it. A number of other states are looking at trying to do this same kind of process, because all of us in higher ed are being pushed for more completion. We want more students to complete and we want more students with some kind of a credential that they can give when they have completed. This gives a student who maybe went for a short time to the community college and then transferred, this gives them an opportunity maybe if they can't complete the four-year degree, they can still get an associate's degree and still have a credential when they go out into the work force. So I think it's good for students. I think we can...you know, I think we ought to collectively be able to figure this out where it isn't all that complicated for anybody. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Is there any problem if somebody at the...started at UNL, and for whatever reason they can't or don't wish to complete their four-years, to transfer those credits back to community college? [LB162]

DENNIS BAACK: No, I mean, the community college would certainly look at that...from my understanding, they would look at that transcript and stuff and if they had the qualifications for an associate's degree, I would assume they could give them an associate's degree at that point if they met their criteria. [LB162]

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SENATOR HAAR: Is there any cost involved for the student to do that or... [LB162]

DENNIS BAACK: There may be a fee or something at some of the colleges. I don't know that for sure. I don't know whether there's a fee for that from the college, but... [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. So separate issue there with the fee. [LB162]

DENNIS BAACK: That would be...I would think it would be a minimal fee. To look at a transcript is not all that complicated. It takes some time. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Baack. [LB162]

DENNIS BAACK: Thank you. [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee, my name is Ron Withem, R-o-n W-i-t-h-e-m. And every year I enjoy coming back to this committee for the first time. Had, I'd say--I don't know if I'd say fun memories--but I have lots of memories of serving on (laughter) the Education Committee. When we first heard this concept, we were very excited about it and very supportive and are very supportive of this idea. There are lots of Nebraskans who have had some postsecondary education experience but do not have completed degrees. And this is another avenue of getting more people to be awarded the degrees that they've worked for and have coming. We also think that probably a person possessing an associate degree would at that point be more likely to go on to their four-year institution. So we're very supportive of Senator McGill's idea. And I think this is the other side of the coin, I think the questions that came up here as Dennis indicated are the questions that we had when we first read this bill. And we think that probably procedurally we need to nail this down just a little better and would like to work with Senator McGill and other individuals in doing that. But we commend her for bringing this idea forward, and I would respond to any questions you might have. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Withem. And reflecting on Mr. Baack's comment that you could really do this now, do you think you can? [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Oh, I don't think...yeah, I think we would probably could. I think the institutions have under their control what basis under which they award degrees. It probably could happen without legislation. The legislation is a motivating factor in moving forward with it. That I think would be a policy decision that the Legislature would need to make. [LB162]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. All right. Thank you. Question over here? Senator Haar. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: So would you see then that this could be valuable for every student that reaches 70 hours or...I'm having a little trouble differentiating between the, you know, the students who started at the junior college, went to UNL, came back, versus just... [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Well, four-year institutions with some minor exceptions--I shouldn't say minor exceptions--some specific exceptions, do not grant two-year degrees. Several years ago when the university was offering a number of two-year degrees, we kind of went through and cleaned out most of those. The biggest exception, of course, is College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. So I don't see that this would get us in the field of awarding associate degrees. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: No, no. No, I'm not saying that. But just...all we're talking...this really is a bill about notification. [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Right. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: So would that also benefit just every student perhaps? [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Well, every student that had an interest in having an associate degree. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB162]

RON WITHEM: I don't see who else would be benefited by this, but. [LB162]

SENATOR HAAR: Gotcha. Okay. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Senator Avery. [LB162]

SENATOR AVERY: Briefly. Would you like to comment on that fiscal note, given the recent article in the paper about administrative bloat at the university? [LB162]

RON WITHEM: I'm not prepared to talk about the second issue (laughter) here at this hour. In terms of the fiscal note, we had difficulties, and I don't know if ours was the number or not. I think the state colleges had three personnel who would need to be hired. We knew that there was going to be some additional work for us, so we put in one additional employee. And we also knew we were going to have to reprogram our computer system, so we put in a number for that. I think those concepts are justifiable. And not really knowing how the system will work out to say exactly how much it would

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cost us, it's...you know, you're free to question I think what is put in there. And as we get the system nailed down a little better, we'd be able to be a little more accurate with that. [LB162]

SENATOR AVERY: Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Scheer. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Just...and maybe you don't know but I'm going to ask. At the university system, and maybe it's not the same for all your institutions, but when you give...send out the grades, and I don't know, probably electronic now rather than by mail, but when each semester when those are sent out, is it just the semester's grades or does it give you the cumulative hours that you have obtained at that university? [LB162]

RON WITHEM: You know, I would not know the answer. I can get you an answer and get you a sample of the report card that goes out, but I don't know what's contained on that. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: Well, I guess from a...you know, we've talked about personal responsibility, and so my thought was if the total number was already on that report that a student received, it would be fairly simplistic just to add a following comment at the bottom that if the total hours is greater than 70 that you should...and you were a student at a, you know, community college, you know, please contact them for an associate's degree information. I mean, that way there's really not a lot of work on the university's part... [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Right. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: ...as far as having to flag them. It just simply states that on paperwork. And as long as that's then...then it gets back to that student. Okay. Yeah, it's there. Now it's my job to go make sure that it comes up. And it might be a simpler matter than flagging everybody and having to worry about if it was a community college in Iowa or someplace else. Just, you know, the...and, again, that's based on the fact that somewhere on there it shows total hours, so. Thank you. [LB162]

RON WITHEM: Good point. And it may end up being a much simpler process than we thought it was when we first saw the bill. [LB162]

SENATOR SCHEER: Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Withem. [LB162]

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RON WITHEM: Thank you. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Good evening. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Good evening. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Randy Schmailzl, R-a-n-d-y S-c-h-m-a-i-l-z-l, president of Metro Community College. And for purposes of simplicity and semantics, I'm going to only talk about Metropolitan Community College. So if you have some questions, let's just talk about Metro students. Many good questions here tonight. Regarding grades, at Metro you look up on-line your grades. We don't even send grades out to students anymore. Electronically the student has an e-mail account and a college account, so they need to look up their own grades. Plus the FERPA side of that is if Mom and Dad intercept your grades, they really don't have the right to see your grades. So we got to be careful, when you send them in the mail, so that doesn't happen. It works pretty slick for us. We thought we'd get a lot of complaints. We don't. The question is: You come to Metro and you take 25 hours of general education courses, which happens a lot. We probably have thousands of students a year that take just their gen-ed at Metro and transfer to UNO. At that point, you go to UNO for two years and you accumulate 70 credit hours. Metro is contacted and we see if that equates to a degree. That's the simplicity of how this would work for a Metro student. Same thing with the university. On our end, we send out 24,000 transcripts for our students last year. That means 24,000 students either transferred someplace or needed a transcript to an employer or an agency. We also received over 60,000 transcripts from our students. And many of the students nowadays transfer in multiple community college records. Especially if you're in the Air Force and you've travelled around, you may have five or six community colleges or colleges. So some of it's an easy transfer because we can put it on electronically. And if it comes from the Nebraska university system, all of it's loaded, and we know if you get a C or better in a certain class, it automatically transfers to Metro. So we rely heavily on computers in our registrar's office. Once we transfer this to your transcript, if it's a transfer credit that you moved into Metro from ABC University, it is not a grade. It's transferred as test by proficiency because these transcripts at Metro move on all across the United States and we don't want a grade associated with that. If the other institution that you transferred to wants to have a grade, they can look at it. So many of our students have not done well in a past life in higher ed and we want you to start out with a fresh grade point average so that you can build your grade point average up and transfer. With that said, we're also working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Omaha Chamber and its CEOs for cities and we're trying to increase the graduation rate in Omaha. All the colleges and universities are working together and we're hopeful that more students will graduate in Omaha. According to our research, about 30 percent of the population in the Metro Community College area that we serve, which is about 800,000 people, have college credits but they do not have a degree; so that, I don't think, is unusual. But this will help students receive a degree, plus it will help

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Metro. We are always looked at for a low graduation rate because a lot of our students transfer before they get their associate's degree. So we're certainly going to work with the university system, and this is something that we can all work on and the difference is going to be for the student. They're going to have a degree from the community college and then ultimately a degree from the university we hope. So hopefully that puts it into a little bit of a simpler context for the Metro student moving different places. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Randy. In addition to sending these communications to students via e-mail on their grades, is there an opportunity to communicate additional information to them at that point? [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Absolutely. We have our...each student, and this is at many colleges and universities, they have their own Metro e-mail account. So we communicate with them and we can say anything we want on that account to them. And, you know, whether it's about the university and the transfer... [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: ...advantage, whatever we want to call it, so. Yep. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. But then once they leave your student population, that communication is cut off. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: We still know where they're at... [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: ...on that first step... [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: ...because when we send it to the University of Nebraska-Omaha, we have a list of who all transferred there. We can also check with them to see if they're currently enrolled. And the National Student Clearinghouse keeps track of that for financial aid purposes. So you can go back and crosscheck this list back to the Student Clearinghouse and get a lot of information. Now, granted, there's going to be a certain percentage that you're going to lose, you're just going to lose track of. That happens. But we're talking about the 85 percent here figure, 85 to 90 percent you're going to be able to keep track of. Now once they leave the university or stop out or, you know, don't...then it's going to be tougher to find them unless they matriculate into another college or university that's on the National Student Clearinghouse registry. [LB162]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: I have just a short question, you raised it. Do you need any legislation that would waive privilege for doing any of this that's set out in the bill? [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: You know, as long as we're doing it in Nebraska, I mean, I would...it would be up to the university if they wanted to do it with Iowa or everybody else. But if we're only doing it with the state institutions, I don't see any need to waive current legislation or statutes to do this. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: Well, I was thinking of permission and stuff like that. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: No. You know, this is something that when Senator McGill brought it up this summer and we talked to her, it was very attractive for us for all the reasons I said about what we're doing wrong. [LB162]

SENATOR SEILER: Not a problem. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Yep. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions? Thank you, Randy. [LB162]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Thanks. [LB162]

MARSHALL HILL: (Exhibit 1) I bet you and I hope I'm the last one. (Laughter) But Marshall Hill, M-a-r-s-h-a-l-l H-i-l-l, executive director of the Coordinating Commission. Let me try to respond to some of the questions that have been asked because I think everybody understands the general concept. Senator Haar asked a couple of times about wouldn't this be applicable to any student who starts anywhere. But basically let's take a student who would start at UNL and accumulate 75 hours and then decide he couldn't go on. Could he then transfer his credits to Southeast Community College and be awarded a degree? No. The answer is no because accreditation criteria require an institution awarding a degree have a very significant part of that student's education that they have provided. Frankly, the way the bill is written right now would cause...I just learned the other day, would cause a bit of problem for Nebraska institutions because of a requirement of the regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission. But because this issue is becoming...moving to the front in many states, I believe the Higher Learning Commission is going to modify its provisions on that to enable something like that. We do acknowledge that the bill could add something to the workload of the state's public four-year institutions. Frankly, though, we think there would be ways to do it which could certainly lessen that requirement. Maybe something as simple as a blanket e-mail about

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this possibility. The main point to this is I would guess that very, very few students who could do this realize that they could do this. They don't know that they could do this. So they start at Northeast. They transfer to UNO. They diligently work hard for several years and then life just gets in the way and they drop out without ever having accomplished anything in terms of a tangible credential. What this is about is finding a way to let them know they could do that and then enabling it to be done. I haven't looked at the fiscal notes. But I'll just say my opinion is that if after spending tens of millions of dollars on student records systems for the university and the state colleges, if we can't find a way to do this for under \$100,000 it's just bewildering to me. (Laughter) And last point is there are a lot of details, and the devil is always in the details. And with all due respect, I would suggest that some of the details are maybe at a level that don't need to be worked out in legislation. But the Coordinating Commission would be very pleased to work with all the institutions to develop a process to make this happen as efficiently and cheaply as possible. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Very good. Senator Davis. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: Sorry, but do you work with private schools, too, in the Coordinating Commission? [LB162]

MARSHALL HILL: Private career schools, yes. We approve private career schools to operate. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: And I realize that this legislation doesn't address that but obviously they ought to play a part in this discussion. And if it could be done voluntarily and inexpensively, I think that would be something that we should encourage with them. [LB162]

MARSHALL HILL: Our intent would be if this bill were to pass, if the commissioner were to be involved, you can make directives to public institutions. You can't make those same directives to independent colleges and universities and to the career schools. We would invite all four-year institutions that wanted to participate in this to do so, be they public, private, and so forth. I meet regularly, at least once a year, with the presidents of the independent colleges and universities. We have a good working relationship with all of them. And any of them that wanted to do this, we'd certainly welcome them. [LB162]

SENATOR DAVIS: I certainly encourage it. [LB162]

MARSHALL HILL: Okay. Thank you. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Marshall. Any other proponent testimony? Opponent testimony. Neutral. [LB162]

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STAN CARPENTER: I'm very sorry. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: That's all right. [LB162]

STAN CARPENTER: I know it's late and I promise I will just be quick as I can. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: It's all right. [LB162]

STAN CARPENTER: Senator Sullivan and members of the committee, again, I'm Stan Carpenter, S-t-a-n C-a-r-p-e-n-t-e-r, and I'm the chancellor of the Nebraska State College System. We don't oppose this bill. I think it's a good idea. But we have some questions that we think need to be answered before legislation can go forward. And Marshall was very helpful in some of the questions that we had or at least one of the questions that we had. But let me just list them for you or tell you what we think needs to be clarified before this bill should go forward, because it does create a burden on the four-year institutions and that may not be overly burdensome. We don't know yet. And there is a cost and we submitted a fiscal note on that based on what we thought this bill said. That may be overstated--certainly not intentionally--or it could be understated. But that was what our best guess was at that point. A couple of things that would need to be clarified from our perspective. We were talking about dual enrollment before. And the community colleges are involved in dual enrollment and we accept those credits into our institution. Those students never go to the community college if they're in high school or they may not go to the community college. Does that qualify then for us to have to give notice to that student? We don't know the answer to that question, but it's one that comes to our mind. There is no minimum number of credits that a student can transfer that would trigger our notification. So, for example, if a student comes to us with 3 or 6 or 9 credits from Northeast and goes to Wayne, after 70 credits do we have to notify that student as well? Before Marshall spoke, I did have the question of if a student came to us with three or four courses, 12, 15 hours, they earned 70 hours at our institution or it goes to a total of 70 hours, would that mean that the community college would then take those hours and provide them a degree where the majority of the courses or credits came from us? That doesn't seem right to me and maybe HLC would deal with that issue. But it seems to me that if that's the case, if this is so important the majority of hours come from our institutions, we could transcript an associate's degree. I'm not suggesting that, but it's something we could do. But those are the kind of questions I think that need to be answered before we go forward. We talked about this in terms of is a simple electronic notification enough. And what happens if a student comes to us with credits from Northeast and Southeast? Which of those two institutions do we notify? I'm not trying to be obstreperous or obstructive here, but I think there is, as Marshall said, the devil is in the details here. And if this were put forward so that the burden fell upon us, we would want to make sure we knew how we could meet the burden. And I will point out that we find ourselves in this similar circumstance at our institutions because, as many of you know, we have the Rural Health Opportunities Program, RHOP, and we

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offer bachelor's degrees in the health professions as well. Many of those students leave our institutions without a bachelor's degree to go to UNMC to pursue their professional degree. And so we say to them as they leave, hey, if you want a bachelor's degree before you get your professional degree, when you get to X number of hours, whatever it is, let us know and we'll take a look at your transcript and if it qualifies we'll award you a bachelor's degree. We don't ask the medical center to do anything other than obviously provide a transcript when the student asks for it. So it seems to me that could be the same thing the community colleges could do as well if they say to their students, hey, if you're going to go to Chadron or to Wayne or to UNO, you want an associate's degree, let us know and we'll work with you. So we're not opposed to it. I'm not trying to be obstructionist, but I think there are some really legitimate questions that would need to be answered before we went forward. And with that, I will stop and hopefully wish you a good night... [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Stan. [LB162]

STAN CARPENTER: ...unless you have any questions. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yeah. Any questions? Thank you very much. [LB162]

STAN CARPENTER: Thank you so much. Thanks for indulging me. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: You bet. Any other neutral testifier? Senator McGill for closing. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: All right. Thank you all for your time. I'll be very brief. You know, I'm certainly open to many of the ideas, like the minimum number of credits thing I think is a good point that we could discuss or put in there in some way. But this really could be a simple, like we were talking about when you log on to get your grades that there's a box on the screen that says you've got 70 credits, you may be eligible. And so I think that really takes a little of the responsibility off of the four-year university to even do massive checking. In fact, it could be on every kids' and it just says if you attended a community college previously and you're at 70 credits, and then it could just be on everybody's and it would take out some of these concerns about what about this kid, what if they went to two community colleges. I think there are ways that we can get around that. And I look forward to bringing you a possible amendment to help clarify some of these concerns. All right. [LB162]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other comments for Senator McGill? Thank you so much. [LB162]

SENATOR MCGILL: Thanks. [LB162]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: You bet. Okay. This closes the hearing on LB162. And we have one final one, LB254 by Senator Adams who I think he sent his replacement. (Laughter) [LB162]

JANET ANDERSON: Good evening. I'm Janet Anderson, J-a-n-e-t A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. I'm the legislative aide to Senator Adams. He apologizes for not being here. This is a very simple bill. It changes the word "television" for the Nebraska Educational Television Communication to "telecommunications." It just more accurately reflects our electronic age. That's as simple as it gets. Any questions? [LB254]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Wow. [LB254]

SENATOR AVERY: Really? [LB254]

SENATOR SEILER: If anybody opposes it, we throw a rock at them. [LB254]

SENATOR SCHEER: We still have people out there. Are they going to actually testify? [LB254]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And with that being said, is there any desire on your part to close? [LB254]

JANET ANDERSON: I will waive. [LB254]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. All right. Very good. Thank you for that understanding. Do we have any proponent testimony? Any opponent testimony? Anyone wishing to speak in a neutral capacity? I therefore close the hearing on LB254. Thank you all. [LB254]