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Education Committee  
February 18, 2014

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[LB826 LB1106 LB754 LB1064 LB842]

The Committee on Education met at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 18, 2014, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB826, LB1106, LB754, LB1064, and LB842. Senators present: Kate Sullivan, Chairperson; Bill Avery; Tanya Cook; Al Davis; Ken Haar; Rick Kolowski; and Les Seiler. Senators absent: Jim Scheer, Vice Chairperson.

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (Recorder malfunction)...everyone. I think we'll get started since we're running just a little bit late. This is the Education Committee public hearing. I apologize for being a little late in starting. We had Executive Session beforehand as you know. This is a full schedule we've got in a short session, so we try to get these Executive Sessions scheduled as best as we can. But here we are for today's public hearing. And we have before us five different bills that we will be hearing this afternoon. I'd like to introduce you to members of the committee. My name is Kate Sullivan. I chair the committee, and I represent District 41. The Vice Chair of the committee, Senator Jim Scheer from Norfolk is stranded via snow and bad weather on the East Coast having visited his family over the weekend. To my far left is Senator Bill Avery of Lincoln. And to his right is Senator Ken Haar of Malcolm. And to his right is Senator Tanya Cook of Omaha. And to her right is Senator Les Seiler of Hastings. To my right is Senator Rick Kolowski from the Millard area. To my immediate left is senator...not quite, no (laughter) LaMont Rainey who is one of the legal counsels for the Education Committee. And to my far right is Mandy Mizerski who is the committee clerk. Also, we have two pages helping us today: Nate Funk from Norfolk, a student at UNL and Tyler Zentner, also a student at UNL, and we are from the same town, Cedar Rapids. As I said, we will be discussing five different bills today: LB826, LB1106, LB754, LB1064, and LB842. If you are planning to testify on any of those bills, we'd ask that you pick up a green sheet that's on the table at either entrance. Please fill that out in its entirety and bring that up when you come up to testify. Please print. And as I said, fill it out in its entirety so that we can have an accurate record. When you come up to testify, please give that green sheet to the committee clerk to enter it into the record. If you choose not to testify but would like your name so noted, you can submit your comments in writing and have them read into the official record. If you have handouts for your testimony, please make sure you have 12 copies for the pages. When you come up to testify, please speak clearly into the microphone. Tell us your name and spell both your first and last names. I'd really ask that you turn off any cell phones, pagers, or anything that makes noise so that we aren't distracting the testifiers. The introducers of the bills will make the opening comments. They aren't limited by time, but the testifiers will be. We will be using the light system today. Five minutes for each testifier. So when you've got one minute left, the amber light will come on. And then when you are to be wrapping up your testimony, the red light will come on as well. So I think with that, we will get started. And our first bill is LB826 being introduced by Senator McCoy. Welcome. [LB826]

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SENATOR McCOY: Thank you, Chairwoman Sullivan, and good afternoon, members of the committee. For the record, I am Beau McCoy; that's B-e-a-u M-c-C-o-y. I represent the 39th District. And I am here this afternoon to introduce LB826 which asks the Education Committee to study and to make recommendations for education incentives to fill the high-needs jobs in our state. I think it's exciting when we can create educational opportunities and boost economic development in the same initiative. And I think it's helpful to look at what a few other states have done. There are a number of other states not too far from ours that are perhaps a little farther down the trail in this area. And I think it's helpful to look at their states and what they've done. We've done a lot of that in our office. In particular, in Kansas...and you'll find a letter I believe at some point it'll be read into the record from a Mr. Blake Flanders who works in education in Kansas. And they offer today free tuition for high school students in postsecondary education courses and incentives to school districts for students earning industry-recognized credentials in high-demand occupations. And probably I think the most intriguing state is what Oklahoma has done. Now their industry is a little different than ours. Their job's picture and the dynamics there are somewhat the same as ours. But in ways--it's oil and gas and whatnot--a little different. But in Oklahoma, the system offers its programs and services throughout nearly 400 public school districts, 29 technology centers with 57 campus sites and 16 skill centers located in correctional facilities. And I think there's some exciting programs that I think many of us are aware of. Not the least of...in our state, not the least of which is the recent bond issue here in Lincoln that was passed with the new career academy that will be set up between Southeast and Lincoln Public Schools. You have the Career Pathways Institute in Grand Island. I had the opportunity to go out there on a recess day a few weeks ago and tour that facility. I was blown away and amazed truly at what's going on out there. In addition to what the Hastings High School is doing with partnering with the business community, the manufacturing association in the area there. And Millard obviously is doing a number of things. And there are many, many others. And I don't want to leave any school district out across the state or any community that has reached out and decided and determined that they needed to address the shortage of the skilled workforce in their community and in their area of the state by working collaboratively and together. And along with the Dream It, Do It program, and there are a number of other programs and associations out there and groups that are working on this. And you're going to hear a number of bills today, I believe, that are similar to what we're proposing. And out of respect for your committee and the hard work that you do and the difficult issues that you handle and that eventually end up in front of all of us in the Legislature, my hope with this legislation is not to study any issue to death. We all have a lot of things we study, clearly. But the idea here is, if you talk to the states that have gone about setting up these kind of programs and you ask them...and I think hindsight is always 20/20. You ask them, if you had it to do over again, what would you do different? Invariably the answer that we've gotten is, we would have taken a little bit of time, maybe more than what we did. And rather than just set aside some money if we had it and hope that somehow we'd kind of figure it out as we go, that we would have liked to

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have taken a little bit more time, figured out what were those specific areas where we were really short and it appeared going forward that we were going to be short in jobs. And how do we address that using our technical schools or community colleges? I'm particularly sensitive to this because when I'm not here in the Legislature as many of you know we, our family owns and operates a construction company, a home-improvement business. And we really struggle, like many small businesses across the state, to find a skilled workforce. It's a real challenge. And it's a...I think, something in some ways that we can be proud of the fact that we do have the second lowest unemployment rate in the country. But that creates a workforce shortage as well. And my hope is...and I'm a graduate of a community college myself. I think, unless I'm mistaken, I might be the only member of the Legislature to date who is, and then went on to get a bachelor's degree. But it's something I really feel very passionate about, that this is a way forward for our state if we can figure this out. My hope is that LB826 might build upon the good work that's already been done across the state, pull everything together and figure out a way...can we address this statewide in a cohesive way. And again, I know you're going hear multiple bills along these lines. My hope is that somehow we can figure out a pathway forward that makes sense for our state. And with that, I close. [LB826]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator McCoy. Sometimes I think when we use the term "high-need areas" in terms of our workforce, we have a preconceived notion of what that might be. And so I guess I'd like to know if you have recommendations on how the Education Committee should determine that because, you know, it's one way to look at, like you said, the skilled labor. But I've also heard in some of the communities in my district, they have a crying need for some of the professional positions like an accountant. And then you look at the demographics of Nebraska, and you know as well as I do the challenges of rural Nebraska. So how do you think the Education Committee should go about assessing this? [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: Well, I think that's why, Senator Sullivan, that we set this up in a way that we would involve the Department of Labor, Department of Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, obviously all of you on this committee and others to try to determine because I do think that the Planning Committee under the excellent direction, I think, of Senator Harms and the wealth of resources that are available at our fingertips today with technology and otherwise, I really do think we can drill down through some data and determine. And when I say "high needs," I'm thinking in the light of that career and technical education. Yes, I think there is a professional shortage particularly in rural Nebraska is my understanding, probably less of an issue in maybe more of our urban areas of the state. But I think...I'll give you a great example. There's a family company that owns a string of implement dealerships in an area of our state. They actually have a recruiter on staff to go to high schools too. They have such a shortage for diesel technicians and service techs. They actually go to high schools and even middle schools to recruit young Nebraskans to then try to explain to them what

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opportunities are out there so they can come to Milford or they go somewhere else to get that education. And they assist with that in hopes that then they can have them come back to work for them. And they're great jobs. They're excellent paying jobs that you can raise a family on. You can have a great career, stable career helping support agriculture which we all know is our number one industry. And I think that helps rural Nebraska by bringing those jobs back to the areas that need it the most. So you're right. It's a challenge. That's why I think this...the answer is not maybe just throwing money. Although I think we're all more frugal than that as we should be with taxpayer dollars. But I don't think the answer is just to say, well, we think it's these areas of high need and we're going to spend some money and try to fix it overnight. I really do think we need to study it a little bit because I think that's...I think the data will show us, in the next decade or so, what are those areas that we are really going to be short in. And yes, in some areas of the state it is professional jobs that you do need to go get a four-year liberal arts degree or some other degree to have the training and qualifications to hold. But in many cases, certainly our business among many other small businesses across the state that want to hire more, want to expand a workforce, want to grow our businesses and jobs in Nebraska, it's a certificate program or a technical or community college degree that more than amply provides for that training. [LB826]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Any questions for Senator McCoy? Will you be here...oh, Senator Kolowski. [LB826]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Senator McCoy, thank you for your interest in this bill, and I thank you for bringing it forward. I think it's...again, it's extremely important for our state and to keep on the cutting edge of many things. Have you...did you and your staff touch base with community colleges as well as the areas that you mentioned, the chambers of commerce and all the rest as you were gathering information on this bill, and what did you find in that search? [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: Yes, we have. And the answer, Senator Kolowski, is that our community colleges do, I believe, tremendous work across our state. And I think each of them has found a niche or multiple niches in many ways of how they can help with this, whether it's a partnership with Mid-Plains with Union Pacific, or Metro with the companies and organizations that they do such great training with. You know, our community colleges have found a way to be extremely relevant in today's marketplace that we find ourselves in. And I think we should be very proud of that, all of us, because that's a team effort. And to me this isn't so much as finding a new way or reinventing the wheel as is it, how do we work together to have a statewide goal in mind? And I think that's to grow jobs here. It's our future, especially as baby boomers continue to retire, I think it becomes even more critically important that we find young Nebraskans or those maybe returning for second career to fill these jobs and to make sure that we're keeping especially I think rural Nebraska healthy. [LB826]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: My other comment would simply be the career awareness starting at a very young level. And sharing with the students the possibilities of what could be out there for them but also the necessity of the math skills, the reading skills, technical reading they might have to do in a job that makes a difference. If they're not going into an academic venture, if they're going into a hands-on career area like this, it's really important that they have those skills as well. They need them as much as anyone else when they're in those early years because you can't go into hardly anywhere without computers attached to something. And doing the finite aspect of that work, it's really a heads-up...it's not just grabbing a welding mask and jumping into a bin of steel and working on something. It's way beyond that now. And people just don't realize that. It's an aspect that is really lost sometimes. [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: I'm often reminded in the construction industry just why, you know, when teachers said, you really should pay attention in math and science, what they meant with geometry and other things. [LB826]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: And I think many of us as adults realize that. But I think it's difficult as young people to understand the impact of the education that we get and how it may provide value to us later in life. And I think there's ways that we can partner together. And I'm encouraged by...I should have mentioned this earlier. A couple of states that are now offering internship programs to teachers during the summer or on breaks... [LB826]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: ...in order to come see what the jobs are like in their organizations. So they have the ability to go back to their students, and they spend probably more time with those students than in many cases some of his parents or grandparents or guardians might, and have the ability to have firsthand experience articulating to those young people the value of the jobs that are available out there. And I think that is really, really important to get at those young people at an early age and explain to them the great opportunities that are out there. That if you want to go get a four-year liberal arts degree, that's fantastic. But there are many jobs available that you don't have to and still have a great...live a great life and be able to provide for your family. [LB826]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB826]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Will you be here for closing? [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: I will. [LB826]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. [LB826]

SENATOR McCOY: Thank you. [LB826]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) We will now hear proponent testimony. Anyone wishing to speak in favor of LB826? Anyone interested in speaking in opposition? Or in a neutral capacity? And Senator McCoy waives closing, so that closes the hearing on LB826. We will now move on. So Senator McGill... [LB826]

RACHEL MEIER: Senator McGill is up in Urban Affairs. She's heading down now. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Oh, okay. [LB1106]

RACHEL MEIER: We didn't anticipate that this... [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes, neither did we. [LB1106]

SENATOR MCGILL: Hello, Senator Sullivan. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Hello, Senator McGill. We moved through this a little bit faster than anticipated so... [LB1106]

SENATOR MCGILL: We have MUD going on upstairs... [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. Very good. [LB1106]

SENATOR MCGILL: I thought I was leaving in good time, but you snuck up on me. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: That's all right. So you're here to introduce LB1106. [LB1106]

SENATOR MCGILL: (Exhibits 1 and 2) That's right, Chairwoman. Thank you very much. Members of the committee, I'm state Senator Amanda McGill, M-c-G-i-l-l, and I'm here to introduce LB1106, a bill to ensure that all students in the state of Nebraska have the opportunity to take part in the complete career academy experience. LB1106 creates a tuition reimbursement program to be housed under the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Students or their family would be provided the initial tuition fees and fees for dual-enrollment courses; earn a C or higher and earn reimbursement. I've introduced LB1106 to support the development of a workforce with the job skills necessary for Nebraska's economic future. It is clear through research that over the past 30 years, career academies are a proven method for preparing students for successful transition to college and careers. The three key components for career

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academies include advanced study through a series of career courses, connections with local businesses and industries, and dual high school and college credit courses that transition students to advanced career preparation prior to leaving high school. Students who participate in career academies with dual college-level courses perform better academically in high school and college and are more likely to graduate high school, two-year college programs, and four-year college programs than students who are not in career academy experiences. These students will have more economic viability for themselves and their families than without the career academy experience. In Nebraska, we have incredibly low unemployment but high levels of citizens being underemployed working two jobs because they lack their skills. We also have some industries that have perpetual job openings because they don't have the workforce needed trained in the skills of those jobs. Career academies help Nebraska develop the skills to have productive futures. If Nebraska is going to be economically viable, it needs citizens that have advanced skills to either work in existing businesses and industries or with their skills and the Nebraska entrepreneurial spirit, start businesses that will employ others. Career academies help ensure that those citizens are there to be employers or employees. Other states have seen the value of developing students for the future of the state. South Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, Colorado, and Kansas all have tuition assistance of some kind for students in career academies to take dual high and college credit courses. They are doing this for those very reasons. It benefits the individuals and the families of the students that complete the career academy programs and it supports the region and the state because career academies select career pathways as defined in the NDE Rule 47 that have connections to local businesses and industries. When the TEEOSA formula was formulated, it was never intended to try and cover the cost of dual-credit tuition and fees because at the time we didn't understand the incredible benefit it had for the state and for the students. The investment of LB1106 asks for would provides that support. And for the group of students participating in advanced study and career areas identified by their local economies as being high wage, high skill and in high demand of the future. That this makes it possible for those students, should they choose, to stay close to home, raise a family in an economically viable circumstance, and build the local economy of the state of Nebraska. I have a couple of handouts for you if I can see a page. One of them is a map that illustrates those career academies that have been identified by the Nebraska Department of Education. Rule 47 is a new rule, and NDE will be working with school districts beginning with a seminar on March 13, to help them become approved career academies. I've also provided an amendment that clarifies the administration of the reimbursements will be handled completely by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. The clarification was at the request of both NDE and the Coordinating Commission. I know there is a lineup of experts behind me. I'd be happy to try to answer any questions, but they are the experts. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you, Senator McGill. Any questions? Will you be here for closing? [LB1106]

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SENATOR MCGILL: I'm going to try to stay through. I'm chairing the committee upstairs, and I may need to get back to that. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB1106]

SENATOR MCGILL: All right. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Very good, thank you. We will now hear proponent testimony on LB1106. Welcome. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: (Exhibit 3) Thank you very much. Madam Chair and members of the Education Committee, my name is Randy Nelson, R-a-n-d-y N-e-l-s-o-n. I'm the director of the Southeast Community College Career Academy Partnership sometimes referred to as SENCAP. That acronym has been used a lot. And I am here in support of LB1106. I do need to make a clarification before I share my brief testimony today. And that is that our career academy program, SENCAP, has been in existence for just over six years now. And we actually serve...or are available to serve the 40-plus schools in the Southeast Community College 15 county service area. Our program is not part of the LPS-SCC Capital Career Center. Southeast Community College has made a tremendous commitment and investment for both Lincoln Public Schools and also for the schools outside of Lincoln as it relates to career academies and to help prepare our students for both careers and for college. Hopefully if you have a copy of the guide...if you would turn to page 5, I just wanted you to kind of just get a mind-set of the schools that we do serve in our career academy program. And you can see right now we're currently serving 37 schools throughout the 15 county area. And as I said, we had been in place for over six years now. We provide different opportunities for our high school students. This program is open to both juniors and seniors. And we...all of our classes...we have over 40 different classes. If you look on page 5...I'm sorry, page 4 was the map. Page 5 is the courses that we offer. We offer over 40 dual-credit courses for our students. We also provide job-shadowing opportunities. We do field trips. We engage with professional speakers and we give our students opportunities to interact with businesses and organizations around Nebraska and certainly in their home communities. And again, I'm not going to go through the entire booklet. But certainly want you to have that for your review and reading to give you a really good idea of what we do and what we've been doing over the last six years. Because dual-credit classes are such a great and important part of our program, we really believe that Senator McGill's bill, LB1106, can really be a tremendous benefit for our students who are participating in our career academy program. And so we are here to support this bill. I really want you to have the opportunity to listen to three of our students that are currently in our career academy program. We have some young ladies here today that I'd like to have them share their testimony. They're from three different communities in our career program. And what's really exciting to think about is that with the passage, if

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LB1106 would be successful, this bill would have a tremendous impact on students like these but also other students that otherwise may not have the opportunity to be involved not only in the career academy, but certainly taking dual-credit classes from our colleges. And so I really think it's important that you hear their personal stories because they are all somewhat different. And that will certainly give you a lot better idea of not only what our program is doing but how LB1106 can impact these young people. So with that, I'll kind of stop here. If you have any questions of me right now, I'd be glad to answer those if I may. Otherwise, I'd like our students to talk with you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Nelson, for your testimony. So under the current arrangement, what sort of financial assistance is available to the students taking dual credit? [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Okay, we have a couple different options. Southeast Community College--at least as far as I know--is the only community college in Nebraska that for any of the students that are part of our career academy program, they provide half the tuition. Over the first three years that we had our program, the K-12 schools that were participating in our program paid the other half. So basically, for the first three years, all of our schools, the tuition was paid for the students. We now have kind of a mixture. We have some students paying half. We still have some schools paying the other half. And so that is one avenue that we have had to really help a lot of our kids be able to take college-level classes. We also have a couple scholarships that are available to our students. The Learn to Dream Scholarship that's there through Union Bank. And we have several of our students that use that as part of the...taking care of part of the tuition while they're in the career academy. And then the ACE Scholarship is another one that is available to our students as well. So there's a few options right now. And this certainly would be a real boost to opening that opportunity to a lot more students. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Do you have any indication from student feedback that the financial aspect is keeping them from participating in some of these dual-credit courses? [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: I don't have a lot of data right now. What we do have is every time we have students that show an interest in our program, we try everything we can do to make sure they have that opportunity, whether it's a school, whether a personal individual, a business stepping up to help make sure that that student has that opportunity. So I do know that we have several students that have participated in our program that without additional support and aid would not be able to take our program. And it's been exciting to see the different stories out there of young people that had...college was not even on the radar. And now, not only is it on the radar, they see that they can be successful. And so the outcome is very significant. So our hope is that this would be one more option for students that would enable them to do that. [LB1106]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Um-hum. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: So what is the difference then between what's going to be happening between you and Lincoln Public Schools and your career academy right now? [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Senator, I'm not sure I'm the one to answer. I know John Neal will be talking here in just a minute... [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Oh, okay. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: ...from LPS. But my understanding is that a lot of the components will be very similar. The only difference would be that they are going to be housed in one facility there at the Lincoln campus. As you'll see here, we serve a lot of smaller schools. So we have a variety of ways that we deliver our courses; on-line, a hybrid class where it may be a fiber class. We have face-to-face classes. So we have to be very creative in how we offer these classes for our students because time is such a commitment and we want to minimize the amount of driving time the students might have. So we look at it a little bit differently. But the point being...and it's a great question, the point being with our program is because we work with so many multiple schools, smaller schools, we have a lot of partnerships. We have schools within certain regions that work together. Give you an example; we have Weeping Water that works with Elmwood-Murdock, so students travel back and forth to their schools to take cooperative classes together. So we have a lot of different options that are there, and it's worked out very well. And the point being is that this can happen across the state in the small schools, especially schools that are somewhat isolated. There can be strategies and plans that can be put into place to make this thing work. So we're excited about that. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Senator Kolowski. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, sir, for your presentation. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Yes, sir. You're welcome. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And I wanted to ask you, what would be the maximum number

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of credits a student might accumulate in any one program right now that would be the largest amount that you'd be assisting with or they could accumulate over the two years? [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Great question, Senator. Our program is set up for a two year program. And so typically a student will take one course per semester which is equivalent to a three-hour semester course. Southeast is on a quarter system, so it's 4.5 credits, but it's equivalent to 3 semester hours. So anywhere from 12 to 16 hours in our program. Now we have several other students that are part of our academy that also take other dual credit classes in addition to...in fact, you'll see some young ladies here today that are doing just that. And they'll share that with you in a little bit. So I would say on average 12 to 16 hours would be...those students that are with us for two years. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Two years. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: And again, the courses that we offer are all foundational classes that would be going into a certain career. And we've also tried to select classes that have the greatest transferability so that if they start at Southeast those hours would transfer to other colleges within the state of Nebraska. And we've been pretty fortunate so far with that. And as many of you know, that's always a moving target as far as if they transfer or not, but we've had really good luck with our program so far. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And affordability, you said that your community college pays half. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Yes. Any student, yeah. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And then most districts pick up the other half but not all. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: I would...yeah. In the first three years, we had all of our schools. We started with 16 schools and about 45 students. This current year we have over 500 students and 37 schools. Of those 37 schools, I would say right at half of them are still paying the half for the students. And for whatever...for budgetary reasons in most cases, the other half are having the students pay the other half. But if you think about the cost, we're talking about...a credit hour at Southeast is like \$56. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Sure. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: So you're \$25 a credit hour. So cost really is minimal. And I realize we still have some students that can't afford that, but we again, try to find ways to make that happen. So it is very affordable. But again, when we're talking with students that

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really don't have the means at all to do this, we're always open to some other avenues that we can pursue some assistance. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: So incentivizing of a program perhaps through aspect of state aid or whatever we would think of would really be a benefit to these students and overall to keep them on track to their goal... [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Yes. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...of getting a community college associate's degree or beyond. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Absolutely. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: And the other beauty of this, Senator, is that when students are getting focused as a junior and senior in high school on a career rather than waiting until they're a freshman or sophomore in college, it makes a tremendous difference. We're collecting data on that right now to see how many students are actually staying in the career area they started here. And two or three of the young ladies here today are going to premed. And so, I mean, we have some focused young ladies, and a lot of our students are in that same boat. But they don't always start that way. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Motivation is very important. It really is. One last question if I could, your chart on the back of your... [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Yes, yes. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...programs is excellent looking at career directions and all the rest. This goes from my own background as a high school principal going back to your counseling division, your school psychologist, and all those working with students in their selection of what they might think of, but also on advising programs for every student at every level; middle school and high school. So they have someone who assist them, knows them, and the assist to guide them to some of the directions because when kids wait and don't know, they lose... [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Exactly. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...out on opportunities. And that's just a crucial aspect in my mind of what we need to do and do what's better. Would you comment on that and what your range of support is across the board? [LB1106]

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RANDY NELSON: Yeah, absolutely. Our counselors have been the key to our program. And so again, you kind of mentioned the earlier that we can do this, the better. We have many of our schools that are starting in 4th grade and beginning that introduction of thinking about a career. And so it's vital we have that involvement. And again, we work very closely with our counselors and as it relates to a career component. If you look at this chart, this was devised and developed by the state department of Nebraska. We have developed it to an extent to where we have career academies that are in each one of these clusters. And so again, the idea is to try to reach as many students as we can as far as their interests. But you're right. The earlier, the better, and the more guided that is, the more involvement that we have from adults and our counselors and others, it's really critical. So we're hoping that...and again, we're finding that that is moving lower into the grades than it has been in the past which is good. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, sir. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: You're welcome. Any other questions? [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB1106]

RANDY NELSON: Okay, thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's my pleasure to be here in front of you today to discuss an important issue. My name is Taylor Hermann, T-a-y-l-o-r H-e-r-m-a-n-n, and I'm a senior at Weeping Water High School. I am here to testify in favor of passing LB1106. Before I begin, I'd like to extend my gratitude to the legislative body of Nebraska for all that is provided for education in our state. Educating the youth of Nebraska is the most important step in creating better prepared citizens. My first two years of high school, I excelled in classes that were offered. However, none seemed to create a challenge for me. Small schools such as Weeping Water are limited in resources and unable to offer courses that are beneficial and challenging to students like myself. The Southeast Nebraska Career Academy has given me the opportunity to excel at a younger age and solidify my career goals. I've been able to take dual-credit classes which have provided challenging coursework. Along with the courses I'm currently taking, I've completed 8 classes totalling 22 credit hours. My high school experience wouldn't have been the same without having the opportunity to participate in the Southeast Nebraska Career Academy Partnership. This program allows juniors and seniors in high schools to not only have opportunity to take college-level coursework in a career cluster of their interest but also have multiple opportunities to explore their career in a hands-on approach. Through job shadows, field trips, professional speakers, and annual events highlighting resume building, mock interviews, and other worthy career-related activities. As a first-year student of the academy, I focused on

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discovering my passions and what makes them unique while also exploring my career field of interest. This year, as a second-year student I have focused on creating a useful Web site outline, what I have learned in identifying the most essential skills and strengths needed for my future profession. I've gained numerous skills and contacts with professionals in the field I am interested in which I would never had the chance to do. One valuable experience I've had...been able to take part in was a job shadow with a well respected medicine rehab specialist at Madonna. In a professional field, people say networking is a huge asset to furthering opportunities. I'd like to feel that I have advantage due the fact that the career academy has provided these opportunities. I know from firsthand experience that students have been able to get jobs because of the courses the Southeast Career Academy offers. Through the CNA course, students have been able to receive their CNA license and now are working in a nursing home as a part-time job. This has not only given them a jump-start in their college but also in their career path. What this programs has given me along with other students is an opportunity to experience college. Participating in this program has been difficult at times, however, very rewarding. My goal is to obtain a double major in college along with studying abroad. I will be able to make this goal feasible and finish college in four years because I have been given the opportunity to take college credit courses in high school. Nelson Mandela once quoted, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." You as state legislators have the opportunity to be the instigation of change for students in Nebraska. I'd welcome the opportunity to visit with any of you and answer any questions you may have on my experience with the Southeast Nebraska Career Academy Partnership. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Taylor, for your testimony. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: How have you accessed many of these dual-credit courses, on-line or right in the classroom, or what's been the delivery mechanism? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Actually both. So I'm from Weeping Water, so we've partnered with Elmwood and also Conestoga. And they're about 15 minutes both from...we're like in the middle. And I've been to Elmwood, and I have taken the CNA class. So I've been in front an instructor. And then this semester I'm actually taking on-line courses. So I've experienced both. And I think they're both very beneficial. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And did you say you're a junior? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: I'm a senior. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senior, and so the next fall where will you be hopefully?  
[LB1106]

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TAYLOR HERMANN: I will be attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Majoring in? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Premed. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. Any questions for Taylor? One thing, you mentioned that at times you've had some difficulty. Can you elaborate on that a little bit? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Yeah, just the coursework is definitely way more difficult than my high school coursework. And it's a lot more time consuming. But I think it's definitely prepared me for when I do go to college so like it's giving me a head start so when I get there I'm not overwhelmed. And that I would say would be the difficulty. And it's just harder coursework. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. Very good. Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah, thanks for being here. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Comparing what you're doing with some of your friends who aren't taking advantage of this, what's the difference? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Well, I'm getting a head start. And they're helping me pay for college which is awesome. And another thing is that my coursework is definitely harder, but in the long run it's going to be beneficial for me because I've already gotten experience to college. And when they go to college, they're not going to be as well prepared as I will be. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Great. Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, madam. Taylor, thank you for your testimony and also your excellent motivation in all this. Do you have any AP courses at your school, advanced placement? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: We have just...yeah, advanced placement like English courses, but none of them count college credit. [LB1106]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Okay. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: So they're just like...we have like regular English class, and then AP English... [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Is it like honors English? [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Yeah, it's like honors. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: But it's not an AP where you take a national test and do all those things. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: No, nope. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: So this kind of fills the gap where you can take... [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Yeah. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...some college experiences and get a flavor... [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Exactly. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...for the college experience. Thank you very much. That's really good. Thank you. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Yeah. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Good luck to you. [LB1106]

TAYLOR HERMANN: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Zandy Sotelo, Z-e-n-d-y S-o-t-e-l-o. I am a senior at Wahoo High School. I would like to begin by thanking you all for having me here. I believe that education is a fundamental element for a vital piece of work to be developed. But even then, education itself is a piece of work that is vital to mankind. As Nelson Mandela once said: Education is the weapon that has the power to change the world. And obviously I'm not the only one that thinks so. (Laughter) I believe that education is important. And with that being said, Wahoo High School has offered the opportunity for students to get a head start in their career through a program called Southeast Nebraska Career Academy Partnership. It offers a variety of college-level courses to students who are eager to not only learn but to also

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explore a variety of different courses. It's an opportunity to get a head start. It's an opportunity for those students like me and others who enjoy to learn and grow as individuals to get an education that exceeds a high school level. It allows students to challenge their intuition. My first year of being in this program, I struggled to understand what study method worked best for me. I was in medical terminology I. And for the longest time I failed a lot of my tests because of my study methods. I didn't have it down, and I didn't know how to study for it. But by the end of the course, I had it figured out. And I did pass the course. My point is though that students who are offered this type of program get to find what that study method is for them before they get to college. I know I have and that makes it easier and less likely for me to fail. I will be able to enter college with more college-ready skills and more knowledge and understanding of the career I plan to pursue in. I am currently enrolled in five college courses. And although the courses can be really challenging at times, they are allowing me to prepare for college. By the time I graduate high school, I will have 90 percent of my freshman year of college completed. And coming from a family of nine members, this program really helps me because I know that I'm saving a lot of money, and I know that my parents are saving a lot of money as well. I will also be the first member of my family to attend college. And I know that what lies ahead of me is bright because my experiences through the career academy program have truly helped me become a better and more knowledgeable person. And I believe that if students are offered the opportunity to become better at a lower price compared to when they get to college, I know they will take that opportunity. The students who take these courses want to learn. And I believe that because of that drive and motivation, they deserve this opportunity. I hope you take into consideration what I have told you. And I urge you to pass LB1106 for future students like me to get the most out of their education. Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. And you said you're taking quite a load of dual-credit courses. [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: Yeah. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: What sort of support do you get in terms of guidance or advising? Do you have a guidance counselor that helps you make some of these decisions? [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: Actually I have Lana Robinson. She's sitting over here. She helps me with...she just guides me throughout it. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: She's a guidance counselor? [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: No, she's the coordinator for the career academy. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: I see. Okay. [LB1106]

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ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: Yeah. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. Very good. All right, any other questions?  
Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: I know some places they'd say, graduate early from high school and go into college. What's the advantage of staying in high school and taking college courses? [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: You save a lot of money. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay. [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: You have that support from your school and from your friends. I think it's just easier, and I don't know I just think it's better. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah. Okay, great. Well, thanks for coming. [LB1106]

ZENDY CRISOL SOTELO: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. Welcome. [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: Thank you. Good afternoon. It is an honor to be in front of you today. My name is Elisha Scheiber, E-l-i-s-h-a S-h-e-i-b-e-r, and I'm a senior at Seward High School. I'm here this afternoon to testify in favor of LB1106. I've been enrolled in the health academy of the SENCAP career academy for the duration of this school year. Joining the academy has been one of the best decisions of my life. The experience I have gained, the connections I have made to people in the health field, and the relationships I have formed with students from other schools are invaluable. Being a student in a career academy has supplied me with opportunities to which other students do not have access. I have contacts to professionals in the fields I am interested in which makes it easier to arrange meaningful job shadows. The academy has also put me ahead of other students my age in regards to being prepared for college and the workplace. Because of the courses I have taken through SENCAP as well as others offered by my high school, I will enter college with more than one full semester of credit hours which will allow me to either graduate in 3.5 years or take a semester to study abroad. And because the classes are offered at a greatly reduced price compared to regular college tuition, I will graduate from college with less debt than I would have had had I waited to take these courses. I also feel that I will make the transition into college with greater ease than other students because I have experienced the amount of effort and responsibility that college-level coursework requires. I have acquired the study skills I will need to succeed as well as mastered time management and the ability to balance

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responsibilities, both of which are extremely important at university-level. I have been asked by several students in the past couple of weeks as they prepare their schedules for next year if taking the career academy courses was worth it. Each time I have answered absolutely without hesitation. I tell them, yes, it's hard work, and you will be frustrated at times. But in the end you will look back at what you have accomplished and all you have learned and experienced and it will be worth it because you are that much closer to what you want to do with the rest of your life. The SENCAP career academy and programs like it provide a wonderful opportunity for students who are serious about preparing for college and their future careers. That is why I believe it is critical that schools continue to offer these opportunities. In closing, I would like to thank you all for inviting me here today to speak to you about the career academy. I hope you take what I have said today into account as you discuss LB1106. The experience and knowledge I have gained through the career academy has given me an incredible head start into medical field, and I would love to see future students equipped by the academy to succeed in their future fields. My hope would be that the funding provided in LB1106 would allow other high school students the same opportunity I have had in becoming college and career ready. Thank you again for your time. And I will go ahead and open it up to any questions you may have for me. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. Any questions? Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, thanks for being here. So you made a really good choice, but you've got to be hanging out with the friends that didn't do that. Why did you make choice and others didn't do you think? [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: My older brother actually took the career academy as well, and so I had seen the skills that he had learned and how it had benefited him. So that's why I chose to. My friends that have not taken it...frequently, I mean, they ask me questions in the classes that they're taking in the high school level that I've already taken through the career academy. And so it's just allowed me to help them with their coursework as well. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: So you find yourself an ambassador as well. [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: I do. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah, good. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Elisha, thank you very much for your comments. Where would you like to be in six years? [LB1106]

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ELISHA SCHEIBER: In six years. In six years, I hope to be in medical school at UNMC studying to become an ob-gyn. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And college plans, where will that be? [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: College before that will be at Concordia University next semester where I'll major in biology and hopefully Spanish and minor in chemistry. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Concordia here in Nebraska. [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: In Nebraska, yes. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: There's lots of Concordias. Thank you. [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: Yes. Sorry, I should have specified. (Laughter) [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you very much and good luck to you. [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: Yes, thank you. Thank you very much. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you and good luck. [LB1106]

ELISHA SCHEIBER: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Nick Cusick, N-i-c-k C-u-s-i-c-k. I'm founder and co-owner and CEO of a Lincoln-based manufacturing firm with about 200 employees. I'm here just representing myself and my company on an official basis, no organization. However, I'd have to say I'd like to think that I'm also representing a wide variety of employers in all sectors of our economy, not just manufacturing, who seek high-skilled, motivated, career, not job based employees coming into the marketplace. And I believe in my conversations with other employers over the past six years that I've had involvement and discussion of career academy-type of involvements, I think employers are desperately seeking that in Nebraska. I think I also speak unofficially on behalf of students, some of which are highly motivated like the girls that you heard from and some of which maybe are a little less motivated with the traditional high school pathways and the...and maybe weren't quite as career focused in their high school careers. Part of the opportunity may be getting into a career academy. I think I also speak for parents who end up bearing a lot of the cost of those kids who go to college for two or three years still trying to figure out what kind of career path might be the best opportunity for their long-term successful life. So I think I speak for them as

well. A little bit of my own history...of conversation about the career academies. I'm very familiar with the Lincoln Public School focus high schools. There's four of them. I had a daughter who went to the first focus high school in Lincoln. She was an all-A student in high school. As a sophomore she got very bored with school. And it was at the time that the science focus program started in Lincoln. There's subsequently been three other focus programs that have started. And my first involvement in the career...what is now the career academy concept was when I spoke with Susan Gourley who was then the superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools about a manufacturing-based focus high school, that I thought there was a lot of kids who would benefit from that type of program. That morphed into...when Steve Joel came on board here, that morphed into the broader-based career academy that we just passed a bond issue for. I visited EVIT which is the East Valley Institute of Technology which is a career academy type of a model that basically the Lincoln Southeast Community College model is being somewhat patterned after. I had the opportunity to be down there two different times. I was down there the first time and I guess I'd have to say I was blown away by the approximately 3,000 students that were in that facility. I went back a second time to introduce it to three or four more of my manufacturing friends who went down there with me. And I guess I was even more impressed the second time. And I'll tell you about a couple of stories that I did here. I also chaired Superintendent Steve Joel's subcommittee that ultimately led to the partnership with Southeast Community College and the successful bond issue that we did pass to do, among other things, the career academy. I've also spent numerous hours and had dozens and dozens of meetings with employers in and around Lincoln about the career academies and have fielded a lot of questions. And it has really kind of given me an insight to what employers are looking for out of a career academy. I mention the fact that there's a significant difference between a career and a job. I think many people view that as synonymous. Within my 200 employees, I'd like to think that every one of them that was there that had an opportunity to develop some concept of what they wanted out of a career when they got out of high school and then beyond. I can tell you out of 200 employees not all of them had that opportunity and many of them are there as a job. And I think they'd be way better off for it if they'd had an opportunity like career academies. I think it's very worthwhile that Chancellor Perlman has targeted getting 30,000 students to UNL by whatever year is the current moving target. Certainly I would never speak against four year and beyond college experience. I have an MBA from the University of Nebraska and it has served me well. I was given an opportunity to be on a panel where the title of it was Point-Counterpoint Liberal Arts Education versus Career Education. Ultimately, the four of us that were on the panel, two of us on each side, agree that it was not a point-counterpoint. They are not mutually exclusive. Certainly they are compatible with each other and it would be my belief that career education can be...walk lockstep with liberal arts education to give well-rounded kids. And I think generally speaking in Nebraska we have not done a very good job over history of introducing the career aspect of education as much as we have the liberal arts side of it. You know, I think it's a well-known fact and I think it's probably the same in many of the high schools across

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the state that LPS, Lincoln Public Schools, has a very high college-going rate. We do not have an exemplary college graduation rate. I think one of the reasons is kids get out of high school. They don't have a career focus. They go to school. They pay a couple years of tuition. They float around doing different things, changing majors a handful of times. And maybe that's not all bad for some students, but for many students the cost and the lost time is an issue. I would like to tell three stories about three students that I--and they'll be very brief--that I did. And is that my light? [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Not yet, but soon. [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Okay, thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Well, I guess it is. (Laughter) [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Now is my light. I anticipated. I'd like to tell three stories, and they're very similar. These happen to be three students that we met the two times I was down at EVIT, down in the Phoenix area. [LB1106]

SENATOR SEILER: Sir, just a second. The red light means you've got to stop. [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Oh, I'm sorry. [LB1106]

SENATOR SEILER: However, we get questions. May I have...I'll ask you the question. Tell us the three stories. (Laughter) [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Thank you very much, Senator. I misinterpreted the light. I anticipated but...thank you. It'll be brief. The first was a culinary arts student. We were in a classroom, a large classroom, about 150 kids I believe. That day they happened to be studying how to prepare veal cordon bleu; asked one of the students, what would you be doing if you were in your home high school? They were still connected to home high school, but they were in a class at this facility EVIT. She said, I'd be making chocolate chip cookies in home ec. That was as far as she could go in her home high school. The second student was a young gal who had been the captain of her high school basketball team as a junior. Her senior year she had taken all of possible courses she could take that had anything to do with science at here home high school. And she wanted to be a dentist. So she chose to quit basketball after playing since was age six. She had been the captain of her team and chose--so she's very motivated--to get more out of her education at an earlier age and get a good head start on her ultimately dentistry career. The third was a very inventive-type young gentleman, probably someone who might be the kind of person who would develop the best way to land on Jupiter at some point. But he had taken all the engineering-type classes that he could possibly take at his home high school and was studying robotics at the focus...at EVIT. You know, obviously my testimony doesn't specifically yet have to do with LB1106 and why LB1106. I think it's

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one small piece and one small financial commitment to help make sure all kids have the opportunity to have the best possible chance of transitioning from high school into college, into a career and to stay on the education bus as long as is practical for them. Every kid is not going to stay on the educational bus the same length of time, but I think it gives everybody the best opportunity no matter what your economic background is to stay on that education bus and ultimately have the strongest career possible. [LB1106]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. I have one follow-up question. Of your 200 employees, how of them do you think that didn't have a chance for the career path could have benefited? [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: You know, we're a very blue collar employee base. I would say probably somewhere in the third, in the...and of course many of them have...we have educational reimbursement opportunities for them. We have...in our engineering department we probably have at least four employees that I know of who started out as laborers in our facility but because they had motivation, because they like to work with their hands, ultimately went back either to Southeast Community College and/or...we have two right now that are going to the university who are started out in our plant... [LB1106]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: ...that are now engineers or becoming engineers. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: What more do you think we can be doing to start early with young people helping them identify the careers that they might be interested in? [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Certainly it doesn't start all of sudden magically as a junior in high school, although the career academies, generally speaking, the models that I'm familiar with seem to be that last couple years of high school. I think school districts have attempted through various required courses or speakers coming out of industry to come into classrooms and talk about careers. So those are certainly a positive thing. I think the biggest thing quite honestly from my perspective is to build a culture around career-based education, that it's okay to look at education from a career perspective, not just from an education for education sake. And it's okay for parents to have their kids go to a career center that might lead to whatever career path, whether it's physicians, whether it's dentists, whether it's med techs, whether it's welders, whatever that happens to be. And I think educators need to...I think there's evolution of...in many school districts, there's an evolution of educators at the high school and below level that understands that career education is a good thing. It's not a point-counterpoint, liberal arts versus career education. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB1106]

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SENATOR HAAR: Yeah. Well, thanks for being here. So one way you could look at establishing career education is to fix something the public schools aren't doing. But do you think there's an advantage of having a different place that kids go? I mean, is having this as an adjunct instead of a substitute for just what's going on in public schools? [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: You talking physically moving, geographically as in having a single location as opposed to... [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah, both. [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: ...in high schools or...? [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: I mean both. I mean like we've heard the kids are still in their own high school but yet they're going to some other location. So is that a good thing or should the public schools just be doing what these career academies are going to do? [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: You know, I'm certainly by no means an expert in the economics of education, but I suspect critical mass has a significant impact on what's practical about where and in what districts you could offer it in the high school versus combine it. In Lincoln, well, obviously we have a fairly good size significant mass. We think we can do more in a single location combining all that as opposed to having shop classes or whatever type of science classes, you know, that are a little bit more career focused within all the high schools independently. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Okay, great. Thanks. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB1106]

NICK CUSICK: Thank you. Appreciate the time. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB1106]

KEN SPELLMAN: (Exhibit 4) Good afternoon. I'm Ken Spellman with the Omaha Public Schools, and we're here to support LB1106. Ken, K-e-n, Spellman, S-p-e-l-l-m-a-n, and I brought way too much stuff for you guys to look at today. So I do apologize for that. I'll try to get through it as quickly as possible. I just wanted to update the committee a little bit about some of the things that we're doing in Omaha Public Schools regarding Career Education. The first document that I'd like you to quickly take a look at is this one right here. This is a road map that we kind of put together for kids. And we distribute this information at middle schools, high schools. Career counselors and others use this

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information, this document right here. If I could get you to turn to page 6 for example. These are all of the programs of studies that we offer in Omaha Public Schools in the area of architecture construction. You'll notice that we have introduction courses. Those are freshman-level courses. We have intermediate courses that might be a sophomore-, junior-level course. And then we also have a capstone course which is a senior level course on the top of page 6. You'll notice in the very next column is a postsecondary connection. We really strongly believe in dual enrollment, and we have dual-enrollment agreements with Metro Community College, University of Nebraska-Omaha, and then Creighton University. We also list our student organizations and activities. And so in this brochure, we've got 39 different programs of study that we've implemented in Omaha Public Schools, anything from law and public safety to meet some of the needs of our community members. Last year, we actually put in an agriculture, food, and natural resources system. As you're aware, one in three jobs out of the state of Nebraska is agriculture related. That program is on page 13. We'll have the largest FFA chapter in the state of Nebraska next school year at Bryan High School. And so our kids are real excited about it. They don't know much about agriculture, and we're sure learning. We've got ConAgra, Farm Credit Services. We've got some tremendous partnerships. Most of these programs of study in this booklet also have active advisory board members. We can't do this by ourselves, so we have engineers, software developers, health professionals that meet with us three to four times a year to discuss these programs and to review our curriculum. So the next document that I'd like to talk about is the dual-enrollment document or brochure here. This allows our students to earn credit while sitting at Benson High School, North High School, South High School and also college credit. Last year, our students saved \$77,000 in tuition going through the dual-enrollment process. We had 515 students participate. And we have over 30 different courses. On average, our students are walking out of Omaha Public Schools with 6...between 6 and 12 credit hours towards...of college. The majority of our agreements are with Metro Community College who have articulation agreements with UNL, UNO, and UNK so that way a student can choose between a two- and four-year, or six-year program. And we're always looking for additional opportunities in the dual-enrollment section. I've also included a brochure. We're pretty proud of the University of Nebraska Medical Center High School Alliance. This program is open to 21 participating high schools in the Metro area. And we have 10 school districts also, and they arrive at campus from 1:00 until 3:00. And they're taught by a handful of science teachers, but more importantly, physicians, researchers, doctors. And students will actually go on rounds and things like that with the students. So it's a pretty remarkable type of program that's housed at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The last bit of information that I have for you is we do have a career center in Omaha Public Schools. We average 725 students a year, and we have 14 programs at the career center. Our students are on campus for 90 minutes or so a day, and we run three different sessions. We provide transportation to all seven of our high schools. And these particular programs lead to either dual enrollment, certification, or some type of licensure. For example, we offer an emergency medical technician program where kids

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can get their EMT certificates upon graduation. We also offer a CNA program. It's a certified nursing assistant program in the district to help prepare kids for health careers. I went through that faster than I thought. Are there any questions? [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much for your testimony, Mr. Spellman. Tell me again what sort of financial support or aid you have for these students that are in the dual enrollment. [LB1106]

KEN SPELLMAN: Not a lot. Metro Community College has been a great partner, and we have a reduced tuition rate for \$25 for a 4.5 college credit class. And the gentleman that spoke earlier...we do have the Access College Early. That's the ACE Scholarship that we can have kids if they qualify for free and reduced lunch, and the majority of our kids in Omaha Public Schools do. We do have some grant funding. But for the most part the kids are coming up with the \$25 or are...UNO and Creighton tuition is a little bit more than that. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: So you already have a great program. And by the way I'm familiar with the magnet school at North High School which is really great. I've been there. So how is this bill going to help you? [LB1106]

KEN SPELLMAN: I think any type of additional funding that we can have for career education will help. Right now, the majority of our funding is through a grant. It's Carl D. Perkins grant that we receive, and most Nebraska schools do. And that's it. I mean, the schools help out as they can, but the majority of funding that we receive is based on a grant which is kind of scary because it fluctuates as well. We'll get increases and decreases for the most part in the last four or five years. We don't for the most part receive much district funding for career education. And I don't know if that's true through most of the schools. But I heard a reference on Oklahoma for example where there is funding through the state to help with the career academies and career programs. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Seiler. [LB1106]

SENATOR SEILER: Do you feel you're getting students that would normally fall through the cracks without this program? [LB1106]

KEN SPELLMAN: I do. We do. We have all kinds of success stories, especially when kids come through the career center. They just don't...they're impatient with their math. They don't understand science, but then they get to work with their hands in the culinary class, turn a wrench on a car. Not that these are dummy-type or dumbed down-type of courses. That's one of the cool things about dual enrollment. It increases the rigor in our

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career education courses. You come sit in one of our CAD courses. That's a college class. In order to be dual enrolled, we have to use Metro, UNO, or Creighton's curriculum. So it just kind of adds that extra bit of rigor for our classes. One of the things that I've seen in the 25 years or so I've been doing this, career education is a different animal than it was even when I was in high school. We're no longer in the bottom floor. We're no longer full of sawdust. We're producing engineers that go on to, you know, four to six, eight-year degrees. We're producing physicians and nurses and things like that. So in general, career education has taken a big leap as far as the rigor and relevance for our courses. [LB1106]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Spellman, for your testimony. [LB1106]

KEN SPELLMAN: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB1106]

JOHN NEAL: Hi, good afternoon. My name is John Neal, J-o-h-n N-e-a-l, and I represent Lincoln Public Schools. And good afternoon. Good afternoon, members of the committee. There's been some wonderful information shared about career academies in general, and so I don't want to repeat that information. It's very valuable and very important. But I would like to share just a brief story. When Lincoln Public Schools first thought about starting a career academy it was about two years ago. And we looked at it specifically as an effort to raise graduation rate. There was a large number of articles, lots of research about the impact career academies could have on students and how well they graduated. But we found through investigation that it had a much greater effect. Students involved in the three characteristics that Senator McGill had shared which is a career pathway that was recognized as important in their community, as an important economic vehicle for their community so the students would see that a future in that career is valued by their community combined with rigorous education. And then third, the dual-credit enrollment actually had students not only graduate high school at a higher rate. In fact, Nebraska Department of Ed identify students that are part of three course career sequence at graduating at 99.5 percent rate in Nebraska. But they also outperform their peers of similar skill when they went on to college both in GPA, credits earned, two-year degree completion, and four-year degree completion. So their work at the career academy not only helped with LPS's immediate goal which is graduation rate but also our community responsibility which is preparing students for their future beyond high school. And we saw a little bit of the importance of LB1106 when we were doing our research before we had decided to move forward with the concept or not. And we visited a career academy in Denver, Colorado. And we were sitting down talking to a round table of students. And our question to the students was, tell us if you think this will

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prepare you for college when you go on to college. And one of the young women that was there gave us a look that only I think a teenager can give an adult who asked a question that they think is stupid but that look. And her answer back was, I'm already in college, with that look on her face that...I don't even understand your question. Even though she hadn't graduated high school yet, she saw herself as a college student. She was no longer a high school student. And I think that's what's so critical. All the other components aside with the dual credit because for students, especially those students who don't have a family member or previous experience going to college, they don't have anyone to help them through that difficult transition that it takes to be successful in college. And dual credit while they're still in high school with their friends, their college counselor, their college teacher as they begin to develop a college mentor, they go through paying tuition the first time or buying a book or going to the bursar's office or something that helps them get through what it is to be college student. All of sudden before they leave high school, they are a college student. So when they go on to college and run into the first roadblock it doesn't result in them dropping out. They stay. They persevere, and they're successful. And the other piece that goes with that is they've self-selected a passion area, an area they're interested in that helps them develop. They might start in a career center as our young ladies described with a goal of being a CNA. But once they're there, they're around the students, they're around those mentors, then it might switch...I will be a licensed practical nurse. Well, then I might be a registered nurse. Well, I might get my bachelor's degree and want to be in management or leadership. Well, I might on and become a nurse anesthetist. All along that passion area because they learn as part of career academy that education isn't for one thing. It's for preparation for a career life. What LB1106 does is make that opportunity that that young lady had in Colorado to say, I am a college student, it makes it available to everyone regardless of their financial means. And I think that's the piece we're looking for because truly in our existing budget, in our existing TEEOSA I'm not sure where tuition and fees fits into that particular budget. The other parts of the career academy I think we can capture a lot of those in what we already do as I think Senator Kolowski had said. What would you already do? What's already there? But that's the one piece that is a little beyond us. And you can hear from Randy's testimony that at the start when it's small, maybe. But as it grows and grows, as people see the power of experience, the power, have the success, that's where the assistance is necessary and very much appreciated through something like LB1106. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thanks, Mr. Neal. What role do you think the counselor plays in all of this? And if there is a role to be played, which I'm sure there is, is that person stretched in providing the capacities? [LB1106]

JOHN NEAL: I think it's critically important. One of the examples that we spoke with was a principal in Hutchinson, Kansas. And they start their career guidance counseling in elementary school not to narrow student's focus but to broaden it to start see the whole world and all the possible careers that might be...give students lots of different hand-on

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experiences so they can start to see, what are my strengths? What do I like to do? Where do I like to work? What do I...what is the world of work? All the way back in elementary school so it doesn't become a heavy conversation late in the game, 9th and 10th grade. So then in middle school students start to have...if you remember middle school, you start to go to tech class and computer class and foods class, try things hands-on. And then the teachers can help the counselors by having those questions. So what you did today, what...did you like that? What did you like about it? Here are the different careers that could fit into that because I think we have to spread out that guidance part to lots of people in the building so that conversation happens in lots of places. So by the time the student is in eight grade getting ready to register for high school, they have purpose behind it. They have something they want to try out. And they might try out two career pathways. I can't tell you the number of times we heard about somebody who started in healthcare and the first time they had to draw blood no longer wanted to be in healthcare and wanted to be someplace else. But they have a plan, a strategy. And I think we can include that not only in the counselors but all throughout the system if we want it to be successful. And when we talked to schools there were successful, it wasn't just a counselor. It was, how is this built into all of the courses you offer, all of the conversations you have with students? [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Yeah, Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah. Well, I speak as one. I'm still not sure what I want to be when I grow up. (Laugh) So this is kind of a follow up to a question I asked earlier. Do you think that, for example, senior high school should start to look more like career academies, or is it important that there be this sort of different structure that some kids can fit into and others won't? [LB1106]

JOHN NEAL: When we were doing our research, we saw two dozen different ways to do it. And you heard an example earlier from SENCAP of how they're doing it in a broad range of schools. We've had some that have been separate standalone buildings on the same site, separate standalone buildings on a separate site, just every possible combination. And I think what you have to do is determine as a district or as a building, as a school, what is going to be the best delivery model for those three components: business and industry connection to your local industry--so maybe even it's a job site. I know Papillion is not here, but one of...they, like Omaha, also have an academy that's at a health facility where they have classes. So it could be at an industry space, school space, a combo space. You have to figure out what you can deliver and what best meets your needs. I don't think there's one right way. There are right components to include, and that's what you need to...how do we include those three components? [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Thanks. [LB1106]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LB1106]

JOHN NEAL: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB1106]

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, and I'm here on behalf of two organizations, first of all, the Nebraska Community College Association where I serve as executive director, and also for the State Chamber as I serve as the chair of the education committee for the State Chamber. We are here in support of LB1106. We are very, very supportive of whatever we can do to make career education a priority. We think it's really important that we start figuring out ways that we can get people younger and younger interested in careers and seeing what careers are available. And I think we've had some discussions here. How do we get more people into these careers? You know, like welding is one of them I think we've talked about before. And it's not that we don't have some capacity to do more welding classes and stuff, we just don't have enough students. We need to get more and more of those interested. And as you start looking at the high-demand careers as Senator McCoy talked about in his study, I think it's important that we start pinpointing some of those career and looking at how we can make our programs work better for those high-demand careers that we have out there. I think you've heard today how you can...there are lots of different ways to do career academies. I think Randy Nelson's testimony about all the different schools that they work with and the different methods they use to do career academies; I think this is something that could be beneficial to the whole state. And I would hope that we would continue to push career education. I think the career education part of it, the study that Senator McCoy talked about falls right in with your study, Senator Sullivan, on where education is going and what we want education to look like in the future. I think this certainly will play a part in that. And with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions if there are any. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Any questions for Denny? Senator Haar. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: How do you sort of deal with the kingdom issue? Okay, I mean you know, like now you have some people getting credit in high school that otherwise would have to come to Southeast or whatever community college and get their credits there. And then a university looks at this stuff, you know, the credits you're issuing that they can no longer issue. Is there any tension there between sort of the volume of students? [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: Well, I don't see any real conflict there quite frankly. I think that we all understand that we are really all in the business of doing what's best for students. That's

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the business that we ought to be in. And if it's best to do it this way for students and if this provides the state with the kind of workforce and stuff that they need then that's what we ought to do. If that's what's in the best...that should be in all of our best interests as to what's the best interest for students. And I think that's what we're all looking for here. I don't anticipate there being any big fights over that. I think that if you get those students started in a dual-credit course and they've experienced college, and I think as John Neal has said, once they start thinking like college students and they feel like they're part of a college. And then they know that they can deal with the work because the rigor is there. They can deal with college work. You're going to get more students interested in being in college which I think is important. And that should be important to all of us in postsecondary education. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Well, that's a great attitude that we probably have to remember sometimes. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: Yeah, I think so. I think we need to remind ourselves of that. [LB1106]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you very much. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, madam. Dennis, just as a thank you, watched the community college systems all over the country and especially in our state in the last many decades. What I see now taking place as far a credit accumulation and the dual-enrollment opportunities, UNO, UNL, different places that are...all these are opening up. And you know, there's no easier way to say it except that the taxpayers expect it. There's a flow, an easy flow with all this credit accumulation and granting and all the rest. And the students are the great benefactors of this. So I can't thank you enough for the move on behalf of all the community colleges in the state to see this happen. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: Well, I appreciate that. And I think that, you know, our colleges have really said, this is our job, to do what's best for students. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: And I think they always keep that in mind as they're working with students. And I think that's really positive. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: It wasn't always that way. It was difficult in the past. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: I understand that. [LB1106]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: We're at a better place. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: But I think it's better. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yes, very much so. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: And I think it's better throughout higher education quite frankly. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: Even in...you know, I've been at this job for about 20 years, and I've seen attitudes changes over these change over these 20 years... [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. [ LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: ...and change for the better. And in most cases it's been change looking at what is best for students. And we would all be in that business as to what's best for students. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. Appreciate that. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: All right. Thank you for your testimony. [LB1106]

DENNIS BAACK: You bet. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other proponent testimony? Welcome. [LB1106]

CARNA PFEIL: (Exhibit 5) Thank you. Senator Sullivan and members of the committee, my name is Carna Pfeil, C-a-r-n-a P-f-e-i-l, and I'm the interim director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. I'm going to be very brief. I just wanted to bring up a study that we did when we were talking about career academies and dual enrollment. And that was a piece of legislation that was passed in 2011, and it asked the commission to conduct a study to look at policies and practices for career academies and dual enrollment. As part of that study we found there were 6,000 students in Nebraska already involved in career academies. I'm sure that's more now, but two years ago that's how many we found. As you know, the commission administers the Access College Early program, and that pays for tuition and fees for students...low-income high school students to take college courses while they're still in high school. Some of the funds that are used for those dual enrollment are also used to pay for the dual enrollment that is in a career academy. So we have both of those. We also support the amendment that Senator McGill has provided. It helps clarify the role of the commission. We are confident that we could effectively administer this program

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because we have effectively administered the ACE program for about seven years. If you choose to move this forward, I would ask for one additional thing. And that is on page 3, line 24, we would ask that you add the commission to be able to adopt rules and regulations. We don't always use them, but it's nice to have that option so that if there's something that needs to be clarified, that that's something...that we have those rules as a process to do that. So with that, I thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (Exhibits 6 and 7) All right. Thank you, Carna. Any questions for her? Very good, thank you. Any other proponent testimony? I would like to read into the record that we have one letter of support for LB1106 from Jean Petsch, Associated General Contractors, Nebraska Building Chapter. And also I failed to indicate that were several letters of support for Senator McCoy's LB826. And they came from Carna Pfeil of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, Blake Flanders, the Kansas Board of Regents; Jean Petsch, Associated General Contractors; and Kristi Gibbs of Ralston Public Schools. Okay, now we will have any opponent testimony for LB1106. Anyone wishing to speak in a neutral capacity? Welcome. [LB1106]

JAY SEARS: (Exhibit 8) Thank you. Good afternoon. Madam Chair, members of the Education Committee, for the record, I'm Jay Sears, J-a-y S-e-a-r-s, and I'm here today representing the 28,000 members of the Nebraska State Education Association. NSEA is testifying today in the neutral position on LB754, LB826, and LB1106, and I intend to use the hearing on LB1106 as my testimony to cover the whole gamut of the career education issues except for LB1064 that comes up later. LB754, LB826, and LB1106 are all important concepts about career education and delivery of career education courses. They have a lot in common with LB682 and LB1077 which have already had a public hearing and LB682 as you know is out and scheduled for General File debate. So what do these bills have in common besides their focus on career education, you may ask. To NSEA, all these bills including LB682 now on General File would provide great topics for the visioning process that's contemplated in LB1103. Unlike the bills that have focused on early childhood education where there seems to be statewide consensus to get started before it's too late, career education, how Nebraska pays for it, and how schools deliver courses is not something Nebraskans have reached consensus about. NSEA would encourage the Education Committee and those who will take part in the vision process to bundle these issues and consider them in the discussions about the future of Nebraska and its education process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We'll see you later. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Sears. Any questions for him? Thank you. Welcome. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: (Exhibit 9) Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Sullivan and members of the committee. My name is Randy Schmailzl spelled R-a-n-d-y S-c-h-m-a-i-l-z-l. I'm president of the Metropolitan Community College, and I'm here to

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testify today on behalf of the college on LB1106 in a neutral capacity. Have you heard earlier in the testimonies by others, there's numerous ways that career academies are being offered in the state of Nebraska. And I'd like to bring to your attention that many years ago Metro started the career academy approach. And during 2013, we're going to operate 17 career academies for 153 students for 19 schools and also homeschools. It represents 14 school districts in our area and you been provided a list of the career academies and the districts that we are dealing with. We also have about 1,200 students out of the Omaha, Millard, and Papillion school districts in their career academies that take supplementary classes at the college. And we have over 2,000 students that take dual-enrollment courses. And one of the reasons we're in a neutral capacity is the difference between being in a career academy and being in a dual-enrollment course, I'm not sure what the definition of that is because we have many students that come to the college and take courses and we charge \$25 a course or \$145 for half credit. And I'm not sure they qualify for the tuition remission within the bill. So basically I have two questions. The Nebraska Department of Education is going to work on Rule 47. And I'm not sure...it's a brand new rule. I'm not sure what the rule is about. And we're invited to the gathering out in Grand Island so we'll find out more about that. But I'm not sure how that affects the high schools working with the community colleges because in our career academies, the ones that Metro provides, we set and work with the high schools to set the curriculum in place for opportunities for the students that normally would not be able to be offered in the high school. So for example, CNA classes and the such. You have a list there. The other thing is on the tuition, we've discounted tuition, as has Southeast because the students that we were dealing with really can't afford tuition. And so we're down to \$25 a class or \$145 a class. And many students go by the wayside. If you had to have the parents or significant other pay for this tuition up front, we're concerned about that. You know, it'd be better if somehow the State Department of Education of the Coordinating Commission worked with the colleges so it's a direct agency to agency payment instead of going through the parents. So I think that a consideration. And we did talk to John Neal in advance about that. And they're very aware of that. The other thing is grades. I think you've heard from the students today the fact that these courses are rigorous. And they're more rigorous than high school courses because they come out of a college curriculum base. And that is nothing to say, you know, against high school courses. But many of our students take a career academy at the college just to experiment on if they're interested in that. And many of our students in the health career academies find out that halfway into it, wow, I don't think I can deal with this close personal contact or this blood and all this. And I'm...I don't I want to do this. And that's a great learning experience to know that you're not wanting to get into nursing or into medical school because you found out about it this time. I'd hate to see the student not have their tuition paid for because of that. And also we do a lot competency teaching at the college and especially in the trades where, you know, your person that works on your brakes, I don't care what kind of grade they got. I want them competent in fixing my brakes, as competent as my medical doctor. And so sometimes the grades that a student receives might not be as good in the

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career academies as they would in high school. And it might not be a C. So I'd hate to see that that...we shut them out on any kind of tuition remission because of that. So with that, I would ask for any questions. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Randy. Any questions for him? [LB1106]

SENATOR DAVIS: I've got a couple. Can you elaborate on the payment, what you mean by that because I came in late? I might have missed some of this, but you said agency to agency. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: You know, in the way the bill is written which, you know, it gives the money to the student. Or, you know, the student pays up front. And then the student gets reimbursed from the state if they get a C or better. What I'm saying is that we may want to consider paying...have the Department of Education or the Coordinating Commission allocate the money directly to the community college so that no matter...you know, the community college is going to want their tuition payment before the course starts. And so that way if the course starts and the student is in the course past the drop date, no matter what grade they get, they're going to get...the community college or the four-year institution is going to get payment for that class. I think that's a cleaner easier way to make sure that the students aren't having to come up with the money up front, get a C, and then they end up not getting it paid for. And that's the reason Southeast discounts their tuition and the reason we discount our tuition because none of the students in high school get Title IV financial aid. They're not eligible for that. So we're always out digging up scholarship money now so. [LB1106]

SENATOR DAVIS: And they have to have a C in order to get it paid for. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Well, according to the bill. And I know there's been a lot discussion on that within the bill. You know, it was a C-plus, and then it went down to a C. And so ultimately I'm not sure what the grade does because if we went ahead and issued state aid to all high schools based on students that only got C or better, I think we'd have a little problem. And I just don't want the community colleges to fall into that category. I think that's a little unfair to the community colleges and to their trades because it's not about the grade as much as it is about competency and performance. And what you heard today earlier is students that have taken career academies at Southeast, they're going on to other colleges and universities. And that's the great thing about this, that students get interested in higher education go on to other colleges. And so that's the great part about this. [LB1106]

SENATOR DAVIS: And then you said, they may realize they don't want to be a nurse or whatever. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Yeah. [LB1106]

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SENATOR DAVIS: And you think that we should waive the tuition? I mean, is that...?  
[LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Well, I think if the student gets into the course and they don't do very well for whatever reason, they shouldn't have to be held to pay for the tuition because they didn't get a C. [LB1106]

SENATOR DAVIS: So is the community college willing to waive the tuition in that situation? [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Well, we collect the tuition up front no matter what grade they get. And so right now we're willing to waive tuition down to the \$25 a course level and also half tuition. So we've already done quite bit in lowering the tuition. And I do think within the bill they did a nice job about saying, if you get financial aid or if you get a scholarship, you know, that should be calculated. And so the state is only reimbursing the college for the actual money that it collected. So if the class is \$200 and I got \$100 scholarship, the college is only going to be reimbursed \$100 for that. So...and that's why I think agency to agency is important, so all that paperwork gets sent and audited.  
[LB1106]

SENATOR DAVIS: Gotcha, thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, madam. Randy, thank you for your time today and thank you being here and for your leadership at Metro. I want to just clarify something I thought I heard you say but I'm not sure. Did you say there was a problem with the students taking the academy programs and receiving credit compared to dual-enrollment assignments? [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: I'm not sure if there is a problem. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: You were asking the question. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: What I should have said...that's my question. Is there a problem because we have many students that are not in an academy but...in fact, one of Millard West's recent graduates is also graduating from Metro at the same time. And so I'm not sure how those classes fit into the career academy because they're maybe not under that curriculum. So the word "dual enrollment" was thrown around a lot today. And I just want to make sure that if we're talking about just career academy enrollment, you know, it may mean that the high school is giving credit for that. It may not mean that the high school is giving for that because... [LB1106]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I'd like to see that as inclusive as possible. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: And that's the question. You know, let's...if we're going to work on this, let's make sure we get it done the right way so it is inclusive, Senator. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you very much. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Exactly. [LB1106]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB1106]

RANDY SCHMAILZL: Thanks. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other testimony in a neutral capacity? Do you suppose...would you like to close for Senator McGill? [LB1106]

RACHEL MEIERS: No, I'm sure she'll get in touch with the committee. [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB1106]

RACHEL MEIERS: (Inaudible). [LB1106]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. Very good. All right, this closes the hearing on LB1106. We'll move on to LB754. And I'll just mention as Senator Smith is coming up that we will take a break after this hearing is completed. Welcome, Senator Smith. [LB1106]

SENATOR SMITH: (Exhibit 1) Thank you, Madam Chair. And good afternoon. Good afternoon, members of the Education Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. My name is Jim Smith, J-i-m S-m-i-t-h, and I represent the 14th Legislative District in Sarpy County. And I'm here this afternoon to introduce to you LB754. Simply put, LB754 promotes the trades in education, and it supports our young people in that it gives them the option to follow a trade career. You know we have a great need in our state for young people to choose the trades as a career path. And this bill provides more resources for them to be able to make that decision and make that decision more easily. LB754 would allocate from the Education Innovation Fund to the Department of Education \$1 million in fiscal year 2014-2015 and another \$1 million in fiscal year 2015-2016. The department would use these funds as grants to school districts to assist those districts in evaluating their career education programs and to improve those programs in order to align them with the state's economic and workforce needs. The

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Department of Education already has the structure for this effort in place through an innovative program it started called reVISION; reVISION helps participating school districts evaluate their current career education programs, partner with community businesses, and come up with an action plan to ensure the program helps educate and train a workforce that is relevant and economically beneficial to Nebraska. These funds...the funds requested in LB754 would be awarded as grants to qualifying districts to assist them in carrying out the action plan. It is my understanding that there will be an excess of between \$4 million and \$5 million in the Innovation Fund. And so this is not taking funds from other recipients. I also understand there are other proposals out there that want to tap into this money. Although I am sure all those programs have merit, I would encourage you, I would impart to you that it is time, it is past time for this date to make a real investment in career education. We have an opportunity before us. Last session, the Legislature adopted LR285 introduced by Senator Lathrop and Senator Ashford, who by the way I want to thank for signing on to this bill, and also Senator Haar, a member of your committee, has signed on to this bill. LR285 called for a study of Nebraska's career education programs in public schools. The Research Triangle Institute was hired to conduct a study which was released in December. The study points to the reVISION program as an example of a strong education-workforce partnership. However, that same study also notes that Nebraska does not currently provide funding for career education programs at the K-12 level. You will see in a support letter that you received from Burwell superintendent Dan Bird that Kansas has appropriated \$40 million to a similar effort. And South Dakota will be investing \$8.5 million. But Nebraska does not provide any funding. LB754 simply asks, only asks for a mere \$2 million over a 2-year period. While I believe it is important to promote the traditional four-year college degree--I certainly am a benefactor of that as is my wife--we encourage the children to have a choice, to have an option before them. I believe career education is an equally important component of the education experience, just as important as a two-year or four-year college degree. As the LR285 study acknowledges, successful career education programs increase student achievement. It lowers dropout rates. It prepares students for further education and careers, and it promotes economic development by providing business and companies with a skilled workforce. This is simply another opportunity that we want to provide to our children. I do want to mention that I intend to request the Speaker to consider making LB754 a Speaker priority. But neither would I be opposed if the Education Committee saw fit to amend the provisions of the bill into the committee's priority bill, LB967. I think it'd be a perfect match. So with that, I will entertain any questions you have. And I appreciate your listening to me. You know that this has been an area of passion for me. I believe that the trades are something that we really need to promote in our state. I think it provides a great opportunity to our young people. It can provide a great livelihood, great income. And many of these children that choose to go into the trades become entrepreneurs. Many of them return to college and continue to get that education. So this is not a throwaway piece of legislation. This is something that we can do to develop our children and provide greater economic opportunities in our state. Thank you very much. [LB754]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Smith. Senator, the superintendent you referred to, Mr. Bird, is in my district. So I received that letter. But can you tell me a little more about this...is it the reVISION program; how much those grants were and where the money came from to provide the grant dollars? [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: I believe that there will be some people that follow me that have some of that information at their disposal. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: And I'm going to hopefully see them, provide that information to you. If not, I will certainly include that in my closing to you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And in your legislation proposed you indicate the \$1 million each year but don't specify how the grants should be distributed and to what level. And so do you have any designs on how that should work? [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: I do not have designs on that. I do believe that there's some opportunity for developing that. I do believe there's a platform already in place to build off of for determining how those funds are allocated and what purposes they're allocated. I simply want to get the ball rolling and make those funds available for the purpose of career education development. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Any other questions? [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: I have some questions. You have...go ahead. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: Just one question. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Go ahead, Senator Cook. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Senator Smith, for bringing this legislation. We had a brief conversation this morning about maximizing opportunities for our students. In a previous life, I did career education with high school students and even as people as tiny as kindergartners. And what we ran into sometimes, especially with the achieving high school students is that they would say, and their parents would say, that's fine for the other student in the classroom or in those other classes, but my kid is going to Harvard. Or my kid is going to a four-year university. Do you have any thoughts on that that you'd like to offer how you get over that? [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: It's a crying...yeah, yeah. [LB754]

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SENATOR COOK: It's almost a stigma. [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: Thanks for bringing that up. It's really a crying shame frankly that we look at it as a society like that when the fact of the matter is many of the children that pursue a trade education will end up after their certification making sometimes twice what they would make coming out of a four-year program, college program. I think we need to change that mind-set. And I'm not certain how we do that other than increasing the exposure earlier on to the children and hopefully also to the parents and getting it across to them that it may be the valedictorian that wants to pursue a career education or the trades. I don't...please don't take this the wrong way, but I say this many times when I speak to chambers of commerce. Oftentimes, we treat the people in the trades or that are pursuing the trades as losers, that they cannot pursue a four-year college education. And that's not true, not true at all. So we have to change that mind-set in our school system, in our community. And I think part of it is exposing the children and the family at an earlier age, maybe middle school, maybe at elementary school level, that there are great opportunities out there in the trades. So thank you for that question. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you, Senator Sullivan. And great question, Senator Cook. I've always said one of the problems was...as a school board member and as I think all schools in the state are in the same boat. We push toward the four-year degree. That's where we've always thought our kids ought to be. And we need to rethink that. And a lot of that has to do with how the trades have changed in the last 40 years. It used to be kind of a dirty job. Now it's quite a high-tech job. But my question was, you talked about Kansas and South Dakota. Do you know what they've done and how they've implemented their programs? [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: Senator, I do not. I do not have the specifics of that. I can certainly find more about those studies and what they have done to implement those programs. It's more of a matter of the quantity of expenditures that they've invested in this area that I want to bring to your attention. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: I think that would be helpful. Then the other question I have, he talks...your superintendent from Burwell talks about...the reVISION dollars will help schools invest in obtaining the equipment to better prepare students to enter the workforce. A lot of equipment in our schools is outdated and simply needs to be updated. Do you know what he's referring to specifically there because I couldn't find anything like that in your bill? [LB754]

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SENATOR SMITH: In terms of what specifically the expenditures will be for. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Well, he's talking about buying new welders and things. [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: It could be. These are supplemental expenditures. So it does not necessarily satisfy that the compensation for the educators or those pieces of equipment that are part of the school to begin with. It's simply...I mean you think about, you're splitting \$1 million across a number of school districts. It's going to be a fairly small grant, but it's a small token of what we need to be doing in providing these programs, these certified programs with some of the minor tools that they need to have those programs in place. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: I would hate to encourage people into thinking that there was going to be money for hardware. [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: Right. I mean, you have to think in terms of it; that amount of money being spread across the state, the individual grants could be fairly small. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: A thousand dollars. [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: Yes. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Will you be here for closing? [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: Yes, I will. Thank you for your questions. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. We'll now hear proponent testimony. Welcome. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: Good afternoon. Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, for the record, my name is Richard Baier, B-a-i-e-r. I appear before you today on behalf of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry and also the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce. I want to thank Senator Smith for his continuing passion for this topic and for the work that you're talking about doing as a committee in terms of long-term visioning for Nebraska's education. As many of you know, I've spent the last couple of years at the Chamber looking at long-term competitiveness issues for Nebraska. And we really keep coming back to about three or four areas. And two of those tend to be education and workforce. And so we've spent a lot of time looking at that, and as you know our unemployment rate is both a blessing and a curse in Nebraska. We're fortunate we have most of our people working, but it's also a curse that many of our

employers are struggling to find people with the right skill sets to meet their needs in a global economy. I think what we're talking about today is a step in the right direction. And I wanted to share with you the excitement that we have for building this partnership because it isn't often that education and business can get to come to this committee and share a vision for something that's really about building for the next generation. So it's a great opportunity to do that. I also just wanted to share with you, because there's been a couple of questions today and a lot of comments about, how do the schools handle that with the kids. And I happen to have a senior in high school and an 8th-grader. And I just wanted to share with you a couple of experiences and how I think this whole discussion needs to be changing. I am fortunate my high school senior is a really bright young man who wants to be a medical doctor much like the ladies that were here earlier today. But I would also tell you he likes to work with his hands. He has a construction job during the summer and he likes to get dirty and do all of those other things. He recently had an opportunity about a year ago to try and do his scheduling. And I physically had to walk myself to the high school to make sure he could get enrolled into a construction class because the guidance counselor and the teacher both said, no, you don't need that. You're going to be a doctor. And so again, I think this whole conversation as we begin to turn the dialogue about, how do we do a better job with this topic is important. The other thing I would tell you is as my kids have grown up, I've had a chance to--and I still do--spend a lot of time with teenagers in my house. And it's not uncommon to have six or eight of them that's in my house eating me out of house and home out of my refrigerator. But one of the things that concerns me and one of the things I think is important to us as we prepare for the next generation is begin to think about those 30 or 40 percent of the students who really don't have a vision for their future. And many of them know that they may not go to college. But I don't know that we've always given them a clear path. And so as I've talked to these young people, I've really been trying to encourage more of them to think about a technical trade and a technical skill as a career path like many of the folks have mentioned today. So I think what you're talking about today with Senator Smith's bill is a down payment, a small one, what we need to be doing in terms of career education and also in career and technical training. So we want to work with you to leverage the state's resources and to better prepare our students for both the careers and the opportunities that face them in the future. With that, I'd be happy to take any questions. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Richard. In your work on the future... [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: Forging Nebraska's Future. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Yes. Do you think that Nebraska is still experiencing a significant brain drain? [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: You know, if you look at the data for several years, Senator, we didn't. We went about a three- or four-year period where we were keeping more of our

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highly educated people than we were losing. Last year was the first time that flipped back again. I think that's an indication maybe that the jobs are coming back in some of the metro areas and some of the kids are seeing that opportunity to run to Denver or Chicago or Dallas. The other thing that I see as I travel the state, and I don't have the numbers to back it up, but what I do sense is in places like Ord that there are a lot of young families coming back to Nebraska. And I think there are people that...the "boomerang-ers" that have left and we need to bring them back home to be part of our solution in Nebraska. There's also some other things we need to be doing. We're actively targeting military veterans. And so it's a chance...part of the reason I've got to see this committee three times this year, which I've never done in my life. So I think there's lots of pieces to that puzzle to help us not only reverse the brain drain, but make sure we're making strategic investments in growing the state's population and workforce. I think for a lot years we've looked at how do we have policy to protect what we have. And our policy needs to make that transition to how are we going to grow in the future. And that ought to be our first level or kind of criteria on that process. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, very good. Senator Seiler. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: What program has the State Chamber and the Omaha Chamber set up for working with the career path? Do they have an advertising program? Do they have speakers going to the schools and talking about the program? [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: We do. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Tell us what you're doing for the program. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: Be happy to. There's a couple things we're doing. Our board members have been encouraged. Number one, we're supporting legislation, a lot of the career academy legislation and things over the last few years. But we are actively encouraging, our board members in particular, to go out and go to their local schools. We just hosted Manufacturing Day, for example, and made a big push with our members to get into their local schools. Our current chairman, Chris Roth who is the CEO at Reinke Manufacturing in Deshler...Chris has been very active encouraging other board members to get engaged in the schools. One of the things that I have an appreciation with what Chris has been able to do, he physically on his calendar meets with his superintendent of schools monthly to talk about issues in their community. And so there is a very active partnership. And we've also been trying to bring in some national speakers. Had a chance...at our annual meeting we brought in some folks from D.C. to talk about career readiness skills and had a chance to have both Senator Scheer and Senator Sullivan have breakfast with them. So again, trying to continue that dialogue with our education partners and our education friends. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. [LB754]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Cook, did you have a question? [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: I did, but it's really more focused on our...I'll go ahead and ask it. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, fine. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Sure. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: As I look at the bill, I do recognize that it is related to students, high school students. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: Um-hum. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: But when you talk about our low unemployment, my mind automatically clicks to our endemic 12 to 20 percent unemployment in parts of east Omaha. And this doesn't seem like a tool to address that issue, but perhaps you can offer another example of how the State Chamber, the Greater Omaha Chamber is addressing that issue. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: Well, across the hall right now they just heard a bill to increase job training funding to try and support job training projects in high-poverty areas. We've also been active in supporting the internship program as a way to try to get young people both at the community college and college levels into Nebraska businesses so that they can make that connection and recognize those opportunities here and sort of again sort of build that culture of success. [LB754]

SENATOR COOK: Okay, thank you. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: You bet. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Richard, are there any corporate entities that are members of the chamber or...either chamber that are helping with tuition assistance and things for students who might be interested in doing something like this? [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: You know, there are a few. I would tell you a lot of them do it through scholarship programs. And so we're having a lot of conversation both in the corporate

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community and the philanthropic community about what should those scholarship programs look like in the future. One of my concerns and when in the research, we found when I was going through the Forging process is we had an awful lot of folks giving scholarships to students who left the state after they graduated from either community college or the college. Well, that's a pretty bad business model to be quite honest with you. If you're in private business, that model doesn't work so well. And so we've got people reevaluating that. The other thing I would tell you that our members are doing is much like Nick Cusick mentioned before is sort of that education of their existing workforce. A lot of our members get very, very engaged in that process. And then a lot of the folks are working with their community foundations to sort of do come-home campaigns through a tuition assistance down payment. So I think there's two or three different areas where our folks are getting very engaged in that conversation. And I guess I've been involved in the Nebraska business community for 20 years, and I feel better about the engagement we've had the last couple years than we've had in those first 18. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: I think we're doing a better job. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB754]

RICHARD BAIER: Thank you, Senator. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: (Exhibit 2) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. I am Rich Katt, R-i-c-h K-a-t-t. I'm with the Nebraska Department of Education. I'm the state director for Nebraska career education here to testify as a proponent both on behalf of the department and the State Board of Education. I've prepared some written testimony, but I want to spend...just kind of maybe veer from that a little bit and talk a little bit about the reVISION process that we implemented. We're enjoying an unprecedented kind of attention in Nebraska's secondary schools with career education over the last few years. One of the needs that continued to come forward as we were working with schools was the need for a very strong evaluative process to take a look at course offerings, what were the schools currently offering, what their success rate is, how their career guidance is working, so we created a year ago a process we call reVISION. And if you notice, it's a little R with a lot of emphasis on the "vision" because it is about looking towards the future. We developed this process in collaboration with the Department of Labor and Department of Economic Development so that it would have a strong look towards where Nebraska's workforce and economic priorities are. And where our programming should be going in terms of career education on the secondary level. So as we put this program together, we piloted it last year in year one. The funds for this project came out of our federal Carl Perkins dollars that we have and part of that legislation called state reserve. The state reserve

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allows us to pull back about \$500,000 that we can use for innovative projects. This fell within that definition. So we used that money this last year--or part of that money anyway--to fund the first year of reVISION. We paid for the cost to the schools, of the 13 schools that went through the process, that meaning some substitute pay while teachers met and talked about their curricular offerings, met with our staff for community engagement meetings where they brought in local business and industry. So there was a part of that dollars paid for that cost. And then at the conclusion of the process, and you can see on the back of this little flyer, it's a five-step process, the school had the opportunity to prepare what we call the reVISION action grant. So that was an opportunity for them to apply for a grant. And we had a small amount of money left over in that year. I think it was about 200...I think I have it in here. We had \$500,000 set aside to do that for this coming year. We had about \$290,000 left that we could send out in grants. And now the grants had some restrictions to them. First of all, they had to be based on what they heard through the reVISION process. So very clearly, what did the community say? What...how was the analysis of their career guidance system? What did their career programming look like? It also had to align with Nebraska's workforce priorities--high-skill, high-wage, high-demand jobs--and on Nebraska's economic development priorities. So taking a look at, how do we retool our career technical education programs in this state to make certain that the instruction we're providing in high school leads those students to a family-sustaining wage jobs, and that it is in alignment with postsecondary education. So we also asked our postsecondary partners to be a part of this evaluation process. When we were done with year one, we received a little over \$1 million in requests for that approximately \$300,000. The money that was requested was really built a lot around retooling. Senator Davis asked about equipment. That was one of the areas where they needed to maybe make a shift because of the local economy. They needed to be preparing workers in a different way, in a different area. So there was some equipment purchased. There was some money that was allocated around career guidance. We've had a lot of conversation today about, how could be more effective K-12, not just junior high, not just high school, but K-12 in terms of an effective career guidance program, some of it around professional development of teachers. They needed to learn a new skill in order to be able to teach effectively in that classroom. So those are the kinds of examples of how that money was allocated. We did proceed with year two. And you can see a list of 14 districts that were brought on board this year. Between those districts, although that doesn't sound like a lot of districts, it is a lot of student body. We're almost at about 50 percent of Nebraska's student population. We'll be in a school district that has gone through the reVISION process. So with the action grant coming on board, we're allowing year one schools to reapply and year two. We know we're going to have a significant shortfall of dollars that schools need for the reVISION process. I also have a list of schools that are waiting for us to open the opportunity to be a part of year three. So schools are calling. Superintendents have had a lot of conversations with school administrators looking forward to this opportunity because it is unique. It is something that a school typically in a career ed program, they kind of offer what they offer because they've always offered

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it. This was the first time we really took a serious look at the curricular offerings, its alignment with business and industry, an alignment with Nebraska's workforce needs, and our economic priorities. So we're very proud of the process. We're thankful for Senator Smith for his leadership and looking at the possibility of some additional funding to help schools retool. Be open to any questions. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Rich. Well, the...so you're using Carl Perkins funds for the reVISION. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Right. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Carl Perkins funds have been around quite a long time. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: They have. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Do you anticipate them continuing to be used for this reVISION-ing process with even more schools? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: We do. The problem is we're limited. That's a cap of...\$500,000 is the most we can do. The Perkins funds, as you know through federal reductions and sequestration, we are now receiving the same amount of money we did in 1998. So the state has been cut significantly in terms of federal dollars being invested in current technical education. I wish I could say the money goes as far in 2014 as it did in '98. It does not. So that's as much as we have to spend. And we know that...you know, and so we're kind of in a critical moment to know whether we proceed with this process. I know that the process is solid. But I also know that if a school comes up with a whole list of what they need to do and don't have the resources to make the changes, it's kind of a point of frustration for them. So we're kind of at a critical point to think about. So we do have the \$500,000 in federal dollars that we are allocating to the process, but that pays for the reVISION process and for the action grant. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And is it fair to say that certainly Carl Perkins funding has helped in this process but also previous career and technical education programs? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: It... [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: However, career and technical education has been around for a long time in addition to what Carl Perkins funding has provided, is that correct? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Absolutely. You know, nationwide we talk about...and it's probably true in Nebraska. Perkins, federal Perkins dollars, usually pays for something around 7 percent of the cost of current technical education in this country. So it's a very minimal,

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it's a one billion dollar investment at the federal level across the entire nation and all of our territories. So it's a pretty limited funding from the federal level to support. That's why a majority of states...Nebraska is one of eight states that does not provide state funding for career and technical education. Majority of states have provided some additional dollars. You had some questions earlier. South Dakota just put in place a very similar program. They don't have the reVISION side, but they have a grant program that schools can apply for. And they had \$8.5 million in that program. The Kansas program that was talked about earlier, they have a 1.5 percent in their state aid formula for those career and tech ed courses that count. The courses that count have to go through a rigorous approval process to make sure that they meet the standards that they need to meet. But then...so then they get that bump. But then there's also dollars that helps offset the cost of postsecondary education. And for every high school student that earns an industry certification in Kansas, the school gets \$1,000 bonus. So they've put a lot of emphasis...and this just all in the last two years that this has been put in place. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: So while we may not as a state provide direct funding for this, many schools across Nebraska have developed fairly extensive career and technical education programs that then ultimately, through their general fund operating expenses, we help support as a state. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: That is correct. We do not have categorical funding. We do support career and tech ed like we do every other course through the state, through TEEOSA, and etcetera. That is correct. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, very good. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Right. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Senator Kolowski. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, madam. Rich, good to see you this afternoon. Thank you very much for coming. On this map here, what are the zones, and how are they divided? It looks like there's about 19 different zones in the state. Is that...? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Those are Educational Service Unit areas. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ESUs. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Right. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you very much. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: I think we just use...I don't know why we used that. Year one we

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worked...we were going to try and work through the service units to kind of regionalize. And in year two, we opened that up recognizing that the service units' plate was very full and they didn't need one more thing added to that. So they're still a partner. We meet with the service units, we meet at the service units many times when we do our reVISION work. So that was the reason why it's on there. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis, did you have a question? [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Well, a little bit of a follow up to his question. When I looked at the map I thought it must be the ESUs that are doing the promoting of it because for the second year you've got lots of points in certain ESUs and none in others. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: They've done a great job of promotion working with schools and identifying those schools that significantly need the assistance. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: What kind of...you talked about equipment. What kind of equipment are you talking about that's going in? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: I know in Beatrice, for example, was one of our reVISION schools early on. They had eliminated their welding program a number of years ago. And because of reVISION and because of the community need in that area, they reimplemented their welding program. And that's a program collaboratively done with Southeast Community College. So that was an example of part of what they did. Scottsbluff did...theirs was around manufacturing, upgrading equipment so that it was representative of the equipment that students would utilize in the manufacturing area around...in that area. So those are examples of that kind of thing. So for the most part it's high-dollar equipment that a normal school budget would struggle to be able to purchase. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Has there ever been an effort made to let's just say talk to Linweld to say, look, we're going to be training people in this business, will you help us replace these welders and things to stretch your money? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: We've had some of the conversations. In fact, one of the...we work with the industry councils that the Department of Economic Development has started, and they've been a great asset in this process. The manufacturing council actually brought up and said...asked if we would support a piece of legislation that would provide some kind of a tax incentive for donating equipment to schools. And so that's a little bit out of our realm of responsibility at the Department of Education, but it's an interesting idea. [LB754]

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SENATOR DAVIS: I think that's a good idea. Any means testing for this funding as far as you know. I mean, does the \$1.05 or the levy doesn't play into this at all? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: That's correct. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: And then the last question, I'm very interested in what you're talking about. If you've got any documentation on the Kansas and the South Dakota cases, I'd certainly like to look at that. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Absolutely, absolutely, I'd be glad to provide you. We've collected over the last couple of years in particular many state models of how states have supported trying to kind of craft a white paper if we will about what would work in Nebraska. You know, we have some geographical challenges. We have some interesting challenges that I think will require some pretty careful thought about how we proceed with funding of career education. One of my concerns on the career academy side is what we do for rural schools. You know, I mean it's one thing to develop a career academy in Grand Island or Lincoln or in Omaha. It's another thing when you're in Burwell or you're in Cody-Kilgore. And how do we provide a meaningful career academy-type experience for those students? And we haven't solved that yet, but we're going to. We're going to be the first state to do that. (Laugh) [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: It looks to me in the letter from the superintendent in Burwell that there's some talk of entrepreneurship and things that goes on which I think is a huge part of trying to revitalize rural Nebraska. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Absolutely, right. It's an important part of the reVISION process is we talk about entrepreneurship, where is it in the curriculum, what kind of exposure students have to entrepreneurship. You know, and so...and same thing with work-based learning. We know that we have...nationwide we have the lowest percentage of students working today that we've ever had since World War II. So a lot of students do not have any kind of exposure to the world of work until they graduate from high school or even college. I can tell you a lot of stories from HR people that we've talked about college graduates coming in and they've never held a job. They have some rather unusual expectations about the world of work. (Laugh) So we're looking at all of those factors because we know it's important that students get an exposure to work early on, that they really get into the situation. It's one thing to take a course or to read about it in a book. It's another thing to get in a hospital or to get in the manufacturing plant. And we know we have OSHA rules and HIPAA rules and all those things to work through. But we're going to look for opportunities. One of them is our Nebraska career tours that we have in partnership with the Department of Labor and Economic Development. We are producing little ten minute videos of Nebraska businesses. And we have...we're doing by career cluster, we have manufacturing done, information technology. And they're great because they can show them in the classroom. And you can go into Hudl down

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here in Lincoln and they talk with people about, what does it take to work here? What kind of education? You can go to transportation distribution. We have Werner. We have Cash-Wa out of Kearney. So we're trying to do statewide, try to show a lot of different companies. And so students can actually see what it looks like inside MetalQuest in Hebron, Nebraska. And that you can...it's so clean it's unbelievable. They can't believe it's a manufacturing plant because they still think of the dirty manufacturing. So we're looking at any opportunity like that that we can do, that we can leverage some dollars even between our three agencies together to figure how to make that work has been really valuable for us. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay. Any other questions? Senator Seiler. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Well, this is part of the problem which you just touched on was OSHA, which is a federal law, which you have no and we have no control over. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Absolutely. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: We've taken away the jobs on construction during the summer that people my age worked on during the summer. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Right. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: And you can't be on there now unless you're 18. You can't work in the back room hamburger store if they've got a meat cutter there. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: That's right. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: It just goes on and on and on. And we shot ourselves in the foot. [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Yeah, right. We are going to sponsor a work-based learning summit in May where we're going to try and bring together some of the best minds from business, industry, HR, and education just to talk about, so let's get creative. Besides the tours, besides the videos, what else could we do to expose young people to all the career opportunities so that they...at least if they're interested in exploring a career, they can go someplace and see something that's relevant. It's been interesting on the career tours how many young people have said, well, we drove that building all the time but I never what they did in there. And then they get to go in and watch BD in Columbus and see what that's all about inside that manufacturing plant. So there are some benefits. And that's a small token, but I agree with you, Senator. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you. [LB754]

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RICHARD KATT: It makes it difficult. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB754]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, well for example, in Germany kids are separated out early. And some go totally into career for the rest of their education. Some go into academics. And we seem to have gone for a while thinking everybody ought to go into academics. Where do you think we're headed? I mean, where's the good fit there? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: My hope is we no longer have a line. That was, we prepare young people, everybody. We need to quit thinking about, you're just going to go to college. College is simply one more step on your way to a career. You know, everybody needs to be thinking about what they want to do as a career. And we still have a lot of attitude out there that all we need to do is get our students into college and they'll be just fine. Well, we know that college-going is one thing and college completion is a totally different statistic. One of the things that we've looked at from a research perspective is, what happens to students who go in that are undeclared or that don't have at least an area of focus? Don't pick a job, but pick an area of focus. I love science, or I love business or something that engages their passion and their skill set. And if we can get students to that point in time and then have them pursue the appropriate postsecondary education that is required for the career. You know, a four-year degree in my era was a magic ticket. It didn't even matter what I majored in. If I had a college degree, I knew there were jobs waiting. And that's not true anymore. Employers tell us over and over again they're more concerned about knowledge and skill then they are even the diploma. They want to know what you know and what you can do and you better be able to produce with employability skills, that you show up to work on time and you accept responsibility and all those things. So that's all part of the package we're trying to work on. [LB754]

SENATOR HAAR: Do you see a career path for people who want to be a legislator or a... [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: We'll talk later. (Laughter) [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? [LB754]

RICHARD KATT: Any other questions? [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Rich. [LB754]

RICH KATT: Thank you for the opportunity. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB754]

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KEVIN REIMAN: Thank you. My name is Kevin Reiman; it's K-e-v-i-n R-e-i-m-a-n. I'm the superintendent at Auburn Public Schools. And we are in the first...round one of the reVISION, so I'm hoping I can answer some of your questions. Obviously, we're here in support of LB754. We strongly believe in its purpose and the potential good it has for students in Nebraska. Auburn is located about an hour southeast of Lincoln. We have approximately 850 students who attend our school district in pre-K through graduation. As with the vast majority of schools in Nebraska and across the nation, our focus after the past several years has been on core academic areas. So we're talking reading and writing and math and science. No Child Left Behind and the state STARS and NeSA testing have been a driving force in ensuring we meet the benchmarks in those subject areas. This focus has left many of the vocational areas behind. It is not that we do not value these courses, but our professional development time has been spent in these core areas. I think one of the largest criticisms of No Child Left Behind is that very thing. So while we have made significant gains in our core academic areas, our vocational courses have been left to the dedicated teachers who work in those areas. At Auburn, we felt like we needed to address these vocational areas, so we applied for the Perkins Innovation grant through the Nebraska Department of Education. The Perkins Grant as you've heard, funds the reVISION program. Through this reVISION program, we have rewritten or are in the process of reviewing and rewriting our school's curriculum. After reading the materials and the goals, we felt like this was a perfect match for us. And now we're about six months in, and I'm happy to report that we are extremely pleased with the process. Last fall, we did a complete audit of our vocational courses. We brought this data to Lincoln and met with the NDE experts and talked about the possibilities reVISION has for our community. Our staff was very excited about the reVISION process and what it could do for our students and community. The next step was to gather public input. So we sat down with local leaders and stakeholders in Auburn and we asked them, what's your vision for Auburn and what particular career fields do you feel like we need to be focused on? We wanted to know how Auburn Public Schools can play a leading role in helping them fill their workforce. And what we found from the meeting, there were five key areas. None of these are going to surprise you. Agriculture came out at the top; health careers; manufacturing; business, especially focused on entrepreneurship; and energy generation. All of these are major career areas in Nemaha County. We felt like we had some of the structure in place to deal with four of these. We have Nemaha County Hospital, and we do some things with them. We have Ariens manufacturing. We have several local businesses. And with energy generation, we have Cooper Nuclear within our district. However, the one thing that we knew going in was that Auburn did not have an ag teacher, and it's been a glaring need for several years. So using this data and with the support local leaders, we brought this information to the school board. And I'm happy to report, the January meeting the board voted to add an ag program to Auburn Public Schools. We are still a long way from our final vision. We continue to work with staff to bring in...and how we can change our curriculum. However, we are heading towards a vocational program

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that will have career pathways in several areas. These pathways will include an introductory course, an intermediate course, and a capstone course. Partnering with NDE, our local businesses, stakeholders, and with postsecondary education, we hope to fulfill these pathways. These pathways address the needs of our students and expose them to the various opportunities that they would have in Nemaha County and in Nebraska once they graduate from Auburn Public Schools. Our vocational program will really become an integral part of our community. Now none of this happens in a vacuum. We were fortunate to receive the reVISION grant. These monies help pay for professional development and curriculum writing that we have been doing all year. We will apply for the year two funds to help us pay for the ag teacher and several other initiatives that we hope to take in place next year. If it were not for the reVISION grant, advice from NDE, and the hard work of our community, teachers, and administrators, we would not be where we are today. Finally, I would leave you with this. Last year, the Auburn Economic Development Group brought in an industry site selector to evaluate our community. At the end of the day he spoke very highly of our community and our educational system. He felt like we did have several things in place to bring industry to Auburn. The one thing he was very blunt with us about is, you're going to struggle to bring industry to Auburn because you do not have the financial incentives to get...lure industry to Auburn. His advice was you need to grown your own. You need to bring graduates back to Auburn to invest in the community and start up businesses. His point was that people from Auburn understand all that it can offer. And I'm guessing several small communities in Nebraska can say the same thing. We see reVISION and the work revamping our vocational curriculum as bringing graduates back to Auburn and getting them to invest in start up communities and our community in general. We strongly believe in the investment of LB745 (sic--LB754) that it will put in our schools and we believe that it will be returned many times over by people returning to Nebraska to work and start businesses. Thank you. I would take questions. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Reiman. Your comment about having to hire an ag teacher made me wonder, and also with the previous testifier, are we going to have some issues as we sort of retool in these areas of having a pipeline that has the teachers and the educators needed to teach these new courses? [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Sure. I think that's an issue. And it's one of the things that our school board brought up. I would tell you I think we're fortunate that we're going to get an ag teacher probably hired this week. Now we had ten applicants. So I see that as a need. When my principal went up and talked to the people at NDE, there were several people, student teachers, working up through the UNL pipeline. So hopefully that's being addressed. But it was an area of concern for us as probably more so with the Board of Education and myself. When we're going to start a program, we want to make sure it gets off right. And we feel confident now but the numbers do kind of lie. And what you say is that we didn't have an overwhelming number of applicants. [LB754]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Any other questions for Mr. Reiman? Senator Kolowski. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, sir, for your comments. And you may have competition more in the future for those positions... [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Yes, absolutely. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: ...because urban agriculture is growing across the country. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Yes. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And there's an FFA movement going on in large cities. And that's going to be pressing for those very important positions as we see. And you're ahead of the curve. And congratulations on that. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Thank you, thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Good job. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Senator Seiler. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Just one. One of the things that impressed me last year is I took a tour of all the manufacturing plants in my area and over into some other areas. And I don't know how we get across and get the career path kids to go to those plants, but I saw people doing geometry. And they were a welder. They were running computers. It wasn't the same program that I remember welders running big presses. And they had to read the manuals because they had to make changes in between. So one of the things...I'm a big believer in the career path. One of the things we can't forget is the core curriculum. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: No, absolutely not and... [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Reading and math and things like that. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Yep. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: But if those kids go see that I think geometry and algebra become a lot more relevant to what they're talking about. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean that's one of the things when we talk about the core areas. It's been a good thing. I mean, we've stepped up our game and

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we feel like we're doing that. Now we're talking to kids about, what if you want to go to Ariens? And we've got a nice connection with Ariens. You talk about partnering with businesses. We've talked to Ariens, and they are very excited about helping provide some of the welders because they know that if they get a graduate from Auburn...we want them working on this machine. So it's to their benefit to buy us the machine that they want. And so that's been the nice thing is that we gotten some community support, some people that understand the importance of it. And so Ariens is coming down and they're providing hopefully welders. Orschlen provided money for this. The nice thing about...with this is since we're starting a new program, it did open up some grant money. And so we've gone out and we're getting some grant money to help us with this ag program. So it's really created a lot of excitement in our community. Yeah, I would highly recommend it to any small school because it's been a real godsend. It's really connected our school, vocational to our business community. And not that we had a bad relationship before, but it's been an added aspect. [LB754]

SENATOR SEILER: Thank you very much. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Yep. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB754]

KEVIN REIMAN: Thank you. [LB754]

KEN SPELLMAN: Good afternoon again. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Did you complete another green sheet? Thank you. I thought I saw it there. [LB754]

KEN SPELLMAN: My name is Ken Spellman. I coordinate the career education programs for the Omaha Public Schools, and we are in support of LB754, Senator Smith's bill. I've been sitting and listening for the last couple hours and some of the questions have been really great. I kind of want to paint a picture of what career education students look like in our schools, in Omaha Public Schools and even in the state of Nebraska. And I'm kind of referring back to this brochure that I handed out earlier. It's kind of interesting because 83 percent of all students enrolled 7th through 12th grade in Omaha Public Schools participate in career education programs. So it's over three-fourths of the kids in our schools participate in career education programs. Sixty-two percent of those students, career education students, are enrolled in honors or AP courses. And so like what we talked about with the stigma of some of the career education programs or students, why would you go in this particular area? We're not...I mean, it's still there, but we're hoping it's slowly being...the views are being changed about career education students. As I said, 62 percent of our kids are in AP or honors courses. Our kids are graduating at or above our high school graduation rates. And

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so...it just these are very, very intelligent type of kids that going on to health and engineering and other areas. Obviously, culinary, business, and marketing are also important but we're seeing a new type of kid I guess in...participate in some of career education programs. There's also some discussion about where programs should be held. We've got some unique partnerships. We've got a program at the Henry Doorly Zoo and aquarium in Omaha. That's with Papillion-La Vista, the zoo, and Omaha Public Schools. That works. Kids love going to the...imagine what the attendance rate of that program is. Who doesn't want to go to the zoo every day. We also have a...we worked the local Omaha Chamber and the Mastercraft building. It's a building located in north Omaha. We're planning to have our students actually take classes there. The Mastercraft building is comprised of about 45 different entrepreneurship. That's one of the themes that's really running, that we need more entrepreneurs in the state of Nebraska as well as the businesses. So this next month, we plan to have kids on campus there, working with all the different entrepreneurs in that particular building. We were approached by the electrician union, IBEW 22, last year about this time. They're kicking, screaming for electricians. If you've been to Omaha lately, we have a lot of construction going on with the recent Gretna outlet mall. Now there's discussion with the Crossroads Mall. We partnered with the electrician union. They actually...at Benson High School we've identified 25 students. Electrician folks come in and teach that class at Benson High School three days a week. They provided all the clothing, textbooks, and tools. And they've also offered our students paid internships during the summer. And we've had other discussions with the HVAC, the welding association, and others. And so we're kind of looking at exploring those opportunities. That's one of the ways that we're able to stretch our dollars further is our partnerships. Not only the grant that Rich Katt talked about, but our partnerships and they've been more than willing to help fund. The Chamber, for example, is renting a space at the Mastercraft building for our kids interested in entrepreneurship. We also are participating in the reVISION process. Monday, for example, is our fourth particular meeting. It's been a great experience. We're really taking a look at what we currently offer and what we need to adjust to meet the needs of our students and our communities. Some of the themes that our community folks are coming up with--health, four out of the top ten jobs in the state of Nebraska are going to be or are health related. So we know that's a given. We have to put more health programs in. Business, accounting, actuaries is another growing business in the Omaha area. Insurance is really big in the Omaha area as well. Real estate is making a comeback. And then always transportation, distribution, and logistics always on the top ten list. Information technology is another big item. And then the STEM, the science, technology, engineering, and math are what we're going to try to probably focus on. So we've got one more series of meetings with our internal staff on Monday. And then from there I plan to develop a five-year strategic plan based on our reVISION process. Are there any questions? [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: All right, thank you, Mr. Spellman. Any questions for him? Thank you so much for your testimony. [LB754]

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KEN SPELLMAN: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB754]

RODNEY VLCEK: Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the committee. My name is Rodney D. Vlcek, spelled R-o-d-n-e-y D. V-l-c-e-k, and I am the president secretary/treasurer of the Nebraska State AFL-CIO. I am here to testify in support of LB754 to provide for expanded career and technical education programs in Nebraska's secondary education system. We want to thank Senator Smith for introducing, in our opinion, this important piece of legislation. Nebraska is blessed with the second lowest unemployment rate in the country. However, that does not mean that we do not have our own workforce problems. Many of our local affiliates struggle to find apprenticeship candidates with the necessary skills to enter our programs. Decline in quality and quantity for noncollege-track programs within our high schools has led to the expansion of these skills gap. For example, one of our affiliates has had to recruit from as far away as Michigan and Texas quality welders. Our apprenticeship programs facilitate the necessary postsecondary vocational training to produce a skilled workforce, but they require a base of knowledge that is currently lacking. We strongly support initiatives that will help close the skills gap. Despite declining membership, America's unions remain the second largest job training organizations behind only the United States Military. We would encourage the Legislature, Nebraska school districts, and proponents of this bill to take advantage of our unique ability to train a high-quality workforce and ensure that our apprentice programs are considered when developing curriculum and encouraging job placement. While we're very happy Senator Smith introduced this, I was assured by Mr. Katt that we'll have an opportunity to go out to Kearney and actually bring our directors from the Omaha and Southwest Iowa Building and Trades apprenticeship program, the Lincoln Building and Trades apprenticeship program, and the Grand Island Building and Trades apprenticeship program to talk to the career counselors, put on our PowerPoint presentation, and also show them an orientation video. And they may be able to reach out to some individuals that may not choose to go to school after the career education for whatever reason it may be. Our apprenticeship programs, we just don't take anybody. You have to be very committed. We usually know within six to eight weeks if it's somebody that's going to be able to take our apprenticeship program whether it be a two year, four year, or possibly even five year. But again, we structure the program. It's very classroom orientated. It's very on-the-job training. And another thing that I haven't really heard a lot is safety. We're very, very safety oriented, especially with young kids because a lot times they like to get out there and hit the ground running. But when they have a journeyman with them, a lot of times we have to explain to them that, you know, what you're doing right now is not what's going to be helpful for you down the road. So with that, we want to thank again Senator Smith. And I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. [LB754]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Vlcek. Senator Davis. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Do you see this kind of...students in high school taking some classes that then would work into your apprenticeship program to sort of shorten with that...how that works? Do you see that working that way? [LB754]

RODNEY VLCEK: Well, we do. We do. But what we need to do is we need to get out to these counselors and let them know that there is an apprenticeship program out there for them instead of...because you know, obviously some kids may not want to go to a community college for four years. They may not want to go a UNK, a UNL. Their idea is to hit the ground running. We can provide that avenue for them. But we need to get out there and let them know. I reached out to Mr. Katt, and we've been wanting to work together. But unfortunately, for some reason we haven't. But since I took over as president, I want to reach out. And we want to get people out there to let these individuals know that there is another avenue in the apprenticeship program that we can, you know, provide them a quality life, a quality pay, and good benefits. [LB754]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Haar. [LB754]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes. Well, Rod and I have been friends for a long time. One of the things...and this is more a statement I really appreciate about organized labor is, for example, when you train...when an electrician trains through your programs, they get all the safety and other kinds of things that very often somebody just learning by following doesn't get, you know. [LB754]

RODNEY VLCEK: True, thank you. Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Kolowski. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Rod, thank you very much for your comments today and welcome. I thank you also for mentioning military, great opportunities for a military, especially that many students can get. And that can carry over very nicely and through their lives as well. And many times that's not looked at or visualized within their overall picture coming out of high school, not sure what I want to do. But the military is a great option for many kids. [LB754]

RODNEY VLCEK: Yes, it is. [LB754]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: The G.I. Bill and all that comes with it after that. Thank you. [LB754]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. [LB754]

RODNEY VLCEK: Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome back. [LB754]

JOHN NEAL: Thank you. John Neal, J-o-h-n N-e-a-l, with Lincoln Public Schools. I'm coming in support of LB754 and want to thank Senator Smith for introducing the bill. Throughout the testimony of LB1106 and the start of LB754 there's been many questions about, well, how would that fit in this school district or this situation or how might we include career counseling at the elementary school or in other areas? And these grants, as Senator Davis said, might not be huge grants, they're not going to put in a \$250,000 piece of computer-aided manufacturing equipment. But what they will do is allow districts across the state to look at how they take the good research that already exists, the things that we know already work in other states and apply them to the unique exact examples in our state so we can effectively implement career academies across the state. We know the strategies work. We know they have good outcomes. This kind of grant programs allows us to make it match our communities, our school districts, and have us move forward as successfully as possible. And another piece is the investment is not just what's in the bill but through the leadership of the Department of Ed as you've heard through all the different programs like reVISION, that that learning doesn't just happen at that district with that school district. It's actually something that district tries and then shares with school districts across the state. So whether you receive a grant or not, you learn from the experiences across the state and will help all of the school districts be better. With that, I'll be happy to answer any questions. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: (Exhibits 3, 4, and 5) Thank you. Any questions for John? Thank you for your testimony. Any other proponent testimony? I would like to read into the record that we have two letters of support for LB754, one from Jean Petsch, the Associated General Contractors, and Kristi Gibbs of Ralston Public Schools. Anyone wishing to speak in opposition to LB754? Or anyone in a neutral capacity? Senator Smith. [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you again, Senator Sullivan and members of the Education Committee. Thanks for your attentiveness to this, for listening to the testimony. And I ask for your support of LB754. I provided...at the beginning of my opening I provided to each of you a cartoon. And sometimes a picture really can get the point across better than lengthy testimonies. I hope you take a look at that because that brings home the point that we're trying to make with this legislation, that not every child is the same yet every child has value to add and particularly in our state. We certainly need the trades in our state. We need to see development of the trades in our state, the trade education. I ask that we provide the opportunity for our children and for their families to be able to fill those needs and have those opportunities. And then I ask for your help in positioning

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our state for economic growth. I believe that education and a skilled workforce can be as valuable to economic growth and development as a strong energy policy, low energy rates, or a tax policy in terms of business incentives. It's as critical of a tool to economic growth as any of those other items. So I appreciate your consideration of this piece of legislation. Thank you for your time. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Senator Haar. [LB754]

SENATOR HAAR: I love the cartoon. Do you think that Albert Einstein really said everything that's attributed to him? (Laughter) [LB754]

SENATOR SMITH: You know what? I bet you he probably did, as smart as he was, right. Thank you. [LB754]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you very much. [LB754]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you very much. This closes the hearing on LB754. We are going to take a five-minute break. And we'll be right back. Five minutes only though. (Laugh) [LB754]

BREAK

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, I think we will resume and join back together for the public hearings. And we will start with our next bill, LB1064 which is being introduced by Senator Lautenbaugh. Welcome. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the committee. As the Education Committee embarks down its role under LB1103, I think programs connecting high school students, colleges, and careers are vital to Nebraska's education system. LB1064 is my attempt to increase academic opportunity for highly motivated, underserved students and put them on a trajectory for a successful college path and inspire and develop the next generation of teachers and educational leaders. This bill was inspired by a kid I met last fall. And I believe he was planning on being here today, but he is actually in school out of Kearney now and had a teaching-in-the-field appointment today and was unable to come. But I think we have a letter from him that we'll be offering. Roughly 50 percent of all urban and poverty stricken public school teachers nationwide leave their position in less than 3 years not because they don't want to teach but because they're not always ready. Nebraska is no exception to this general rule. Additionally, shortages will be in subject areas such as mathematics, science, special education, world languages, bilingual, and early childhood education. The issue crosses urban versus rural lines too. It's an issue for all Nebraska. What this program would do would be to create a baccalaureate program for 8th- and 11th-graders, as it's set up in the bill, at the University of Nebraska-Kearney

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and at UNO for the students to get exposure to...as we list it out in the bill here. You get six-week summer session for eligible students to be exposed to: (a) Students teaching students; (b) Accelerated learning in English literature, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign languages; (c) Grade monitoring, tutoring, and ongoing college preparatory activities; (d) College entrance examination preparation; (e) Internship placements. Housing would be available, that kind of preparation for entering a career in teaching. There would be no tuition charged for students participating in the Teach for Nebraska program. And eligibility would be based upon students having completed either 8th grade or grade 11. They'd be free lunch or free milk students as defined in Section 79-1003, have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher on 4.0 scale, be enrolled for the upcoming school year in 1 or more college preparatory courses. And applicants who meet the requirements of this section would be selected based upon two teacher recommendations, an essay, and a personal interview. It isn't intentional that we did not include the University of Nebraska in this. It's just UNO and Kearney initially came to mind as far as likely destinations for this. I think it's an important program. I know Mr. Wayne from OPS is here to make some comments in this regard as well. I will stay here to close as well. But I think this is designed for exactly what I described; to help encourage students to learn early on, to prepare them to enter the field of teaching and hopefully stay here and teach in Nebraska. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator. Do you think that we put enough value on teachers? [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: I'm not sure how you're defining "we" or "value." [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Culture, society. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: No. Simple answer, short answer, no. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: One of things that I've been concerned about as we've talked about the career academies in preparing for the workforce of today and tomorrow is the pipeline of educators. And I'm concerned about teachers along that line and are we adequately preparing enough people to step into the field of education whether they come from free and reduced lunch demographic or otherwise. Would you agree with that? [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Certainly. There will be a shortage probably. That's part of what this is designed to address. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions for Senator? Senator Kolowski. [LB1064]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, madam. Senator, thank you for this topic and bringing this forward. Will there be a chance for students to retake the experience, or is

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it a one-time, six weeks situation; 8th or 11th grade and that's it? [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: I really hadn't contemplated that. I don't know the answer to that, if we would do 8th grade and then 11th grade or in the intervening years. I guess in my mind just thinking it through...I don't know I guess I really hadn't thought that through as to whether or not you would do it both times or in any intervening year. [LB1064]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Or the encouragement of districts to start teacher education academies in their own districts so you have this experience and then something else to move into as a junior or a senior where they can lock into a dual-enrollment kind of situation where their high school...after high school their junior, senior year would be in this academy in preparation for things. So there's lots of different angles on it. I wouldn't want it to be too short that it could be forgotten and the experience wouldn't carry over. But to do it every year, that's another aspect. That's where the academies come in. So thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Absolutely. I wouldn't it to be too brief that it wouldn't serve a purpose. [LB1064]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Absolutely. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: There should be a point to it. Absolutely. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: What do you mean by exactly "students teaching students"? [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: In my mind, it would be either more experienced students like the older grades helping...maybe the 11th-graders helping out the 8th-graders, or perhaps student teachers coming in to assist with the education of the 8th- and 11th-graders. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: The student teachers that might be enrolled in classes at UNK and UNO. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Yes, yes. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions for Senator? Okay. We will now hear proponent testimony on LB1064. Welcome. [LB1064]

JUSTIN WAYNE: (Exhibit 1) Thank you, Senator. What I'm handing out is a paper. The testimony that...Mr. Trevon Montgomery wanted to be here today. But part of teaching and those educators, you go out and you do field visits. And his field visit was today.

And being that he was in Kearney and he was going to Elm Creek and he doesn't have transportation, it kind of limited his ability to get here. And I had court in the morning, so I couldn't go get him. So he e-mailed me this and said, will you please present it? And I said, I will. And so that's why I'm down here, to make sure he...this is being presented. I will say that...just a little bit about Mr. Trevon Montgomery. In his letter he talks about, when you talk about a student from poverty, he is that student from poverty. He makes no shame about it. He was born when his mother was 12 years old...13 years old. He grew up homeless the first six years of his life, was by no means the best student. But once he found in high school an actual pathway, that he wanted to be a teacher and how to get there, he became excited, graduated. But then he ran into the issues of being in Omaha, going to Metro and his friends and family still being there to pull him down. And actually he was helping coach one of my youth teams, and we went to Kearney for a tournament. And anybody know Kearney, they're pretty big on youth basketball tournaments. And he walked on campus and said, what is this? He never knew it existed. The reason he thanks Senator Lautenbaugh is because while we were out there I called Senator Lautenbaugh and asked if he knew anybody out there in the area. And then he applied. He got in. And now he's doing extremely well there. He's still struggling as outlined in here. Primarily, he knows he has to work twice as hard, but he's excited because he sees a pathway and sees a way to graduate. And that's how this conversation started in the fall was that there was a lot of talk about career academies. And he thought, well, how come there isn't any kind of pathway for teaching? And that we know that there's going to be a need for teachers, particularly urban minority teachers in the Omaha area. And Senator Lautenbaugh said, well, why isn't there? And that's kind of how this whole thing developed. So it was just a conversation and it's a great way to start a conversation. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Very good. I wasn't sure, Mr. Wayne, if you going to then offer your testimony, but either way, maybe you'd better enter your name into the record. [LB1064]

JUSTIN WAYNE: Oh, Justin Wayne, W-a-y-n-e. Sorry, I just got excited... [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: That's all right. No problem. [LB1064]

JUSTIN WAYNE: ...because I was talking about this kid. But I am speaking on behalf of the Midwest Trailblazers organization he is in. I do believe OPS is supportive of this because they support anything that has...gives kids more opportunity. But I'm talking on not behalf of the board of Omaha Public Schools, but on behalf of myself and a nonprofit organization. And it's these type of programs that kids that we deal with, at-risk kids, day in and day out where there seems to be a gap where they can see the finish line. And that gap and the finish line are where it's actually there and how they can see it, because they hinder kids, especially kids from poverty to stay hopeful and to stay inspired. And I think if we can set up clearer pathways to show that, here's a way you

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can graduate and do something productive and be a productive citizen that that gives kids the opportunity and the hope to stay on that course. And that's exactly what he needed, and that's exactly what this bill is trying to do. Thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Wayne. It occurs to me that when you said he knew nothing about UNK that maybe there needs to be more recruiting, if you will, by some of these institutions. Is that...? [LB1064]

JUSTIN WAYNE: Absolutely. Absolutely yes, Senator. There needs to be more recruiting, but...and he stated he wasn't the greatest student. And I think some of the kids who have 2.0s get lost in the recruiting efforts. If you have a 3.5 or above, people tend to go after you. And if you're below, like a 1.0 student, they want to make sure you graduate. So school systems often concentrate on them. But that gap between 1.5 and 2.5 is often missed. And I think that may have occurred here. I'm not quite sure. But I know that 2.0 is a C, C minus. Those are the kids who have that resilience that are still looking for a way to make sure they make it. And those are the kids we should be targeting because I believe they're the best kids that can work with our kids to make sure they stay on track. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Any other questions for Mr. Wayne? Senator Kolowski. [LB1064]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Mr. Wayne, good to see you, and thank you for your testimony and for your work with this young man. The recruitment for all the districts in the Metro area is very difficult to get more diversity into their school districts as far as teaching. And you're right, I think it really helps us to grow on our own. And the more we can do that...it's always nice to bring the recruits into Omaha on a day like today, but not when it's 30 below. Those are...you know, when they from Mississippi or Alabama or somewhere else, that makes for a very difficult challenge. But I think the answer is, let's try to grow our own of all great categories and do the things that we need to do to try to keep them in Omaha and help our kids. Thank you. [LB1064]

JUSTIN WAYNE: Thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LB1064]

JUSTIN WAYNE: That was easy. Thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other proponent testimony for LB1064? Anyone wishing to speak in opposition to LB1064? Or in a neutral capacity? Welcome back. [LB1064]

JAY SEARS: (Exhibit 2) Thank you. Good afternoon. Madam Chair and members of the Education Committee, I am still Jay Sears, J-a-y S-e-a-r-s, and I still represent the

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28,000 members of the Nebraska State Education Association, I think. NSEA is testifying in the neutral position in LB1064. The concepts in LB1064 are sound practices for informing and recruiting middle and high school students about the education profession as a possible career goal. In fact, Nebraska has done something similar to this before. Through a federal grant, the Nebraska Department of Education partnered with Wayne State College to host a two week summer camp for high school students who were interested in the education profession. The program, which was called Teacher World, continued for three years until the federal grant dried up. That was about 2001 I believe when the grant ended. Unfortunately, there was very little data to show any of the participants actually entered college as education majors or completed an education certification program. That's not to say that the program that Senator Lautenbaugh is looking at would do the very same thing. It's a six week intensive program. And as you'll see in further testimony, there's all kinds of links and alignment that we could do. Nebraska has a long-standing presence of Future Educators of America chapters in high schools across our state. In fact, there are at least five Omaha area high schools with active FEA chapters and a number of FEA chapters in rural schools. I believe--and Senator Kolowski can confirm for me--that Phi Delta Kappa organization has been instrumental in supporting the FEA chapters in Nebraska. And my own organization took on sponsorship of the FEA also this past year. There is a career path of education in the career clusters that you've seen the little map about in the Nebraska Department of Education career models. Many school districts are helping their students explore the education profession as a career opportunity. NSEA believes there is interest and support for education as a career choice. What we need in Nebraska is a vision of how we can recruit, train, and retain quality professionals in the education profession. It would seem to us that this is a broader topic about recruiting, training, and retention of educators, and it probably belongs in part of our visioning process and setting our priorities. Where is it we're going to put our emphasis in this process? One of the things I know you've heard from your tours across Nebraska this summer was early childhood education. And I think that's well placed and you're investing in that, and you're showing that in the process. Where else in that continuum do we need to invest our resources? I think recruiting and retaining young people in the education profession is important. Nebraska, contrary to national standards, actually keeps our teachers in the profession a little bit longer than some of the nation schools do. I think our record is getting close to five years. But that's still not a career, and that's not a profession. And I hope our education profession doesn't become one of transience where people come in for two years, leave, do their good deed and take off. We need people to replace us baby boomers in the education profession to teach our young people. As you can see, I've ad-libbed. One of the questions I have, and I haven't had the opportunity and haven't asked Senator Lautenbaugh is he designates \$1 million from the Education Excellence Fund which is the teacher loan forgiveness program for both candidates that are in the beginning stages of the education journey, and for those who are looking at advancing their career with master's degrees in the content. And I wondered if...I was hoping that what he's contemplating is an additional \$1 million into

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that fund so that we have \$2 million, not that we'd be taking away \$1 million and having nothing left for the current practitioners. So I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Look forward to seeing you some more. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Sears. Any questions for him? Thank you. [LB1064]

JAY SEARS: Thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Anyone else in a neutral capacity? Senator Lautenbaugh. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee. I'd note for the record I brought a bill in front you that had no opposition and the union was neutral. (Laughter) I just wanted the record to reflect that. [LB1064]

SENATOR SEILER: ...tie it up. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: So I guess I should probably quit. (Laughter) Thank you and good night. No, I mean there are certainly details to be worked out, absolutely. I have not had any discussions with Mr. Sears or anyone else, but I thought this was a way to promote the profession and especially where we might have the greatest need. But that was my goal. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Do you have a question? [LB1064]

SENATOR COOK: Yes, one. It's really a clarification. And maybe you said it in your opening...about expanding beyond the UNO and UNK campuses in terms of being inclusive among the state colleges and universities across the state. You don't mean to be exclusive necessarily with this opportunity. Or did you? [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Well, I think it came to me--I can't recall--either directly or secondhand, sort of a...you know, what are we, chopped liver from Lincoln? And it was not intentional. That's just...that's how it worked out. Well, I'm from Omaha so UNO was obvious. Some kids seem to do better getting far from, farther from home so Kearney was there. And we had the experience with Trevon so that was the only reason that UNL was not specifically listed. But it was not a intentional avoidance of UNL. So... [LB1064]

SENATOR COOK: Or Peru or... [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH No. [LB1064]

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SENATOR COOK: ...Chadron or...okay. Thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Senator Davis. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: I'm sorry I missed your opening, Senator Lautenbaugh. Maybe I can... [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: It was spectacular, Senator Davis. (Laughter) [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: I'm sure it was. You're always spectacular, always. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: You're a poorer man for it. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: On page 3, you talk about research showing two-thirds of 9th grade achievement gap between low and higher-income students attributed to unequal access to summer learning opportunities. Do you know where you got that information? It's clause 3, line 7. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Oh sure, I see it here. I'm going to have to go back and look. I don't recall where we specifically pulled that from. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: Then on page 5 in item (d), I think it's item (d)... [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Yes. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: ..."Be enrolled for the upcoming school year in one or more college preparatory courses." But back here, earlier you talk about 8th grade students. So are there any freshmen that are enrolled in college prep classes that you know of? [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: It'd be the upcoming, so I mean the 9th grade year. I'd say, yes. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: But yet they'd still be freshman. I'm just wondering if that's realistic I guess. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: It might be a high hurdle. I know just as the father of two 8th-graders and looking what they're going to do next year, it's certainly doable. That may prove a high hurdle for some. But I know college prep courses are available at the freshman level. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: Okay, thank you. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: But you do point out that could be a barrier. That is not

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intended. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: It might be a barrier. It might just be hard to find. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: Right, and that's not desirable. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: Right. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions for the senator? All right, thank you very much. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: And I guess... [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: Spectacular closing by the way. [LB1064]

SENATOR LAUTENBAUGH: (Laugh) And to expand upon what you're saying, I mean my sons are looking at two different districts. And I can think in their case, one of the teachers was recommending one of them take sort of a college prep course. And whether we stayed in one district or went to another district it was either going to be available or not available. So that's what I mean by it could be a barrier sometimes. They just aren't offered. So you do raise a good point. It may not be available at the freshman level in all schools. I just don't know for sure. [LB1064]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. All right, this closes the hearing on LB1064. We will now move on to our final bill of the day, LB842. Welcome. [LB1064]

SENATOR DAVIS: Thank you, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. I feel so at home here. (Laughter) [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: Good. [LB842]

SENATOR DAVIS: (Exhibit 1) I am Al Davis, A-I D-a-v-i-s, and I represent the 43rd Legislative District. Today I'm here introducing LB842. This bill would increase the amount of state lottery proceeds paid through the Education Innovation Fund under the Excellence in Teaching Act. Programs under the act provide loan forgiveness to college students in baccalaureate teacher education programs and to teachers in graduate level college programs. Currently the act allocates \$1 million each year for the loan forgiveness program for preservice college students planning to teach and teachers already in the classroom. LB842 would increase the amount by \$200,000 to \$1.2 million. Funding for the in-service program has not been adequate to meet demand, and many teacher applications have been turned away in the past after funding for the program was fully expended. To be eligible for a forgivable loan, teachers accepted into the program by the Department of Education must first agree to complete an eligible

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graduate program at an eligible institution and to complete the major on which the applicant's eligibility is based as determined by the department. And two, commit to teaching in an accredited or approved public or private school in Nebraska after successful completion of the eligible graduate program for which the applicant is applying to Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program and to maintain certification pursuant to Sections 79-806 to 79-815. Three, apply on an annual basis for loans in an amount of not more than \$175 per credit hour. Loans awarded to individual students may not exceed a cumulative period of more than five consecutive years. Loans are generally forgiven on a year-for-year basis for each year taught in a Nebraska school approved or accredited by the State Department of Education. However, the loans are forgiven on a two-for-one basis for teaching in schools located in sparsely populated areas or high-poverty schools. I am offering AM1946 to LB842. This amendment would make two changes to the bill. The first change would increase the allowable loan amount from \$175 to \$250 per credit hour. This change reflects increases in tuition rates over the last five years. For example, UNL graduate tuition is \$285 per credit hour. If a teacher takes 12 credit hours per year, a teacher grad student now pays about \$1,300 annually for the courses. For a 36 hour degree program, the out-of-pocket costs would be \$3,900. The increase in the hourly amount proposed would increase the amount of the total loan balance at the end of the degree. A typical master's degree is 36 credit hours. The total loan would be \$9,000. The second change proposed by AM1946 would allow loan forgiveness to begin after two years of teaching in a Nebraska public or private school. Currently, teachers must teach three full years before their first year of loan forgiveness begins. The annual forgiveness is \$3,000. A student with a \$9,000 loan would have his or her loan paid off in four years after completing the degree. Students may take up to five years to complete their master's degree, but must complete the degree in four years. From the time the student entered the program until the end of payoff would be eight years of continuous teaching service in Nebraska schools. I'd be happy to answer any questions if I can. Thank you. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Senator Davis. Any questions for him? Maybe at closing. [LB842]

SENATOR DAVIS: Okay, thank you. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: We'll now hear proponent testimony for LB842. Welcome. [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: (Exhibit 2) Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. My name is Skyler Reising; that's spelled S-k-y-l-e-r R-e-i-s-i-n-g, and I'm a teacher at Kloefkorn Elementary School in Lincoln. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of LB842. I'd also like to thank Senator Davis for introducing this bill. Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I earned my bachelor's degree in music education at UNL. I also ran track and competed in decathlon and

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served as a two year track team captain for the Huskers. The athletic scholarship I earned assisted with my funding for my undergraduate education. My mom and dad taught me that the importance of education and continuing to improve myself. So after earning my bachelor's in 2009 and beginning my teaching career, I plan to continue my education with a master's degree. And I decided on doing school counseling which is a shortage area. One concern I had however was how to fund my graduate work. The Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program was suspended when I started my master's degree program, so it was quite a stretch to make ends meet. And I drive to UNO for my coursework. And this counseling degree actually requires 48 credit hours. My second year the loan forgiveness program became available and it is helping a lot. This program, which is funded from lottery proceeds, is truly a win-win. And by mastering the art of teaching and now counseling, I've become a better teacher and counselor for my students. I don't know of a teacher who doesn't want to be the best teacher they can be. But it takes constant work and ongoing study. And it's not cheap. No teachers are getting rich teaching. And in fact, my cable box went home to the cable...or went to the cable company because I'm just trying to save a little bit of money. So the only thing I really miss are live sports, but that's what friends and sports bars are for. (Laughter) Anyway, as I tell my students, you know, let me say that as a music teacher, LB842 really hits all the right notes. By allocating some additional lottery proceeds, it will allow more teachers to participate and improve their education. It raises the costs per credit hour to more closely reflect the current cost of tuition, and it allows the loan forgiveness to begin after two years--instead of three--of teaching in a Nebraska school. As an athlete and a high jump coach, I'd call this a win-win. Our students will benefit from teachers who have a higher degree of subject matter mastery. And we'll be able to better fill those shortage area positions. And our state will have a highly educated teachers who continue to teach in Nebraska schools. LB842 makes good sense for our students and teachers. I encourage you to support LB842 and work to have it passed this legislative session. Thanks for your time and work and your consideration. And I'll be happy to answer any questions you have. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Mr. Reising. So when you complete your graduate work in counseling, will you move into that ideally full time or juggle that with music education as well? [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: Yep, right now I'm a full-time music teacher, but I plan to be a full-time school counselor. I'd prefer to do high school counseling. I have four years of experience coaching at Lincoln Southeast High School, and I really like working with high school students. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: And what's the pipeline look like for music education teachers? [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: Yeah, it's similar. There's a high need I know, especially in the

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western part of the state. I had several classmates who, you know...oh, I would say that there are more jobs out there than there are music teachers is what I would say. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, all right. [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: Several classmates got hired. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Very good. Any other questions? Senator Haar. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, thanks for being here. And do you have any friends...you know, we've heard about three, four, five years, a lot of people quit teaching. Do you have any friends in that situation? [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: Yeah, I could tell you in my first two years of teaching I taught here just about a mile away at Elliot Elementary School, 25th and N Street. And I'd say in my first two years there were probably six new teachers including myself. I'd say three of them stuck it out for a year or two. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: How come? What were the reasons? [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: It's very difficult and time consuming. And I think there's a lot of pressure that goes with teaching and especially in a school where the...it's not as affluent. That school has over 90 percent free and reduced lunch student population. I think part of the reason that I stuck around was because I'm a very determined person, and I was determined no matter what to stick with it. And now I teach...the last two years I've taught at a more affluent school, and it's been much easier. And I think good teachers probably get poached out of the schools that are harder to teach at because, you know, it's a lot harder to teach at this school. So I might go to an easier school to teach at. Well, if you're a new teacher and you walk into that school that's so hard to teach at. I think it's really hard to stick with it when you could say, well, maybe I should find something else to do. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: Yeah. Well, thank you. [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: Yeah. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Reising and good luck to you. [LB842]

SKYLER REISING: You're welcome. Thank you. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB842]

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LYN FORESTER: Thank you. Welcome. Good afternoon. My name is Lyn Forester, L-y-n F-o-r-e-s-t-e-r, and I am the chair of teacher education and dean of the master of education program in curriculum and instruction at Doane College. First, I would like to thank the Legislature for the funding the teachers have received to enhance the excellence of teachers in Nebraska. I truly believe that the money is used wisely and helps our teachers better meet the needs of Nebraska school children. Also, I would like to thank Senator Davis for proposing LB842. Doane College is allotted about 19 percent of the total amount of money provided for the program. By June of 2013, in the last cycle, we awarded \$120,525 to 60 students. Our process for awarding money includes a GPA requirement of 3 point; residency in Nebraska; the students must be in a program that is approved; and beyond that, it's first come, first serve. We send an e-mail out to all of our degree-seeking students across Nebraska and tell them how to apply for the funds. Our program is not a site-based program, so it goes all across Nebraska. I mean, our program is a site-based program. Sorry. It's not an on-line program. In the 60 students that we awarded, demographically they came from as far west as North Platte, north as far Neligh and Norfolk, and then as far east as far you can go--Omaha; and then south there were people to the border. As the applications come in, we number them, keep track of what we award, and do as many as we can. We did have unmet need last year even though we were allowed to use some funds that had not been utilized. Our allotment of money ran out in about two weeks. What happened was the money ran out and then we continued to get applications, but we knew that we weren't ever going to be able to fund them so we just cut the awarding off. Clearly we support the changes to Enhancing Excellence in Teaching Program. I have data from our program from pre-, post-tests of our students' perceptions of their teaching ability which is triangulated with principal surveys of their perceptions of the graduating teachers that teach for them. The data shows that after graduates study, a statistically significant positive change in teachers in the areas of teaching and student learning occurs. I believe that this shows the money being awarded students is being well used and does indeed enhance teaching excellence. One additional item, it would be great for the awards to be granted to people who are getting endorsements, not just a master's degree. For instance, we have lots and lots of teachers in Nebraska who have master's degrees but they want to go back and get a special education endorsement or a reading special endorsement. Those are...at Doane anyway, those are not master's degree programs, and they can't access the funds because they're not in a master's degree program. They already have one. So it would be nice for them to be able to access some of that money for their continued education. Thank you for doing what you do for teachers. And I will be happy to take any questions. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you for your testimony. When you were talking about...I was a little confused I guess. You said that you ran out of the available funds within two weeks. But prior to that you had used some of the funds that hadn't been utilized. [LB842]

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LYN FORESTER: Well, we had so much money, and I think it was like \$102,000, \$105,000. And we ran out of that. And then we funded within two weeks' time the rest of that because the state department told me that we could...to send some more applications to them and they would use some of the money. And so we ended up doing 60 people at \$120,000. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, I see. Okay, very good. Thank you. Senator Haar. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: Yes, thank you. With your experience, could you address this thing? How do we keep young teachers beyond their third or fourth or fifth year? [LB842]

LYN FORESTER: Well, I would have to say that Doane teachers do stay beyond their third or fourth or...(laughter) I mean they do. I mean we keep track of them through their third year at least, and they are still teaching then. You know, I think that the emphasis right now on assessment and accountability is sometimes unbearable for teachers. And I think we need to take a look at that. I agree with the young man that testified right before me for those things because we throw students into positions that they probably should not be in with very little help. I mean there is no mentoring program in Nebraska and that would help first-year teachers a lot. So you know, I think it's a combination of a lot of things. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Speaking of the assessment and accountability, do you think that there is adequate enough preparation in the teacher training program that prepares them for that? [LB842]

LYN FORESTER: Oh, I think there's adequate preparation. You know, all of our teacher preparation programs have to meet the rules of the state. And yes, I do believe there is adequate preparation. But the best preparation for teaching is teaching. And that's why practicum experiences and student teaching are so important. At Doane they do 400 hours of practicum experiences before they student teach. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: Wow. [LB842]

LYN FORESTER: Yeah. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [LB842]

LYN FORESTER: Okay. [LB842]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Welcome. [LB842]

LARRY SCHERER: (Exhibits 3 and 4) Good afternoon, Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee. For the record, my name is Larry Scherer, L-a-r-r-y S-c-h-e-r-e-r, and I'm here to testify in support of LB842 and the amendment Senator Davis presented. We thank Senator Davis for introducing the bill. We believe that there is an adequate demonstration of demand. As the program came into being in 2009, there was 2009-2010, and then along came a recession in state budget. And so it was discontinued for two years. And '13-14 was really the first year after that that it was back. And so demand is back on the way up after that. So there were...just to clarify what Mrs. Forester was saying, there is a process where unused funds from some colleges can go back out to others. And that's what she was referring to. And I think some of the reason some didn't use the funding is because it had gone away for a couple years and now it's back. And so there's maybe a little bit of a question about whether it's going to be there. But we believe it is, and we're supporting this program. You mentioned shortage area. That's one of the main criteria, and it needs to be in a subject area the teacher is teaching in or one that the superintendent says will benefit the school. And so these are not just any master's degree programs. They're ones that will benefit the students and the school. And also as Senator Davis said, there's a provision for extra payoff if you teach in a high-poverty school or a sparsely populated area of the state. I handed out some material. One of the things...before I get to that I'm going to give you five letters from teachers who sent in their comments. But one struck us as being worthwhile. And this is from Christine Walker, a kindergarten teacher in Norfolk. And she says: "Balancing working on masters classes on nights and weekends, teaching during the day, and being a mom of two small children is a difficult task. The financial side of all this is even more difficult. As the recipient of this grant, the money has helped me continue my education without creating more student loans and has not placed financial burden on my family. It shows me that our state supports teachers and values the continued education for those who work in the education field. Our young children deserve the best education possible. I work each day to be the best teacher I can be. Thank you for allowing this program to exist and please allow other teachers the same opportunity as I have been given by expanding this program to include more recipients. As tuition cost increase, along with all the other day-to-day expenses, I am very thankful for programs such as this." And I will give those to you for the record. There's also letters from Omaha, Central City, Stanton, and Schuyler. The teacher says it's from Columbus, but she teaches in Schuyler. We're here on Career Education Day, and I think it's very appropriate we're talking about teachers' careers and keeping teachers in the classrooms. So this is an important piece that can do it. I think if you go into a tough school and you're, you know, looking at, how do I survive? You look at what you can do to become better. And you know, I think we need to encourage more of our teachers to move in that direction because it's a difficult position to place new teachers into. I had a niece who was in that situation. And she wanted to do it, but she just couldn't. I mean, it was too much emotionally. And so that's important. That's important

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that we keep helping good teachers work in high-poverty schools where there are a lot of challenges. The material in the packet, I'll just briefly highlight in addition to the testimony. There's some pie charts. First one that shows a breakdown of the lottery distributions, compulsive gamblers always comes right off the top. Then the Education Innovation programs are about 19...and this is just on the education piece for the education. Then you have the Opportunity Grants for college students; that's 24 percent. Trust funds are 44 percent. And the State Fair is 10 percent. So that's been...that's the breakdown by statute. And what we're talking about--then if you look at the next page--is the breakdown of Education Innovation programs which I assume is the subject of a lot of hearings you've had this year. So not to belabor that, but you know, there's the percentage breakdowns of those funds. There's an article about the...in here from our Voice that talks about the first year the program was in existence. And then the piece from the Department of Education talks about the program, the first \$400,000 goes to teachers that are in the in-service program in college. And that's funded first. And then whatever isn't used after that goes into the enhancing for the teachers in the field. There are 270 individuals awarded a scholarship funding...loan program last year. And on the back you can kind of see the breakdown between colleges of where the money went. And you see some of them actually used a lot more money than they were given. And that's on the flip side of that. And for your interest, you can see on the last document shows a breakdown of the college that the students went to and then where they are teaching. So they're all over the state as we mentioned previously. And I think that the program is working. It's not just an urban. It's not just a...you know, it's going across the state. So with that, I'll close and try to answer any questions. I think there are a couple other folks to testify. And it's late. I know you're all tired. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Larry. Do you know how many applicants are not given funding because there's not enough money? [LB842]

LARRY SCHERER: No. Mrs. Forester mentioned the situation at Doane. The money is allocated to the institution, and they can send out so much. They do a good job of numbering them and keeping track of those. But there is no requirement for a report to the state department of the number of applications or, you know, the number that weren't filled. We thought about doing a survey to try to get that, but you know, in a lot of cases the information just wasn't there. So I think it's fair to say that at some institutions there a number that were turned. And in other, the program wasn't well advertised and so they didn't even fill the demand that they had. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Okay, thank you. Any other questions for Mr. Scherer? [LB842]

LARRY SCHERER: Thank you very much. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. [LB842]

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JOHN BONAIUTO: Senator Sullivan, members of the committee, John Bonaiuto, J-o-h-n B-o-n-a-i-u-t-o, representing Nebraska Association of School Boards, Nebraska Council of School Administrators here as a proponent. My first point says, make sure Senator Seiler tells Senator Adams I was proponent, not neutral, on a bill. (Laugh) And so we agree with the things that have been said. School boards, school administrators have worked with this program over the years. It's taken different iterations and has been given different names. But this is I believe what lottery funds were meant to do, to have a program to help keep teachers in the pipeline and support teachers in Nebraska. Appreciate Senator Davis bringing the bill in. We've got \$1 million that has been in the program. This would raise it to \$1.2 million. The funding will terminate in 2016. I think there's an opportunity to really focus and to target some of these important dollars and not have it be money that's out there for a lot of different purposes. It's a real target. There seems to be no end to bills that come in that would like to tap into these resources. And I think that having them focused and targeted for teacher education is a good thing. With that, I will conclude my testimony and thank you. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you. Welcome. [LB842]

TIP O'NEILL: Thank you, Senator. Senator Sullivan, members of the Education Committee, I'm Tip O'Neill; that's T-i-p O-'-N-e-i-l-l. I am appearing today in favor of this bill, just a couple things I want to say. We in the independent sector..and I'm not going to repeat all the things that Dr. Forester has told you because she is obviously the expert in this area and I'm not. We do award though about a third of the degrees, four year and above, in the education field which surprises a lot of people. And kind of in reference to the bill that you heard a little bit ago from Senator Lautenbaugh, we award twice as many degrees to African-American students as the university and state college systems combined which always surprises a lot of people. And you know, I really have a lot of empathy for you members on the Education Committee because you heard a lot of people testify today and lot them have all said the same thing. And you know, I chaired my national group, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities State Executives, and after the last meeting that I chaired I coined our unofficial motto. And that unofficial motto was, "no horse too dead to beat." (Laughter) And I'm not going to join that brigade, so I have nothing further to say about this bill. Be happy to answer any questions. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: I like that. [LB842]

TIP O'NEILL: Thank you. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Tip. [LB842]

SENATOR HAAR: We'll hang that one in the Legislature next year. [LB842]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any further proponent testimony? Anyone wishing to speak in opposition? Or in a neutral capacity? Senator Davis. [LB842]

SENATOR DAVIS: If there are no questions, I'll waive closing. [LB842]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: Any questions for him? Okay, all right. Thank you. And that concludes our hearings for today. Thank you very much. [LB842]