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Transportation and Telecommunications Committee  
March 04, 2013

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[LB93 LB378 LB383 LB596]

The Committee on Transportation and Telecommunications met at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 4, 2013, in Room 1113 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB596, LB378, LB383, and LB93. Senators present: Annette Dubas, Chairperson; Jim Smith, Vice Chairperson; Lydia Brasch; Galen Hadley; Charlie Janssen; Beau McCoy; Scott Price; and Dan Watermeier. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR DUBAS: Well, good afternoon. I think we will get started. It's just a few minutes after 1:30. So I would like to welcome you to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee hearing for this afternoon. This afternoon we will be hearing LB596, LB378, LB383, and LB93. I'll begin by introducing myself; I'm Senator Annette Dubas, District 34, State Senator. I'll start to my far left. We have Senator Lydia Brasch from Bancroft. Joining us shortly will be Senator Beau McCoy from Omaha. Next is Senator Galen Hadley from Kearney. To my immediate left is Anne Hajek, she is the committee clerk, so it's her job to keep an accurate record of everything that transpires here today, so it's for her benefit that you state and spell your name when you come up to the table and you hand in your little green sheet. To my immediate right is Joselyn Luedtke, she is the legal counsel for the committee. Next to Joselyn is Senator Jim Smith; he is the Vice Chair of the committee, from Papillion. Senator Scott Price will be joining us shortly; he's from Bellevue. We have Senator Dan Watermeier from Syracuse. And then Senator Charlie Janssen from Fremont. Senators will be coming and going throughout the afternoon. They have bills that they're introducing in other committees, so don't be offended if you're speaking and a senator gets up and leaves. It is nothing...that has nothing to do with what you're talking about, there are just lot of things going on during the committee hearing process. Every committee has the fortune of being served by our pages, and they are a very important part of our process; they're very helpful in the legislative process, whether we're upstairs on the floor of the Legislature or in committee. And so we have two pages today...or just one? Okay, we do have two. Kaitlyn must be on an errand. But I will introduce David Postier from York, Nebraska; he is a sophomore at UNL majoring in secondary education. And then when Kaitlyn gets back, her name is Kaitlyn Evanko-Douglas, she is from Montrose, Colorado, a senior at UNL majoring in political science and global studies. So again, we thank them for their service and their help in keeping things moving smoothly. If you plan on testifying today on any of the bills, we ask...there's, back there on the table close to the door, the green sheets, if you would fill those out with all of the information. And then when you come up to the table, one of the pages will take that information from you. If you're here today and you want to be on the record, but you don't plan on getting up and testifying at the table, if you'll fill out...just sign on the pink sheet there and then that will be collected at the end of the hearing, and it will go into the transcript, into the record. The order we take, we'll have the bill introducer first and then proponents, followed by opponents, followed by neutral. When you do come to the table

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we ask you state and spell your name clearly into the microphone. Again, that's for the transcribers' benefits, to make sure that we have an accurate record of who is speaking. Also, if they need to contact you that they'll be able to follow up with that. I know it's always our first inclination to grab the microphone and adjust it, but the microphones really are more for recording than they are for amplifying, so they're very sensitive. So if there is any paper rustling or finger tapping or any of those kinds of things, those are picked up by the microphone and, again, makes it difficult for the transcribers as they're doing their work. So if you can resist the urge to fiddle around with the microphone, that's much appreciated. I do have...we do have a light system, but I'll probably be asking for a show of hands as to who is here to testify in any capacity on the bills. There doesn't seem like there are a lot of people, I won't use the lights. We do ask you to keep your comments though around five minutes or so, and there will always be plenty of opportunity for senators to ask you questions, and that won't go against your time. But if we do happen to use the lights today, the green light will come on at the start, it will stay on for four minutes. Then the yellow light will come on, and that will stay on for one minute. And then the red light comes on at the end of your five minutes. Again, don't feel like you have to stop mid-sentence or mid-word, just wrap up your thoughts and then, again, the committee will likely pick up with questions and things to ask of you. Again, in relation to the pages, they'll pick up your green sheet, if you have any information that you'd like passed out to the committee, you can give that to them also. We ask that you have 15 copies. If you don't, if you'll get that to the pages, they can make copies for the committee, so hand that over to them. Ask that you silence your cell phones or any other electronic devices that you may have with you out of respect for those who are testifying and again for the transcribers' equipment; that does cause an interference. I think that's taken care of most of our housekeeping duties. I would like to just take a moment of committee chair privilege. I know we probably have quite a few veterans in the audience with us today, and I would just like to thank you today for your service, for coming forward and participating in the government that you have all pledged to protect and serve for all of us, so I thank you for coming forward today. I appreciate your service. So we will begin our hearings today with LB596, Senator Price, one of your fellow servicemen.

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Chairman Dubas and the members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. I come before you today, my name is Scott Price, S-c-o-t-t P-r-i-c-e and I represent the 3rd Legislative District in Sarpy County which comprises of Bellevue and Papillion, areas that you might imagine have a very large veteran presence. However, I'd also tell you that veterans serve throughout our state, and we recently went through a period of time where we had the largest deployment of Nebraska Guard since World War II, and we have many members who served throughout the state, and I preface my testimony with that to understand that there...we are the seventeenth largest state by land mass, and as such we have a lot of people spread out, as we know, in sparse-population areas. But they served our country just as well, and they've been doing it for a very long period of time. The bill you have

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before you today...really, fairly succinct and simple bill, and that is to lower the threshold that we created in prior legislation, the 500 people or 500 clients for the specialty plate, and to waive the \$5 additional fee that's levied on individuals who have been bestowed and who are recipients of a Purple Heart. To address the first part of the 500 people, all of you belong to social organizations, and you can relate that we don't have the participation in many social organizations that we used to have. What you see are the same 10, 15 people year in and year out changing hats being the treasurer, president, whatever that title might be, if it's the Federation of Eagles or the American Legion. What's important here is we have 500 people as a threshold, and we've been unable to pierce that threshold to get...for the veterans organizations, to get the numbers needed for the plates. The department has been very helpful to work with the groups, but we're not there. This isn't to say that there aren't 500 people who want the plates, or who would like it, or who have earned it. It's that they don't attend the meetings and can't get a statewide and one organization to do that. And so what I'm proposing is to lower that threshold. I picked 150 because I have attended many American Legion events and other events through other organizations, and getting 150 people together to participate is a challenge almost...unless it's a statewide event done by Farm Bureau or something like that, maybe you can find that. So that's why I picked that number. It's not a magical number; it's just a number I thought that we could work with. It's not new legislation, just a change of what we already have out there for a threshold. With regard to the \$5 fee waived for Purple Heart recipients, I dare say that any one of us would be more than happy to accommodate for that. It's a fee that goes to a veterans' organization, go to a veterans' fund, and there will be people behind me who can testify and talk about impacts and anything about that directly, but it was brought to me by constituents, and I thought it was worthy of discussion before the committee to say that, if you've paid with your pound of flesh, with your...with what...we've put you through to a point where you've been on or with the Purple Heart, I think the \$5 fee can be waived, and I don't believe that there be too heavy of a burden placed on the state for that. And with that I look forward to our discussion and would try to answer any questions the committee might have. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Senator Price. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you. [LB596]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you. And I have a bill up in another committee so I'll try to get back in time to close. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Okay, all right, very good. [LB596]

SENATOR PRICE: If not, then I'll waive it. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Very good. Can I have a show of hands of how many people are here to testify in any capacity on this bill. Okay, very good. Well, we'll start with

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proponents. The first proponent like to come forward. Welcome. [LB596]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Thank you. My name is Greg Holloway, G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y. I'm the immediate past commander for the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Nebraska. And I represent their legislative programs and testify for them. As you can see, he was talking about wearing two hats, I have my DAV cap on and my Purple Heart jacket. On March 4, 1968, I was just getting to a place called Mong Cai, Vietnam, to train with the 7th Calvary Division to fight the north Vietnamese up in the north Vietnam; combat wounded twice in less than five months, so. And I have my Purple Heart plates on two vehicles and a DAV plate so...Waiving the fee, it's not a real big financial impact, the \$5, but it's the fact that we might be able to save a little bit of our money to spend elsewhere. The amount of people to get a new plate, Purple Heart is pretty well locked in, but some of these, you know, we're having less and less veterans now, so to reduce the amount, it would be beneficial to everybody. The Disabled American Veterans, Department of Nebraska does support this bill, and I just want to relay that information to you. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Very good, thank you, Mr. Holloway. Thank you for your service. Are there questions? [LB596]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: And I want to thank you very much for all...for helping LB180 get through. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you. Next proponent. [LB596]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: Senator Dubas, distinguished members of this committee, my name is Lieutenant Colonel Eric Teegerstrom, E-r-i-c T-e-e-g-e-r-s-t-r-o-m. I'm a current member of the Nebraska Army National Guard. I was also a regular army officer at one time. I've served overseas for about six years myself, including three tours in combat zones, including both Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, and I was also stationed in Germany and Korea. My entire career as an adult has been as a soldier. And there's three main points I want to make here about this particular thing. One, we've done a lot for veterans over the last ten years, especially since 9/11, and while those things are all wonderful, and I appreciate each and every one of them, a small thing like a license plate provides a lasting tribute to those folks who did something maybe when they were 20, and now they're 60. Each soldier kind of likes to look back and remember the good ol' days, and I'll be quite frank, when I look back when I was a brand new lieutenant in Korea in 1992, I sure remember the good times more so than the bad. And I think every soldier is like that at some point in their career. And this is a thing where they can...be kind of a reminder of all those good times and all those good things they've done. The second point I want to make is that, as I looked through the information that I was given, I took note of this. Assuming 3 percent of the state's veterans population, which is about 140,000, applies for these plates, there may be 4,200 sets of plates sold. If so, the

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Nebraska Veterans Cemetery Operation Fund would receive about \$21,000. Based upon some of my research...I've been working with the Nebraska National Guard's officer association and enlisted association. I think that that estimate of 3 percent of the state's veterans is extremely conservative. And I believe that actually that number would be much higher than that. So my second point is, this is a fiscally sound decision that they can make. I have spent a number of years living outside of the state; I grew up here in Polk County, went to high school in Stromsburg, attended Concordia University, graduated from the University of Nebraska through ROTC, so I'm a Nebraskan through and through. But I've had the experience of leaving this state and leaving the country numerous times, and I'll tell you other states' license plates are a money-maker for them. So it's a, I think, a fiscally sound decision that they can make. The last thing I want to mention is, as you all well know, that the United States has been supported by an all-volunteer force for nearly 40 years now. And that all-volunteer force doesn't come without an extreme price. Recruiting, retention, training new soldiers, we spend a dramatically great deal more money on that than any of our other western European nations that we recognize in NATO. They have draft systems. Bottom line is, if you are a of-age male in those countries, you're going to spend a period of about two years within their military. They don't have to spend money on recruiting; they don't have to spend money on retention, but any of you familiar with the military in any way, shape or form knows the quality of soldier that we have within the United States, whether it's regular active component services or the Reserve National Guard system, far exceeds those of our counterparts. And that isn't done without a cost. This license plate, although just a small thing, it is a positive symbol out there that people can see and relate to. I know as a kid, when I was there growing up in Stromsburg, Nebraska, one of my classmates, his father was a World War II vet and had been a POW, and he proudly displayed his POW license plate. And I can always remember as a small kid looking at that and saying, wow, that's something special. Well, I think today in the atmosphere we live in, a lot of kids, they need that someone to look up to, or they need that symbol to look up to. I think this is just one more way that they can look up to that and see a positive example of our government in action. Now, that concludes my three points. And I thank you for your time, and if you have any questions I'm willing to answer them now. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Senator Hadley. [LB596]

SENATOR HADLEY: Thank you, Senator Dubas. Thank you, Colonel, for coming. Would you happen to know: we've had this since 2009, are these groups woefully short right now of the 500 or are they close, are they...? [LB596]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: The issue becomes...I was putting together the package for the Guard specifically, and that includes the Army National Guard and the Air Guard, which in Nebraska numbers about 4,000--4,200 total. Now 500, that really doesn't seem like a lot, and could we get those numbers? The issue becomes the management of the money, because you have to pay forward into the system. I just can't write a check for

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the amount that it would take out of either the National Guard fund, you know, the National Guard Association funds, and that's where the problem comes with the 500. And that's not just for our organization, that's for any organization. That...getting that number of 500 is not necessarily as much the challenge as getting the money paid forward because...I would had to have soldiers write a check to me; I would have had to put the check into an account. Then, once the account reached that level of 500, then I can go in and make the application and receive that. And that's where it becomes hard is because what if I fell short by 65, and it's been 7, 8, 9, 10 months that I've been in the process of doing this. Now I got to turn around and write checks to send all that money back at some point. That's where the real challenge lies. The consolidation of all these groups into one makes good sense because the fact of the matter is, not only am I a member of the Nebraska National Guard, the Officer Association, I'm a life member of the Officer Association, I'm a life member of the VFW, I'm a member of the American Legion, I'm a member of the Officer Association which includes your active component forces. A lot of the same names are on the same sheets. So this is a good consolidation of those things, if we can work that way. It would make it a much smoother process. [LB596]

SENATOR HADLEY: And so when you say consolidation, we would just have, basically, one plate? [LB596]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: It would have different symbols. The plate would be different in the sense that...the original example I was shown is that a veteran...there would be a veteran section. And then if you were in the Marine Corps, you would have to document that you were in the Marine Corps, you could choose the Marine Corps; if you were in the Army, you could choose Army; if you were in the National Guard, you'd choose National Guard. But it would all be with...under one auspices. [LB596]

SENATOR HADLEY: Thank you. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Other questions? I would just follow up with you, Lieutenant Colonel, first of all, again thank you for your service, and you and I had a brief conversation before the hearing... [LB596]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: Yes, ma'am. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: ...and you said you wanted to be in support of all the bills, but didn't necessarily want to get up and testify. So you're speaking in support of all of them. [LB596]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: Yes, ma'am. I also support the LB93, LB373 and LB383 as well, but specifically wanted to speak to the LB596. Each one of those others, we do have a number of Purple Heart folks within our association as well, and those many that

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came before us as well, so I fully support those. And there again, as I look through all the paperwork, I think too, this was a...it was not an expensive venture, and I think that with the addition of the ability to get the license plate, we actually will pay...make up the difference for what the other bills would accomplish as well. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Very good. Well, I just to give you a chance to get that on the record. [LB596]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: Thank you, ma'am. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you. Next proponent. [LB596]

JOHN HILGERT: Good afternoon, Chairman Dubas, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is John Hilgert, J-o-h-n H-i-l-g-e-r-t. I'm director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. I'm here to testify in support of LB596 which would allow greater flexibility for our Nebraska veterans in obtaining organizational license plates. I'd also like to thank Senator Price for carrying this bill for Nebraska's veterans. We'd like to comment with the...about some of the recent history that we've had regarding this effort and, Senator Hadley, I think Lieutenant Colonel Teegerstrom made reference to an idea that we had during the interim whereby we would have one veteran plate, if you will, and the Department of Motor Vehicles was going to allow all the organizations to count that one veterans plate as the 500 limit. Within that 500, each branch or organization could designate their unique emblem with a generic background. That was an effort by this administration through the Department of Motor Vehicles to try to make it more attainable through the legislation that was passed some time ago. That was a bit problematic for all the reasons that Lieutenant Colonel Teegerstrom outlined. But that was an effort that we made. Obviously, the situation that the...and current law is a step forward, but has not been taken advantage of because of that \$500 limit and having to pay forward and so forth. We've been talking about veterans license plates since my former position as a state senator back in the '90s. And you'll see a theme today because I'm going to be a proponent on every single one of the bills today. We need to get something done, and I want to offer my department and my service to the committee, to the committee counsel, whatever the technical aspects and challenges may be with the legislation that we're going to...that you'll hear today. We'll certainly do whatever we can to make it happen for our veterans. Again, LB596 grants greater flexibility for our military and our veterans who are members of recognized associations to gain access to these license plates to display their honor and pride, while at the same time allowing others to recognize them for their services that they've made. We certainly don't have a problem with the elimination of the \$5 fee on the military or the Purple Heart. The \$5 fee does go to our cash fund for the cemetery in Alliance, but we believe that, with the passage of this bill and perhaps others today, that would more than compensate for the cash fund loss by this one gesture for those members of the military or the Purple Heart and those who have

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received a Purple Heart (inaudible). This bill reflects the effort that's being already made and already accomplished in all of our sister states for those who are currently serving in the Armed Forces and those who have served, so it...we believe it's time, and we would support the effort by the Legislature to pass this legislation and others that we're going to hear today. If there's any questions, I'd be certainly willing to answer them, Senator. Thank you, Senator. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you very much, Director Hilgert. Are there questions? Seeing none right now... [LB596]

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: ...thank you. Further proponents for LB596? [LB596]

JEFFREY BAKER: Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, members of the committee. My name is Jeffrey Baker, J-e-f-f-r-e-y B-a-k-e-r. I am the Seward County veterans service officer, and I'm here on behalf of the Nebraska Veterans of Foreign Wars to testify in support of LB596. I want to thank Senator Price for introducing LB596. And we came to Senator Price as an organization. We were having difficulty getting that 500. We feel that with the 150 we would be able to meet that threshold, and we do believe that the state needs to take active approach on veterans benefits and something simple like a veterans license plate. And so I apologize; I'm actually recovering from a cold, so I'm not going to take a whole lot of time today, but I thank you for your time and your consideration. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you for coming forward. Are there questions? I would have one for you. [LB596]

JEFFREY BAKER: Yes, ma'am. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Just similar to the previous testifiers who said it's that paying it forward where the problem comes in, is that...would you agree with that? [LB596]

JEFFREY BAKER: I would agree with that, yes, Ma'am. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Very good, thank you. Thank you very much for coming today. [LB596]

JEFFREY BAKER: Thank you. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Further proponents for LB596? Are there any opponents? Anyone in the neutral? Senator Price, would you like to close? [LB596]

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SENATOR PRICE: Thank you. I'll take advantage of this briefly. Committee members, I just want to take this as an opportunity to publicly thank those who came behind me to support this bill, for Mr. Baker to make the effort, for all our other veterans to come out here. Obviously, for Senator Hilgert to do so is well within his wheelhouse, if you would. But again, important also in this discussion is the concept whereby 1 percent of people are serving in the military. And never more than 3 percent total have served. So when you look at numbers, and we just...those numbers in our communities, when we see them, and we're familiar with it, but when you look at it in aggregate, it's a very small number of people. But I feel that once we're able to get the threshold met, and these organizations and individuals will get these license plate, we will see a windfall as people order more of these and fewer of the standard plate. And I think that's...because people like to identify. There are two groups that I know of to date that have met the threshold, and that would be Union Pacific and Creighton. And one of them is almost like a fraternity, if you would, I don't mean to lump them all, but when you look at Creighton, they're almost as good as the folks out at Kearney about keeping their alumni association up, you know. But then you think of Union Pacific, a Fortune 500 company, and you think of the \$35,000 threshold that they talked about, the accounting challenges. So again, first and foremost, I appreciate the effort that everybody made to come out to testify on this bill. And I appreciate your indulgence, and I would answer any questions you might have. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: Questions for Senator Price? Seeing none, thank you very much. [LB596]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you. [LB596]

SENATOR DUBAS: That will close our hearing on LB596, and we will open the hearing now on LB378, Senator Smith. [LB596]

SENATOR SMITH: (Exhibit 1) Good afternoon, Senator Dubas and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. For the record my name is Jim Smith, J-i-m S-m-i-t-h, and I represent the 14th Legislative District in Sarpy County. I'm here this afternoon to introduce LB378. LB378 would eliminate the extra \$5 fee that is currently charged for Pearl Harbor Survivor, Ex-Prisoner of War, Disabled American Veteran, and Purple Heart license plates. I introduced this bill after being contacted by a constituent who strongly believes, as do I, that it is less than respectful for this state to require those veterans who have already sacrificed so much to have to pay for these plates. Under current law, a person who qualifies to display one of these four plates must pay annually the regular plate fee of \$3.30 and an additional \$5 for the specialty plate. The \$5 is remitted to the Nebraska Veteran Cemetery System Operation Fund. This fund is used for the operation and maintenance of the veteran cemetery in Alliance. After looking more carefully at this issue, I decided that this idea has merit and is something that we should consider as a committee. According to the Department of

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Motor Vehicles' 2011 annual report, there were 2,016 military license plates issued to drivers across our state. I have a handout and, if the pages could distribute this, I have a handout that breaks that down by county. I know we all would like to see what...how this reflects in our individual counties and districts. Nearly every county is represented on this list, yet the number is not so large that the cost could not be covered by other means. If you look at the fiscal note, passage of this bill would result in an estimated \$11,600 shortfall for fiscal 2013-2014, and a \$14,000 shortfall for 2014-2015. However, according to the fiscal note, the Appropriations Committee's budget recommendation of \$25,000 in cash funds would more than offset this loss for at least the next biennium. At least 14 states do not charge for these kinds of military recognition plates. An additional six states provide free plates, as well as waive the initial registration fee for these veterans. These individuals' lives have been forever changed, and nothing will ever come close to make up for the pain they have suffered, and this state should consider covering the cost of these plates as a very, very small token of recognition for the many sacrifices they've made. Senators, thank you for listening and for your consideration of LB378, and I ask that you advance the bill. Thank you. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Senator Smith. Questions? Senator Price. [LB378]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Chairperson Dubas. Senator Smith, thank you very much. Obviously, I am in support of this, but I want to make sure that we clarified. When we talk about the fee, that's an additional fee. The veteran is paying for the plate, and I want to make sure...that might have got lost, that they are paying for it, they're just not paying the additional fee. And I think that's a point that we don't want to get lost in testimony. [LB378]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Senator Hadley. [LB378]

SENATOR HADLEY: Senator Dubas, thank you. Senator Smith, and I should know this, but is there any verification of the people who get...who ask for this designation so that... [LB378]

SENATOR SMITH: There...Yes, and I believe somewhere in statute there is some mention there of that process, but there is verification. [LB378]

SENATOR HADLEY: That it's just not the word of the person coming in. [LB378]

SENATOR SMITH: Yes. [LB378]

SENATOR HADLEY: Okay. [LB378]

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SENATOR DUBAS: Further questions? Senator Price. [LB378]

SENATOR PRICE: As a point of clarification, perhaps it's the DD Form 214 for post-Korean War veterans. There is another form, I apologize, I don't know all the nomenclature for military things, and also your military license, suffice it I checked today with the...both the Sarpy County, Lancaster County, and Douglas County folks, that's how they do it to date. So I was proffering that for Senator Smith for the record. [LB378]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you for being my wing man. (Laughter) [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Very good. Other questions? Seeing none, thank you, Senator Smith. [LB378]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: We have our first proponent for LB378. [LB378]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Good afternoon again, and Greg Holloway, G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y, representing the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Nebraska. We approve this bill, the DAV does, the Department of Nebraska. Just want to let you know that there is...I was a county veterans service officer one time and, yes, there is a process that you have to go through to verify whether or not you're a combat-wounded veteran, received a Purple Heart, or you're a service-connected disabled veteran. I worked on the DAV plate bill when it first was initiated, and it was...you had to be 100 percent service connected to get the plate. And then they've changed it, when I was taking a nap somewhere, and you don't actually have to be 100 percent anymore, but your service connected disability has to be 100 percent of what your disability is. I earned mine by getting the back of my head blown out, so...in July of '68, so I like having my DAV plate number 12. And we'll use the money good. And the state cemeteries, they'll be taken care of. The veterans organizations within the state of Nebraska support the department, John Hilgert's office, 100 percent, and we'll make sure that the state cemeteries are well taken care of, one way or the other. So, if you have any questions, I'll answer them, but the DAV does support it. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you very much. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you again for coming today. Further proponents for LB378? [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: Good afternoon, Chairperson Dubas, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is John Hilgert, J-o-h-n H-i-l-g-e-r-t. I'm the director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. I'm here to testify in support of LB378 which would strike certain fees from associated...associated with various veterans-related license plates. I would also like to thank Senator Smith for introducing this bill on behalf of Nebraska's veterans. In many ways, we Nebraskans

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find ways to thank our veterans. We thank them for their service, their sacrifice, and their dedication. This bill is just one more way we can extend a heartfelt thank you to our veterans for everything they've done and, in many ways, everything they continue to do being involved in our communities. Exempting these fees would be a small token of the appreciation to those veterans. It should be noted as well that this bill would eliminate a funding source for our state veterans' cemetery in Alliance. The state veterans' cemetery is a division of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. I would address your attention to the fiscal note on this bill in which the Legislative Fiscal Office has noted that the Appropriations Committee's preliminary budget recommendation uses revenue from the veteran-themed license plates deposited into the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery operations fund to offset the need for General Funds to operate our cemetery. The current cash fund balance is \$66,708 as of January 31, 2013. Could be sufficient to fund the committee's recommendation for the next two years. However, at some point after that, it would be necessary to replace the plate fee cash funds with General Funds. Nevertheless, I'm here to support LB378. I would also like to, perhaps, call a technical point to the bill, and perhaps Senator Smith's consideration is that the list of the different plates that were mentioned in this bill, I don't believe they extend to Gold Star plates. And if it be the wishes of Senator Smith, I would bring that to the attention of the committee, that they also be included; they have given so much and many times, sometimes more than the veteran. I can't imagine losing a son or a daughter. With that, I'm able to answer any questions that you might have. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Director. Are there questions? Senator Brasch. [LB378]

SENATOR BRASCH: Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thank you for your testimony and to all those in the room who have served, and when you made reference to this list, what I'm wondering is...these are just the people with the plates, there are so many other veterans that have not asked for a plate or requested a plate or...the ones that have the military honors, this is just a portion? Not everyone has a plate or has asked for...these are the people who currently have the plates? [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: That is correct. I believe the information that Senator Smith has distributed are those who currently have taken advantage of the state's program for the veterans...for the military honor plates. That list does not include all of those that are eligible. In fact, a list of all those eligibles could only be estimated because they... [LB378]

SENATOR BRASCH: That would be of interest to know who is eligible and what could... [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: We could probably come up with a guesstimate. [LB378]

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SENATOR BRASCH: And, perhaps for future legislation, I would just like to make it more available somehow that the Legislature could...for a special parking of honor...they deserve all the honors and gratitude from the bottom of everyone's heart, but is this enough to do? I'm just wondering for those who are not stepping forward if there's... [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: Well, I agree, and we can take a look at that, Senator. I would make a, perhaps, an observation that, nevertheless, if the list that was distributed, those currently taking advantage of the program, and that list is what we're getting those \$5 for in cash funds for our cemetery, should you reduce or eliminate the fees, there may be more individuals willing to take advantage of the program. But those extra individuals wouldn't represent a loss in fees, we're not getting that now. So regarding the fiscal impact, narrowly defining just part of your answer from our department's standpoint, it wouldn't hurt or wouldn't impact our fiscal situation any more than this bill as it is currently written. But it would be interesting to note those individuals that are eligible. It would be difficult, for example, in the Gold Star plates because, I believe, the eligibility extends beyond the immediate parents, but also family members. So that would be an estimate as well. But we could certainly look at those numbers and make an attempt to do so. But I didn't want to respond to you, Senator, without making it clear that, even if other eligible individuals would take advantage of this program, it wouldn't negatively impact the fiscal note of this bill and the operation of our cemetery. [LB378]

SENATOR BRASCH: Well, I would appreciate knowing that in the future. [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: We'll try. [LB378]

SENATOR BRASCH: Because we...I have been told by veterans about how friendlier other states are in many areas: retirement, taxes, you know, and I thought if the playing...which would be... [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: Well, we tried to eliminate those taxes. (Laugh) [LB378]

SENATOR BRASCH: Well, but if we could substitute license plates for...you know, one step at a time, I'm thinking if we could at least do something within our grasp that, you know, I don't... [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: And your point is certainly well taken. And a myriad of states do things differently. And we're proud of the benefits that we currently have in our state. We're proud of the generosity as exhibited by our policy makers, our Legislature, but we're always willing to advocate for additional benefits for our veterans as we are doing today. [LB378]

SENATOR BRASCH: Very good, thank you so much. [LB378]

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SENATOR DUBAS: Other questions? I would have a question about the money that currently is being appropriated from General Funds for the veterans' cemetery; that's just mainly maintenance? What all does that money go towards for that? [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: The funding composition of the cemetery itself is from two sources: a little bit of cash funds and a lot bit of general. The General Funds do everything from paying for the salaries, our water bill, our electric bill, our communications bill, the benefits for our staff, the fertilizer, all of the operations that it takes to run a state veterans' cemetery. So I could certainly...I'd love to have everyone come out and, for a visit this summer, if you would, to Alliance, Nebraska. It's a very beautiful community, and it's a wonderful cemetery. But everything you could imagine has a cost, and that cost is paid for with those General Funds, as appropriated through the Appropriations Committee and your efforts, and we appreciate that. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Is that our only state cemetery? [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: That's our only state veterans' cemetery. However, I would be remiss not to mention that there is a state-owned cemetery in Grand Island, and specifically, Hall County. That is a state veterans' home cemetery. It is, I believe, our first burial was 1889, or thereabouts, the cornerstone was laid in 1887 by General Thayer for the Nebraska Veterans' Home. That's what it was called at the time, Soldiers' and Sailors' Home; it's now called the Grand Island Veterans' Home. And that cemetery was established contemporaneous with the facility itself. That predates the state Veterans' Cemetery Grants Program, it predates the VA, the USVA. And we...the eligibility for that cemetery is to...I didn't come prepared for that, but it is basically had to be a member of the veterans home. So it's not open to all veterans in Nebraska. And we currently...although, there's currently statutory permission to do that, we have not made a request for the Appropriations Committee, nor made an effort to designate a state veterans' cemetery. It would have to be greatly expanded and the services expanded as well in order to accommodate all the veterans that might be interesting in utilizing the services at a state veterans' cemetery in Hall County. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: I appreciate that. I was wanting you to make that differential between those two cemeteries, so I do appreciate that. Any other questions? [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you, Senator. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you. [LB378]

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Further proponents for LB378? Are there any opponents? Anyone

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in the neutral? Senator Smith. [LB378]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, again, committee members, for listening to the testimony, and I do appreciate the supporters that came here today. And I agree wholeheartedly with their comments. Just a...on the Gold Star, I believe, and Senator Price can probably correct me on this, but the Gold Star license plate is recognition of family members, if I'm not mistaken. And so, that is correct; it's not included in this list. Wouldn't mind having that discussion. But that was not part of the...what I was looking at in this bill. Just a little food for thought, I know long term that there will be a concern with funding. Though the fiscal note for eliminating these fees is nominal, it is a fiscal note nonetheless. Kind of put things in perspective, I think there's roughly 50,000 to 60,000 vanity license plates out there currently. If there were a 25-cent charge...and currently those vanity license plates are about \$40, I believe. If there was a 25-cent increase on those vanity license plates, that would offset this fiscal note, and that might be something that could be considered long term. I'm not particularly an advocate for increasing fees elsewhere to offset the cost, but that would certainly be something that I would entertain with the committee. So once again, thank you for your time, and I appreciate your consideration. [LB378]

SENATOR DUBAS: Any questions for Senator Smith? Seeing none, thank you for introducing your bill. That will close the hearing on LB378, and we will move on to LB383, Senator Janssen. Welcome. [LB378]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Dubas and the members...fellow members of the Transportation Committee. I am Charlie Janssen, C-h-a-r-l-i-e J-a-n-s-s-e-n. I represent Fremont and all of Dodge County in the 15th Legislative District. And for my fellow veterans here today, this bill was introduced on their behalf. And if there are any veterans here that are Vietnam veterans, I would just like to state, welcome home. I appear to introduce LB383. LB383 would provide for the issuance of Nebraska Armed Forces Pride Plates. LB383 would create license plates recognizing service in the United States Army, United States Navy, which I'm partial to, United States Marine Corps, United States Coast Guard, United States Air Force, Nebraska National Guard, and Nebraska Air National Guard. Active duty reservists, veterans, and surviving spouses would be eligible for the appropriate plates. Alphanumeric plates and personalized message plates would be available. Applicants would pay an annual fee of \$5 for alphanumeric plates and \$40 for personalized plates. Alphanumeric plates applicants may elect not to pay the fee for one set of alphanumeric plates. And if that's something the committee decides that we want to go away from, we could work with that certainly, if that's going to hold things up. Fees for alphanumeric plates would be credited to the Nebraska Veteran Cemetery System Operation Fund. Fees for personalized message plates would be credited 25 percent of the fee to the Department of Motor Vehicles Cash Fund and 75 percent of the fee to the Nebraska Veteran Cemetery System Operation Fund. That language I took from previous bills, ran

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by Senator McGill in previous years. The Department of Motor Vehicles would be given rule and regulation authority to design the plates and establish a method for proof of service. Armed Forces plates would be available in 2015. I would like to make the committee aware that the Nebraska National Guard suggested a change in the bill. I'm not going to open it; you can if you want. On page 12, lines 15 and 16, the bill lists the Nebraska National Guard and the Nebraska Air National Guard. A guard representative contacted me in January and relayed that the Nebraska National Guard term includes both Nebraska Army National Guard, Nebraska Air National Guard. She suggested to me that we could either add "Army" to the Nebraska National Guard or remove Nebraska Air National Guard. Since the term "Nebraska National Guard" is an inclusive term, I'll leave it to the testifiers that come behind me to decide that. We're privileged to have nearly 150,000 veterans and 15,000 active duty National Guard and reserve personnel in Nebraska. I urge the committee to recognize them for their honorable service through the passage of LB383. Now...and I also agree with the previous bills that have come before us today, and I've personally never had any greater pride other than, obviously, being married to my wife and my children than serving in the military. And when I look at people that come back right now from the military, a lot of times these are at-risk people. They've given a lot of service; they've been in some traumatic experiences; and to me...I was here when we had the 500 plate thing, it's just...I sit down next to these people. We all sit down next to them. But I sit down to them, and they connect to me. Like, well, hey, Charlie, what about this, what about this? They talk about their service, and that's their pride. Wherever they're working, and if they're not working, it's the pride in the military. And to recognize that, I think we could really boost people up when they come back and not have to go to the veterans' association and say, well, as soon as we get 500 people, and if you give me \$40, or whatever the fee is, I can make this happen. If they can slap that on there right away, on their car and drive around and have people recognize them and say, you know what, thanks for your service; I appreciate that. And people generally do, but so often people don't know who served and who didn't serve, and I see it day in and day out. The more and more that people know that I served, they gravitate toward me and say, oh, what did you do, how can we do this, what's available to me? They want to be recognized, but they won't say they want to be recognized. And we need to do that. I've sat on this committee now for five years, and I've seen bill after bill come forward. And I'm not saying this is the perfect bill; I've already pointed out some dings in it that need to be fixed. But I think we, as a committee, can combine together and find the right bill. You know, and it doesn't even have to be free; it doesn't. It could be the same price. And we could uplift our veterans and quit giving lip service every year, quit having people like us come down here and put bills forward knowing that it will make the veterans in our particular district happy. This is a real opportunity for us. And I think we really need to act on it this year and get something done. And we've got a nice combination of bills we could put together. And I know this committee is a great committee, and it's very...it's actually ran great by Chairman Dubas, which I told you, and probably most the counsel and the clerk, but I think we can really do something this year. And, you know, the one thing...I've taken

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several things from the military, but the one thing that is most important to me, and this is not gender specific, but it's just something we've always said, is you never leave a man behind. And year after year, since I've sat on this committee, we have left a man behind because we find reasons not to pass legislation for a license plate bill. It's a simple bill. It's an easy bill. Fiscal notes, I think there's a \$9,000 fiscal note. You know, I say that's worth it. If that's it, if you could triple that, it's worth it. You could do whatever you want with it. So that's where I'm at on this specific legislation. It means a lot to me. It's the most personalized legislation that I've sponsored, and I really want to work to see something...and it doesn't have to have my name on it; it could have any one of our names on it, any one of the 49's name on it, and I just want to get something passed this year so our veterans know that they're acknowledged. And let's don't forget that the...the very important part...I came back from the military at 22 years old; I could have went anywhere. This is 20 years ago; could have went anywhere, but just having that pride and being in the military and actually coming through a wartime situation really enlightened me to want to participate. And if a license plate can do that, whatever the fiscal note on this is, which is pretty minimal, or Senator Smith's or Senator Price's, whatever the fiscal note, it's worth it. Not only tenfold, you can extrapolate that out. So, that's all I have, that's more than I meant to say, and I'm going to waive my closing. I'm going to sit in my comfortable chair; I don't know why people sit in those hard chairs, but I'll just sit there and keep my mouth shut and listen to the testimony. I'll be happy to answer any questions, though. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Are there questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for introducing the bill. [LB383]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: We have our first proponent on LB383. Welcome back. [LB383]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Senator Dubas, Greg Holloway, G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y, again the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Nebraska, supports this bill. John Hilgert discussed, you know, some of the bills that were trying to be passed early '90s. I did oppose some of those bills because the language of those bills were kind of convoluted, and there had to be a definition of veteran. And they wanted to put the National Guard and the Army Reserves in there as veterans, so I argued against them because...this bill here I've actually read it, and it is pretty cut and dry, and it makes it simple. I like to work on the KISS system: keep it simple, stupid. And this makes it...spells it out pretty good, who can do it, who can do it, who cannot do it, what it will look like, and who is represented. So I do support this bill and the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Nebraska supports this bill also. And there's a...it's pretty easy. The county veterans service officers will make sure that the right people...they take care of a lot of the applications for these bills and not just the motor vehicles. And they assist the veterans and discerning who can do what and how and whatever, and they're very

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good at their job and doing this, and I know they will do it. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Holloway. Are there questions? Senator Brasch. [LB383]

SENATOR BRASCH: Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thank you, Mr. Holloway, for your service to the country, for coming here on these bills. And as I mentioned before, you know, if there's a way that the Legislature, you know, can help, you know, I know we can't pay forward, but if we can show an active respect or kindness for our military who have shown valor, courage, and sacrifice, that...it's my hope that we find a way. And, you know, if it's in the form of a plate or even recognized parking, you know, that would be something that I think that, you know, we should do and, working with the veterans administration and my colleagues here who have served, we'd like to do that and so thank you for coming forward. Thank you for serving. And those of you in this room and those who I cannot speak to today that are beyond the list given to us, so thank you. [LB383]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Well, thank you, Senator. I've been working with...for veterans since...as a matter of fact, I testified for veterans' benefits for Education with Governor Tiemann or right after I got back from Vietnam. My mother was the national commander for the U.S. Army mothers' organization, so she drug me along to one of the hearings. And Nebraska has always been out front; we have the best Department of Veterans' Affairs of any state that I've worked with, because I look after a lot of the veterans in the Cav Association that are throughout the whole United States, and they do not have the services Nebraska has for their veterans in other states, so we're up front, foremost and take care of our veterans which includes...not only when you do that, you take care of all their dependents. So keeps Nebraska healthy and strong, and that's what we want to do. Thank you. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Other questions? Thank you, Mr. Holloway. [LB383]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Thank you. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Further proponents for LB383? [LB383]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: Lieutenant Colonel Eric Teegerstrom, E-r-i-c T-e-e-g-e-r-s-t-r-o-m. Ma'am, I know I said earlier I wasn't going to add anything, but I just...I guess I want to make one point, as I sat there, and I listened to the testimony, in the Guard it's the same way. I work full time for the Guard; I work full time...I mean I was a regular Army officer. It's always about the money. It's always about the money. Guarantee you, in this committee, about 80 percent of what you do, 90 percent of what you do, it always comes down to the money. And as Senator Janssen said here earlier, my license plate on my pickup...I'm a calvary man by trade; that's what I do, and it says

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"CAV SCOUT" (phonetic) on it. And the people at work, affectionately, because it's so big, loud, and obnoxious, they affectionately refer to it as the "CAV SCOUT" so they know who it belongs to. And I pay that money for that license plate, and I don't think twice about it. And I think sometimes we get focused on those dollars, when I think what in reality is the...most of the folks here, veterans of whatever flavor you are, they're willing to pay what is fair. You know, what is fair for that. We're not asking the state to take a big gouge on doing this. What is fair? And I'm sure that Senator Janssen, or anybody else here that is a veteran of some type, no matter what service you are in, they're willing to pay their fair share. And I just kind of wanted to make that point to be sure that you're not all walking away from here thinking that it's always about the money. I'm willing to pay my \$30 or \$20 or whatever the case is, and I can understand the Purple Heart plates and some of those others, that's a different issue, because that was something they earned through, you know, actions that they were necessarily involved in versus this is a prestige plate to a degree. And there are other states, and I know sometimes we don't want to compare to other states, but Arkansas, as an example, has had a plate for their guard for a very long time, and believe it or not, it is done by rank so you are issued a plate based upon what your rank is within the Arkansas National Guard. So if you're the Adjunct General, you have a "1" on your license plate, and it follows down by rank all the way to the newest guy who might be 7,526. And, obviously, that's a lot of administrative work to change that year in and year out because the ranks are going to change. But I'm just giving that as an example of how, you know, we're willing to pay our share when it comes to this prestige plate situation. We're not looking for anything free, we're not looking for anything special, we're just looking for the opportunity. Any questions? I'd be happy to answer them. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Are there questions? Thank you for that clarification. [LB383]

ERIC TEEGERSTROM: Thank you, Ma'am. [LB383]

JOHN HILGERT: Again my name is John Hilgert, J-o-h-n H-i-l-g-e-r-t, director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. I am here today to support LB383 which would create a Nebraska Armed Forces pride plate. I'd also like to thank Senator Janssen for introducing this bill on behalf of Nebraska's veterans. The Armed Forces pride plate is a goal that Nebraska's veterans have had for many years. Obviously, some of the bills that have been proposed in the past by people like me were insufficient. Mr. Holloway, I appreciate that, (laugh) but individuals have attempted. We've tried for so long, so many years, you know. We're here. We supported Senator Smith, Senator Price, Senator Janssen, whatever it takes to try to get this done. We understand the Department of Motor Vehicles and the criteria that they've outlined and the expense. We would go so far as to say that the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs would be the agency...We would be proud to take that eligibility chore as part of our duties to make...to try to help out if we need to. I've been a director for a few years

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now, and never before have I testified on the full slate in support like I have done today. I want to thank the administration; I want to thank the senators; and again, as Senator Janssen said, whatever it takes to get it done my office stands ready to assist including the role of the eligibility determination for these plates on LB383. Thank you. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Director Hilgert. Are there questions? [LB383]

JOHN HILGERT: One more point, if that 3 percent is too conservative, and I think that it might be, but we're a conservative state. If it was merely 4, that would be more to pay for the loss of cash funds through Senator Smith's bill, etcetera. So perhaps there is a grand bargain in these ideas today that we can support, and we will stand ready to assist in any way we can. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Appreciate that offer. Thank you. Questions? Seeing none, thank you again for your testimony. Further testifiers in support of LB383? [LB383]

JEFFREY BAKER: Madam Chair, members of the Transportation Committee, again my name is Jeffrey Baker, J-e-f-f-r-e-y B-a-k-e-r. I have been to this committee since 2006 testifying on license plate bills. I think my friends are tired of hearing me talk about license plate bills, and I found out this last week that my 8-year-old son is even tired of hearing me talk about veterans' license plate bills. We had the opportunity to go skiing this last week, and we were in Colorado. And in Colorado, like every other state, they have veterans' license plate bills. And so I asked those veterans why they wanted those plates, why they purchased those plates. And it's because that they were proud; they're proud of their service. And it's just a simple way to recognize their service. And finally my son, after probably asking 20 people, finally asked, why are you asking everyone about their license plates? And I explained to him. And he said, well, that's just pretty easy to fix. And I said, there you go, from an eight-year-old. So I thought that was a neat story. We are the only state in this country that does not have a veterans' license plate, a generic veterans' license plate. Even Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and American Samoa have veterans' license plates. And so it's just a simple, as Senator Janssen said, it's a simple bill, and it's a very good cause. And so I would appreciate any support that we could do to get LB383 passed. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: Thank you, Mr. Baker. Questions? Seeing none, thank you for coming forward. [LB383]

JEFFREY BAKER: Thank you. [LB383]

SENATOR DUBAS: (Exhibit 2) Further proponents on LB383? Are there any opponents? We have one letter in the neutral on LB383 from Rhonda Lahm, the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Senator Janssen, you were going to waive your closing? All right, very good. Well, that will close the hearing on LB383. And we will

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move on to LB93. [LB383]

SENATOR SMITH: And we will now move to LB93, and Senator Dubas will open for LB93. [LB93]

SENATOR DUBAS: Good afternoon, Senator Smith, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Annette Dubas, A-n-n-e-t-t-e D-u-b-a-s, and I represent Legislative District 34. LB93 allows for the word "veteran" to be displayed on the front of a veteran's driver's license or state ID card. This option is available to an individual who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States and was honorably discharged. A notation is voluntary and will remain on the license until the owner indicates otherwise. A person could wait until their current license expires and asks that it be added onto the new one, or they may obtain a replacement license in order to receive the notation immediately. There would be no additional cost to add the notation, just the regular replacement fee. The director of Motor Vehicles, through rules and regs, will determine the acceptable discharge papers in order to show proof of service. Currently, if a veteran needs to show proof of service, they must provide discharge papers or a DD-214. This is not a picture ID; it's bulky to carry and contains the person's Social Security number. So, for security reasons, veterans are not likely to carry this on a routine basis. I would like to thank Hall County Supervisor, Pam Lancaster, for bringing this idea to my attention. There are well over 30 states who are either...who either have this in place already or are working on legislation or are in the process of fully implementing it. In my mind, there are multiple reasons to pass LB93, and we've heard so many...so many compelling reasons on the license plates here this afternoon, and I think those same reasons carry forward on this particular piece of legislation. First and foremost, it's a matter of convenience for a veteran to be able to show proof of service. And we know more and more of our businesses, restaurants, different entities will offer a discount to a veteran. We have to be able to show that you're a veteran; you have to show proof, and so unless you're carrying that DD-214 or some other...something else that will show proof, you won't be able to take advantage of that discount or that recognition that is being offered to you. I think it's also a great way...you know, we can see, as Senator Janssen mentioned, if you see someone with a license plate, you can go up and publicly acknowledge that person's service. Well, the same can be said true if you're showing your driver's license. And we know we're asked to show our driver's license for a lot of different reasons. And it would be my hope that when a veteran is asked to show their driver's license, for whatever reason, whoever is viewing that license would take the opportunity to say thank you. It's a pretty simple gesture, but I hope they would take advantage of that. Another issue that I hadn't really thought about as I was working on this is we do know that many of our veterans upon returning home are suffering from PTSD or drug abuse or may even be homeless. They've got serious issues that they're dealing with. And they may come in contact with law enforcement, and if there is a way for that law enforcement official to know, early into the intervention or as soon as possible, that

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they're dealing with a veteran, it would be my hope that that law enforcement officer would take a different...because they would have that additional information they'd be able to handle the situation in a better manner. I'm the daughter of a Korean War veteran. And my dad taught me from a very, very early age patriotism and respect for service men and women. I don't know how old I was. I wasn't very old, but he taught me the proper way of folding a flag. We had a flagpole out in front of our house. We put that flag up every day. I mean, I just grew up with that instilled in me, and that any time you saw a serviceman or woman you made sure that you recognized them and appreciated them and thanked them for their service. And my dad isn't with me anymore. But I am so proud of his service, and this bill is just a way for me to honor his memory. And for what he taught me and for what he gave in service to our country, it's a way for me to say thank you to him; it's a way for me to say thank you to all those people behind me, and for all the people across our state, as well as across our nation, for the service that they have provided to us. And so I hope through all of these bills that have been introduced today...Senator Janssen, I couldn't agree with you more. It's time for us to step forward and really, you know, not just give lip service to this, to actually step forward and in some small way acknowledge the service and sacrifice that our veterans and their families have made to our state. So with that I'd be happy to entertain any questions you may have. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: All right, Senator Price has a question. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you Senator Smith. And this is something that I proffer that, hopefully, somebody behind you will enumerate a little more on and that is, if upon...well first of all, we know that our homeless population is made up of about 25 percent of veterans. So, if we have a homeless veteran who...or a veteran...someone who...picked up, as you said, or becomes in contact with the system in any way, if they have veteran status, what's important is that federal VA programs will come on board to assist with some really robust programs now to help with veterans. So if you can imagine just establishing the status of a person as a veteran, it's not as easy as some might put out, and if that work is already done, and it's on a license, that will only get services quicker to a veteran. And I think that's very important because the veterans' hospital in Omaha has a one-stop shop. A veteran goes there, and they get all their appointments and...and they need right then and there, but you have to establish a veteran status. And so I was hopeful that in your bringing forward this bill that that...and some point that's brought out and illuminated some by people who testify afterwards. And I appreciate you bringing the bill. [LB93]

SENATOR DUBAS: I appreciate those comments. And again, it wasn't something that I had really realized until I started doing the research on this bill, and it was brought to my attention. I had never thought about why...what an advantage would be to be able to show that proof as quickly and as easily as a driver's license or state ID card. [LB93]

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SENATOR SMITH: (Exhibits 3 and 4) All right. Are there other questions for Senator Dubas? All right, we have two letters to read into the record that are proponents on LB93: Jerry Watson, Sheriff of Hall County, and also Larry Dix, executive director of the Nebraska Association of County Officials. And, Senator Dubas, thank you for your opening on LB93. We now accept testimony in support of LB93, proponents. Welcome. [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Thank you, Senator Smith. Again, Greg Holloway, G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y, representing the Department of Nebraska, Disabled American Veterans. To talk a little bit about what Senator Price had just brought up, every veteran that is 100 percent service connected disabled has the opportunity to get a regular DOD, Department of Defense, ID card. Not all of those elect to. All honorably discharged veterans that have some medical issues have the ability to enter into the VA hospital system. Not all of them elect to. This would assist, again, agencies to help discern the needs. I had the opportunity to talk to a lieutenant and a captain with the highway patrol downstairs in the cafeteria this afternoon, talked to him a little bit about it. I said, would you give any special preference if you noticed a "V" on the license plate to indicate veteran. And they said, no, we're going to act in the manner that we're supposed to. I said, well, would you reach for your gun a little quicker if you know that he might...if this person might be a veteran and might be a little quicker. No, we're going to react the same to everybody anyway. So, they're okay with it. These two were anyway; they're okay with it. So, and that was one of my concerns about it. I thought, how are law enforcements going to react if they notice? Trust me, if you pull my vehicle over, you know I'm a veteran. I got 1st Cav patches all over it, so, all of them, and I have six vehicles that I could drive. So, but there's...it's not a bad thing. If they're trying to get a kind of a veterans' legal system going here, and that might help discern who needs to be put into what process. And when you're talking about whether to get the right assistance to homeless veterans, my daughter works for CenterPointe with the Nebraska transitional housing program in Lincoln taking care of 10 veterans, and she assists them a lot in getting those paperwork and all that stuff done. So, and getting them moved into the correct facility or organization to take care of them best, whether it be the state, federal, or county. And the county service officers, as being a county service officer myself at one time, we take care of a lot of homeless veterans and a lot of veterans with other issues. So discerning that there is a need and getting that need taken care of as efficiently and as fast as possibly is what makes or breaks a person, whether they be a veteran or not. So, thank you for allowing me to spend some time with you this afternoon and testify on these bills. And again, the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Nebraska, does support this bill also. Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Are there questions for Mr. Holloway. Senator Janssen. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Vice Chair Smith. Mr. Holloway, thank you for being here for all your testimony today. Now this bill is a little different from the other ones

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here. This is dealing with your identification card. [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Um-hum. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: And I really like this bill, so much, in fact, I thought I cosponsored it, but I'm not on it right now for some reason. But I think I did, I signed something because I had a bill exactly the same, so obviously I think it's a great bill. Do you see a difference between one or the other or both should be together, license plates and ID or...? That's what I think, but I mean I don't know, I mean what your preference would be? [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Oh, not necessarily. You know, the license plate discerns that...whether or not...but see, not everybody that has a driver's license has a vehicle either. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Well, you have six. [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: So you know. I have six, but I'm going to hang on to them, I like three of them a lot. But not everybody has...and, you know, Nebraska has a state ID, so that should apply to just the regular ID too. Go ahead and put it on the regular Nebraska state ID if it's applicable to that, in that sense, too. So it should work in conjunction together to discern whether a person is a veteran or not. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Okay. [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: And, you know, honorably discharged veteran, and the DD-214 discerns that, but...and there's...it's not a hard process to figure it out. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: No, it's not. [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: The county service officers will help sort that all out. I know them, know most of them. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: And in my particular county our CVSO does a great job. So I just kind of wanted to see where you were at on that, and I think this is an outstanding bill worthy of serious consideration. And... [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Yeah, I do too. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: You know, hopefully, some day, that we get to show our veterans' IDs to vote, oh sorry, that...different bill, different day. (Laughter) Thank you. [LB93]

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GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Thank you. Thank you, Senators. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: All right, I see no additional questions for Mr. Holloway. Thank you, Mr. Holloway for your testimony. [LB93]

GREGORY HOLLOWAY: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: We'll continue on with proponents of LB93. Welcome. [LB93]

DONALD SHUDA: (Exhibit 5) Good afternoon. My name is Donald Shuda, D-o-n-a-l-d S-h-u-d-a. And I'm the Hall, Howard, Nance, and Sherman County Veterans Service Officer located in Grand Island, Nebraska. I'm here on behalf of Hall County, Nebraska, and speaking on behalf of Pam Lancaster who is unable to be here today, and she asked me to read her letter for the record, so with that I will do that. Senator Dubas and committee members, Pam Lancaster, Hall County Board of Supervisors, chairman; National Association of County Veterans, Military and Families committee chairman; and past president of the Nebraska Association of County Officials, I would like to submit testimony in support of LB93. I apologize for not being here today. I am in Washington, D.C., attending a veterans' meeting. I would like to begin by thanking Senator Dubas for introducing the bill. With it, Nebraska is counted among 43 states who have either passed or have pending legislation regarding the identification of veterans on state veterans' license or state identification cards. Currently, this is a gesture which shows respect and appreciation for our veterans, but LB93 is far more than a feel-good piece of legislation. Presently, veterans need to show their discharge papers or DD-214 for legal identification which is needed for veterans' medical benefits, financial benefits and priority of service status when applying for a job. In addition, many businesses support military and veterans by giving discounts for their purchases. Discharge papers have far more personal information included, like a Social Security number, than can be obtained on a driver's license. If this information is misplaced or becomes available in an unsecured situation, identity theft can more readily take place. Attached to this brief testimony is more information made available through the Hall County Veteran's Service Officer, Don Shuda, and letters of support from Hall County Corrections Director, Fred Ruiz, as well as our Hall County Sheriff, Jerry Watson. I have also included a list of states which support similar legislation. Thank you for receiving my testimony. I respectfully ask that you support LB93, signed Pam Lancaster. And as a Hall County Veterans Service Officer, we also support this legislation. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Shuda. Do we have questions for Mr. Shuda? Senator Janssen. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Just real quick, Mr. Shuda, I assume you served; you're the CVSO in Hall County. [LB93]

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DONALD SHUDA: Yes, sir. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: What branch? [LB93]

DONALD SHUDA: Army. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Surprising, looks like you have a neckerchief around your...look like you'd wear in the Navy, more so...I was just curious about that. [LB93]

DONALD SHUDA: Army. [LB93]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Hey, I'll forgive you. (Laughter) [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: All right. Are there additional questions for Mr. Shuda? I see none. [LB93]

DONALD SHUDA: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you for your testimony. We continue with proponents of LB93. Welcome. [LB93]

BOB SWANSON: (Exhibit 6) Thank you. Madam Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Bob Swanson, B-o-b S-w-a-n-s-o-n. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my personal support for this bill which will allow veterans to have the word "veteran" printed on their driver's license. I'm proud to be a veteran of the U.S. Navy. I'm a Past Commander of Omaha Post 1 of the American legion, a founding member and Past Commander of the Omaha Post 1 Chapter of American Legion Riders which is an official program of the American Legion. With membership in these organizations, I've had contact with many veterans. As you probably know, the American Legion is the nation's largest wartime veterans' organization. With introduction of this bill, Nebraska joins 38 other states that either already have similar legislation or currently have similar bills pending. I believe I heard a more recent number of 43 or 45. According to the Veterans' Administration, as of September 30, 2010, we have over 145,000 veterans in Nebraska. I can't speak for all of them; however, I can tell you that in my experience, the vast majority of veterans are proud of their service to our country and will be proud to show evidence of their honorable service on their driver's license. Veterans don't ask for much for their service, and they will tell you that it was an honor to serve. However, the biggest tragedy is to forget them or to ignore those who have served because they have all sacrificed. Having the word "veteran" on the driver's license will help prevent this from happening. It will also be a source of pride for the veteran. It will provide an opportunity, as Senator Dubas mentioned, for anyone looking at the license for check verification, credit card use, boarding an airplane, or any other situation where the license is used for identification to thank that veteran for their

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service. There is ample evidence that businesses want to and are showing their appreciation to veterans. Nationwide, there are over 300,000 discounts available for our military and/or veterans. Having the word "veteran" on the driver's license will provide an easy method for those businesses to verify that the person is one they intend to honor with their discount. In Nebraska, over 2,000 businesses provide discounts, and if they had an easy way to verify eligibility, it is expected that more businesses would show their support for our veterans by providing discounts. I'm sure that all of you have seen the terrific showing of support on Veterans Day, November 11 of each year, in the form of either discounts or free meals for veterans. For example, among others, the following businesses provided these discounts: Applebee's, Chili's, Denny's, Famous Dave's, Golden Corral, Hooters, Hy-Vee, Krispy Kreme, Little Caesars, Lone Star Steakhouse, Outback Steakhouse, Red Lobster, Red Lion (sic--Robin), Sizzler, Subway, Texas Roadhouse, TGI Fridays, the Olive Garden and 7-Eleven. The generosity of these businesses is greatly appreciated, and each business, whether they ask for it or not, is entitled to see verification that the person receiving their generosity is a veteran. Most veterans do not carry any documentation of their service, the most recognizable of which is their DD-214 which are their discharge papers. This bill allows the word "veteran" to be placed on the driver's license by a showing of your DD-214 at the DMV when your license is issued. It doesn't require it; it allows it. In closing, I thank you all for your service to our state and thanks to Senators Hadley, Janssen and Price for their service to our country and our state. On behalf of the over 145,000 Nebraska veterans, thank you for supporting LB93 which will provide a meaningful reminder to all about the importance of supporting those who have served. If you have any questions, I will try to answer them. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Are there questions for Mr. Swanson? I see none. Thank you, Mr. Swanson. [LB93]

BOB SWANSON: One last comment, if I may. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Yes. [LB93]

BOB SWANSON: There was reference to having a "v" on the driver's license, and I think that would be inadequate. I think if you've looked at your driver's license, mine was renewed last year, on the front in the upper left-hand corner in big print it says "NEBRASKA." Right behind that in small print it gives the DMV Web site. And then down in the lower right-hand corner it again says "DMV Nebraska." I think down in that lower right-hand corner, in a font big enough to read the word, would be an appropriate place for the entire word "veteran." The reason a "v" I feel would be inadequate is a lot of people aren't familiar with the laws that are passed in our Legislature; they may not know that because a license has a "v" on it, that stands for "veteran." It could indicate a Roman Numeral five, or it could, I don't know, it could be any of the "v" words. Plus, if you go out of state, and some states, I understand, have gone to a colored background

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behind the photo, perhaps blue with stars, well, that might be fine in that state, but once you travel to a different state, they don't have any idea what that means. Same thing would happen with merely putting a "v" on the license. I think the word "veteran" would fit perfectly in that lower left-hand corner. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Yes, Senator Price has a question. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: I just want to comment, "v" could be for (Fifth) V Corps, thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: All right, I see no further questions. Thank you, Mr. Swanson, for your testimony. [LB93]

BOB SWANSON: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Additional proponents of LB93? Welcome back. [LB93]

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you. Good afternoon, Vice Chairman Smith, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is John Hilgert, J-o-h-n H-i-l-g-e-r-t, director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. Here to support LB93 and would like to thank Senator Dubas for introducing this bill on behalf of Nebraska's veterans, as well as Senator Price's efforts last year. When I left the service in the 1990s, the Army presented me with a piece of paper. It was flimsy, onion-skinned type thing, believe it or not, a DD-214, that was my proof of service and characterization of my discharge. That document proves that I'm a veteran. I use it when I need to prove to anyone that I am a veteran. Some of the times I might need to prove my status as a veteran include for healthcare access to the USVA VHA, benefits from all the businesses that they've talked about, also enjoy those discounts at Home Depot and Lowe's, and I spend more time at home improvement stores than I do restaurants, but also discounts and memberships to organizations. My service ended 20 years ago, but I still carry that piece of paper when I need to demonstrate the status of a veteran. LB93 would allow me the convenience of leaving the wrinkled, torn, faded piece of paper at home and use something that I already carry each and every day, my Nebraska driver's license. The benefits far outweigh just the inconvenience of carrying the copy of the DD-214. While I understand that there are a few technical issues that need to be addressed before the potentials can be realized, I'm here before you today to offer the assistance of Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs. I see the neutral testimony that was offered by, I believe, the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. They make a recommendation, which they refer to my department, last paragraph on the first page, they recommend that the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs approves and designates those persons who are eligible to receive a veterans designation on their driver's license or identification card. I accept that recommendation; I welcome that recommendation, and, furthermore, if there needs to be an enhancement of the

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capability of the state's system to delineate and to assist the implementation of this bill, the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs would be a suitable place and a center for that activity. My staff can offer advice; we can offer training. We can offer training on how to read a DD-214. We can, in some cases, provide certified copies of the DD-214s. And in many cases, discharge papers exist in several other formats. We can help read and access those as well. Additionally, the indicator on the license or ID would not necessarily need to be the word "veteran," but as we've heard, there is certainly some compelling testimony for that. No less than 30 states have already had some sort of veterans' identification on their license or ID cards. And there's many more states with pending legislation or past legislation. This bill is good for Nebraska's veterans and those who work with Nebraska's veterans. As Senator Price had alluded to, the benefits that are allowable...I was contacted by the Omaha Police Department the other day. They had found a resident of Omaha who had deceased. And the officer knew me and called me up and said, John, can you help me out; there's no family, and I believe he's a veteran. It's a wonderful opportunity to be able to fulfill and complete the service of these men and women by ensuring the access to the services that they've earned. And not everyone could have that firsthand knowledge that this police officer did, but everyone who can see the identification on a driver's license or a state ID can offer that service, whether it's someone at the Golden Corral or Home Depot, or whether it's a Nebraska caseworker at Department of Health and Human Services who says, maybe I can't help you here, but I see that you're a veteran; go to your county, apply for Nebraska veterans aid; go to Don Shuda, go to Jeff Baker, apply for veterans aid. That would be a wonderful benefit. If we don't have access to those benefits, to many veterans, they don't exist. This would help us do that. So I am very much in support of LB93. We stand ready to assist in any way the committee deems, Senator Dubas deems relevant, and we look forward to answering any questions that you might have. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Alright. Senator Price has a question. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Senator Smith. Mr. Hilgert, I appreciate it. Obviously, we've talked about this for over a year now. [LB93]

JOHN HILGERT: Yes, we have. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: And I wish someone from Ms. Lahm's department were here to answer the question to the fiscal note, but since they're not here, I'm going to ask you. [LB93]

JOHN HILGERT: Sure. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Maybe you can carry it back, or we could get that answer. The fiscal note says kind of two things. It can be handled in this appropriation, and then it says it

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would...the contractor says it would cost \$38,000. So I was a little confused to say, is this something they could handle already within the current year's appropriation for the committee, or is it an additional cost is one question. And second, it's my understanding in talking with the previous director, Director Neth, this is a program, you know, to toggle on a field, and I was looking at my driver's license, since we had the dissertation on where we could put it, and there is a field right there on the front and so I, again, if we could address the...how that fiscal note was created, whether it's currently capable and that it would be an additional \$38,000 or not. And then I would challenge if a \$38,000 to turn on a database toggling, I'd be kind of interested to see how that worked out. And I didn't know if you could address the format of the license at all. Just to enclose my question there so you could have an opportunity. [LB93]

JOHN HILGERT: Well, regarding the fiscal note as submitted by the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles, I would certainly be...have no problem in working with them and committee counsel to address your question, Senator. At this very moment, I'm not prepared to dive into the basis for the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles' fiscal note. However, I would go farther and after reading the letter that was submitted by the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles, there's information and questions and concerns raised; they're technical in nature. And I'm might also observe that some of those issues that we had worked with over the last year are not in this letter. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you. [LB93]

JOHN HILGERT: And I'll make that observation, Senator. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Are there additional questions for Mr. Hilgert? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. [LB93]

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Are there additional proponents of LB93? Welcome. [LB93]

GARY BERRY: Chairman Dubas, Senators, my name is Gary, G-a-r-y, last name Berry, B-e-r-r-y. I'm here to testify on behalf of myself as a veteran. I also have a Purple Heart plate. I'm also here as a veterans service officer for Merrick County, Central City, and the veterans that we do represent. I would like to see this bill move forward for the fact that...for...especially for medical benefits. If a veteran is in an accident, if they don't have anyone else with them, they get taken to an ER room, it would be really, really nice for that doctor in the ER room, that may not know this person, to be able to get them in the right direction or at least know that they are a veteran. Right now, unless you are receiving benefits from a VA medical facility, there is no other identification. So I would

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like to see this bill move forward. I'm also the president of the Nebraska County Veterans Service Officers Association of Nebraska. And being president, we represent just about all 93 counties, provided by the Legislature that we must represent every county in the state, which we do. About all the counties, except for a couple, do belong to this association that was established about 60 years ago. So if you look at it from that standpoint, and this organization also is a proponent of this bill. We represent...everybody kicks around the figures, but my last figure was 147,000 veterans in the state of Nebraska. So that's kind of what I would like to present about it. I appreciate the work that you senators do. And I'd like to see this bill move forward. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Are there questions for Mr. Berry? I see none. Thank you very much for your testimony. We now continue with proponents of LB93. [LB93]

JEFFREY BAKER: Good afternoon. My name is Jeffrey Baker, J-e-f-f-r-e-y B-a-k-e-r. And I promise that this will be the last time I come to the desk today. I'm here in support of LB93. And I'm representing the Nebraska Veterans Council, which is an organization that supports legislation regarding veterans. It is an organization that is...every member...every military organization in Nebraska is a member of the Veterans Council, recognized veterans organizations, excuse me. We are in support of this bill. I just would like to share an experience that I had. A couple of years ago, we had a veteran who was involved in an IED explosion and came home. And we started having some difficulty with him and his actions...and because the police department knew him, because we live in a small community and everyone knows everyone, we were able to get the help that he needed. The prosecutor came to me, and we...it started there. That is what this license would allow to do also. It would allow law enforcement and prosecuting attorneys to be able to identify the needs of that veteran and place him in that treatment, maybe not run him through the judicial system, but maybe get alcohol treatment, something of that nature as well instead of running him through the justice system. When I returned home from Iraq in 2005, I had difficulty adhering to speed limits, just because in Iraq there are no speed limits. And when you go from point A to point B, you drive as fast as you possibly can. That was something that...looking back, I identify that. But there was no one there the six times that I got pulled over to maybe say, Mr. Baker, have you ever thought about maybe contacting the VA? That would be something that that driver's license may have assisted me as well. So, it is a great bill, and I thank Senator Dubas for introducing it. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: All right, Senator Price has a question. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Senator Smith. And this will be a question you can actually answer, do you do outreach like...when we have different policy come down from the federal government, do you send out letters to the veterans in your...they're identified, that you have contact with so that you can pass information to them? [LB93]

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JEFFREY BAKER: We do. Some county service officers actually have e-mail lists, contact lists that they can send out that information. I know York County service officer, he does. Myself, I use the newspaper, as well as just outreach, open meetings that we have to get that information out and as well as letters to constituents and to veterans throughout. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: So something like this could actually be a tool to help identify, because I understand that roughly 60 percent of the people who are veterans in Nebraska have actually identified to county service officers and others that they actually are veterans; 40 percent of our eligible veteran base is not identified. And if, forbid, there should be something like an Agent Orange or what we had with the trash piles and the burn pits from (inaudible) DAS 1 there, we would be able to get information out to our veterans, if we actually knew where they were. [LB93]

JEFFREY BAKER: Correct. I would say, Senator Price, that...an important thing that actually happens almost weekly, as veterans come into my office, who just want an ID card. They don't know about any of the benefits that may be available to them. And so this actually could be a tool to reach out to those veterans when they're coming in, as they're coming to see their county service officer, to sign off, to verify their service that we could...ensure that they receive all the benefits that they may be entitled to through their service. It's definitely a tool that we could use to help more veterans as well. [LB93]

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you very much. [LB93]

JEFFREY BAKER: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: Are there additional questions for Mr. Baker? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. [LB93]

JEFFREY BAKER: Thank you. [LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: (Exhibit 7) Are there others in support of LB93? Proponents of LB93? Seeing none, we now accept testimony in opposition to LB93. Seeing none, anyone testifying in a neutral position? We do have a letter to read into the record from Rhonda Lahm, Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles in a neutral capacity. Senator Dubas for closing. [LB93]

SENATOR DUBAS: Well, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everybody that came in today, not only to testify on LB93, but on all of the bills that came...that were presented to us today. I think we heard some great opportunities that this bill could afford us as far as outreach and a working relationship between the Department of Veterans' Affairs and the DMV. I think we have some real opportunities to put together

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something that is workable for our veterans all across the state. The issues that the Department of Motor Vehicles raised are purely technical issues, and I would certainly not want those technical issues to be used as an excuse or a roadblock for us to move forward on this legislation. And I am committed to working with the vested parties as well as committee members in seeing what we can do, not only with the license plate bills, but with this bill as well. I'd be happy to answer any questions if you may have any.  
[LB93]

SENATOR SMITH: I see no questions. Thank you, Senator Dubas. And that concludes the hearing on LB93 and the hearings for the day. Thank you. (See also Exhibit 8.)  
[LB93]