

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Education Committee
May 17, 2017

[LR98 CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Education met at 12:20 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, in Room 2102 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on appointments to the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges, the Board of Educational Lands and Funds, the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission, the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment, and LR98. Senators present: Mike Groene, Chairperson; Rick Kolowski, Vice Chairperson; Laura Ebke; Steve Erdman; Lou Ann Linehan; and Lynne Walz. Senators absent: Adam Morfeld; Patty Pansing Brooks.

SENATOR GROENE: (Recorder malfunction)...Education hearing on confirmations. I'll have senators, if you want to introduce yourselves. Not a big audience.

SENATOR WALZ: I'm Senator Lynne Walz from District 15, which is all of Dodge County.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Steve Erdman, District 47.

SENATOR EBKE: Laura Ebke, District 32.

SENATOR GROENE: Mike Groene, Chairman of Education Committee, District 42.

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Rick Kolowski, Vice Chair of the Education Committee, District 31: southwest Omaha.

SENATOR LINEHAN: I am Lou Ann Linehan, I'm from District 39; which is Elkhorn, Waterloo, and Valley.

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you. Most of these is going to be phone conversations on the phone. And the first one will be calling here at 12:25, a Mr. Carter Peterson, for the position of Board of Trustees of Nebraska State Colleges. And he is a reappointment by Governor Ricketts. Hello? [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Yes, this is Carter Peterson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Carter, this is Chairman Mike Groene. Go ahead, tell us what you want about yourself and why you would like to be reappointed to the Board of Education Land and

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Funds...no, excuse me. I think I got that wrong. Board of Trustees of Nebraska State Colleges.
[CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Okay. Yeah, that's the only one that I can handle. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Well, volunteers are short, you know. [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: My name is Carter Peterson, I'm the president and owner of Northeast Nebraska Insurance Agency here in Wayne, and have been for the last 30-some years I've been in the insurance business. But before that, I'm a Wayne State grad. After graduation I went to and taught school in Winside, Nebraska, for about five years. And then I went into the insurance world here in Wayne. Went on and I was elected to the K-12 school board, which I was on for 12 years here in Wayne. And while I was on that, I was district representative for the Nebraska State School Board Association. In between that I was an adjunct professor at Wayne State in the business department. And then I was appointed by Governor Heineman and continued on and now I'm going for the third term to the board. And I really enjoy education, I've been involved in it most of my adult life. Four kids that have graduated colleges in Nebraska, three of them are in Nebraska working. So the area of education...and I think so much of the state college system, being they're kind of regional. They serve the rural Nebraska, one of the things that's important to me, being from the business side, and I think that's an important thing for each region that we serve, whether it's Chadron, Peru, or Wayne. And so we're a lot of first generation students that are involved in our colleges and are graduates, and they come on back and teach or work in these areas. So whatever we can do and I can help on the board to help these young people succeed, that's kind of my goal as I'm on the board. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, sir. Let's see if we have any questions for you. Does anybody on the committee have a question? I think you're looking good, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Well, thank you. And thank you to the committee. I appreciate getting together and doing this for me. I do appreciate it and I appreciate serving Nebraska as best I can.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: I'm sure with your experience you'll help with the budget shortages we have this year. [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Yeah, I've been through that before. So it's something that I think the colleges understand and with our system office directing us, the colleges, that certainly has helped. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

CARTER PETERSON: Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: When's the next one? What time? The next will be Gary Beiganski, the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges. My staff down below is calling him and seeing if he can call in a little earlier. And he's also a reappointment. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR EBKE: Your staff down below? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: What's that? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR EBKE: Your staff down below? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR EBKE: You got a dungeon? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Did he just say tornado watch? Was that the announcement?
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: I was about to tell Senator Wayne to shut his computer off. It sounded right. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR EBKE: It was a watch. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: It was a watch. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Hello, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: Good morning, this is Gary Bieganski. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: This is Chairman Mike Groene, for a reappointment to the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges. Go ahead and tell us a little bit about yourself and why you want to be reappointed. [CONFIRMATION]

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GARY BIEGANSKI: Okay, I will. And please, for you to take your time over your noonhour and spend it doing these visits. I live in Chadron, Nebraska. I live on a ranch that was in my wife's family for over 100 years. I'm a retired hospital CEO. I served in Atkinson, Nebraska, for 5 years and McCook, Nebraska, for about 30 years. And since I have retired in '06 or '08, I've been doing interim hospital administrative work. I am glad to be on the chat on the Board of Trustees for the State Colleges. Long family history, my mother graduated from a normal school, my dad from Chadron State College, he's a retired Army officer. And we located after he retired back to Chadron, so my sister and I could attend Chadron State College. And I applied for the Board of Trustees because I was interested in being able to give back on behalf of our family, for the education that we had received. Both my mother-in-law and father-in-law later in life would graduate from Chadron State also, and my great-grandfather in 2010 (sic) hauled bricks from the railroad station in Chadron up to build the first normal school. So we've got a lot of history there. And my desire is to serve on the State College Board to see all of the colleges grow. I've really been pleased with the diverse culture nationally and within the state and international students that we have been able to attract to Chadron and provide them high-quality education. And I've enjoyed working with the students and the faculty and the board. We're an open enrollment state college system, as you know. We are still with about 40 percent of our students that graduate may be the first person from their family to go to college and attend. Retention rate I think is very good. We retain about 65 percent of our students that graduate in and around the Nebraska area. And we have an excellent successful rate. And my desire is just to see it keep growing and moving forward and providing high-quality, reasonably cost...or affordable cost education.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Well, thank you. Do we have any questions from the committee members? I have one. Short history, what is Chadron Prep? I'm assuming there was a prep school in Chadron at one time. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: So I went to Chadron for a long time. Chadron Prep was the high school in a complete school system that the college ran for a period of time. And I was the last class to graduate from high school at Chadron Prep, and that was in 1961. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: That's neat. Well, thank you, sir. I'm sure you're fine. We need your experience on the board. [CONFIRMATION]

GARY BIEGANSKI: Thank you very much, and I would appreciate your confirmation for my appointment. And I look forward to serving again for the state college system.
[CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR GROENE: You're welcome. Next appointment will be Jerald Meyer, Board of Educational Lands and Funds. He is also a reappointment. Again, my staff on the first floor is calling him and seeing if they can call in early. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Do you have staff on second floor as well? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: These guys here. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Some more staff? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: The committee staff, not mine. I'll correct myself, I made the wrong notes. He's a new appointment to the Board of Educational Lands and Funds. What we will do is at the end of all the hearings if anybody wants to come up and say proponent, opponent of any of the appointments, you're free to do so. But we'll play it by ear, how much time we have before we get called back to the floor. What time was he scheduled to call in? Should we try one of the other ones? Is anybody here in the room? We're going to jump over Jerry because he was going to call in at 1:00 and Tim can't get ahold of him to call in earlier. So Marilyn, are you prepared to be appointed, to have your hearing on Educational Telecommunications Commission? Your reappointment. [CONFIRMATION]

MARILYN HADLEY: Marilyn Hadley from Kearney, Nebraska. I'm a retired educator, began my career as a ninth grade civics and history teacher, went on to become a professor of teacher education at several universities, and concluded my career as Dean of Education at UNK. So I'm one who is interested in valuing and values educational opportunities. And I consider NET and PBS programming to be one of the best resources we have available in our state for initial and continuing education. Now, you may be familiar with the fact that we just added a fourth channel, one that is devoted entirely to programming for children. We have three other channels, one devoted for creative arts--cooking and remodeling, that kind of thing; one devoted to world news; and the other, the main channel, would be the one that most people are familiar with, with Masterpiece Theatre, Antiques Roadshow, etcetera. I feel that those four channels meet the needs of Nebraska very well. And I've enjoyed my two years serving on the NET commission and a year with the executive committee, learning more about the finances, and I would like to continue my service because I hope I have something to offer in helping NET continue to ensure good quality programming, wise use of facilities, and wise use of resources. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Any questions from the committee? Senator Kolowski.
[CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Hadley, thank you for being here today. Good to see you again. Would you relate to our desire to connect with more districts, large and small, but especially with the smaller districts to bring equal opportunity of programming and coursework to students across the state. Would you just address that within a context?
[CONFIRMATION]

MARILYN HADLEY: You know, I think it's an excellent mission of NET, and it's certainly one that, given our statewide network, we're in a position to do better than many states are. I do believe that it's a valuable opportunity for high school students to be able to take coursework and to advance themselves, especially those coming from rural areas. I grew up in Red Cloud, so I'm familiar with some of the more limited resources people have when they're geographically dispersed. So I'm in favor of it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Perfect, thank you. Appreciate it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Senator Linehan. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Thank you for being here today, I greatly appreciate it. It's a long ways from Kearney. So can you explain what...you are doing NETV or educational communications as far as working with high schools to get programs. For example, it seems to me that we ought to...kids who are in smaller schools, they don't have maybe foreign language or they don't have the AP classes that other kids in larger districts have. Is there a way that we could improve that situation so they would be able to take AP classes? [CONFIRMATION]

MARILYN HADLEY: Well, that's an excellent question, and I'd have to say that I can't...I don't know that I have an answer. I could find out. Many of the students are using distance education to try to, you know, access those courses. And I know that through the high school, the NET high school, that coursework is being offered. But specifically AP, I'm sorry, I can't...
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: No, that's fine. It's a detailed question. But it would be interesting, I would be interested if there's a way, because many schools they're at a disadvantage when they get to college if the kids sitting next to them in the classroom have all had AP classes and they have not been exposed to them. So it's just something I'm interested in. Thank you very much.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Any other questions? Your husband looks a lot more relaxed since he's not here. [CONFIRMATION]

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MARILYN HADLEY: Pardon me? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Your husband has gotten more color in his face and is a lot more relaxed than the last time I seen him. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MARILYN HADLEY: Thank you. Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: I think we have time for another one for sure. Is Stan Carpenter in the room? There he is, I met him just a little bit ago. Again, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission, of course a reappointment. Go ahead, Stan. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Senator Groene, members of the committee, my name is Stan Carpenter. I am the chancellor of the Nebraska State College System and I'm here today for a reappointment to the NET board. Statutorily, the NSCS has a seat on the commission and I took Curt Frye's seat a couple of years ago. I was on it before that, then he took my spot. Just quick history, I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. I went to the University of Cincinnati for my undergraduate bachelor's degree in education, my master's degree in education; I went across the river to Northern Kentucky University for my law degree. I taught school in Cincinnati for six years, then opened a practice in Cincinnati, and then went to Vermont to become general counsel of the Vermont State Colleges System there. And then from there, I came out here to become the chancellor of the Nebraska State College System. I will be brief, I know you're busy. But the NET board is an extremely important board I think statewide, because NET is so important statewide. It offers educational services across the state. I think its mission says something about enriching lives, engaging minds, and reaching out to the community; and that's exactly what NET does through its programming and through its educational services, the Virtual Learning Library and things of that sort. So I have enjoyed my time there. I was chair of the commission for a couple years, vice chair for a couple years, and now I'm back on like a bad penny, simply won't go away. And I hope that you will confirm my reappointment. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, sir. Your virtual library, is that shows that have been on NET? Science shows and... [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yeah, it's a library of informational services that are available to schools. And it has lesson plans, it has standards and objectives that correlate to the state standards and objectives, and they're available to teachers around the state. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: But is it based on programming that's on NET? [CONFIRMATION]

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STAN CARPENTER: Some of that is based on that, but it's also some that have been created by NET as well. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Okay. Senator Kolowski. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Stan, thank you for being here. Very impressive background as you've always had. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: But would you talk about the community colleges and the role they're playing and what's taken place in the last decade? For example, changes in the structure there as far as coming into the colleges or the university system. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: State colleges? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yeah, the state colleges have over the course of my time here, and I don't take credit for it, but it has become a real system where we collaborate, we share information, we look at best practices together, we bring people together on the academic side of the house, financial side of the house, student affairs, and now risk management because that's become so very important in the world today. And the colleges compete to a certain extent, but mostly we cooperate together and collaborate. They're regionally based institutions, as you well know, and so their recruiting base is in their particular regions. So I think that we have come together in a way that makes some sense, so that we share resources as much as we can. Although, there is not a lot of that, but we do share information and share best practices as best we can. So I think we're in a much stronger position together now than we were 17 years ago when I got here. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And the community college connection with the colleges. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: We do have connection with the community colleges, Senator. Obviously we have a dual enrollment agreement with them. A student can either, if they enroll in one of our institutions, can then move over to our institution and enroll automatically. We have transfer agreements across the state with both the community colleges and the University of Nebraska and others in the state. And so we're working to make sure that students are getting the best

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opportunity to have access to education at places and institutions that are suitable for them. Because as we know, not everybody wants to go to the university or not everybody wants to go to Chadron State. But as long as they have access to various kinds of institutions and institutions that are affordable, that's what we're trying to do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: It's come a long way in 30 years. A long way. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: I'm sorry? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: A lot of things have happened in the last 30 years to make a lot smoother transition very openly. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes. Exactly. And we are continuing to work at that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Do you know what percentage of the community colleges, the rural ones-- North Platte, Scottsbluff--that you manage to recruit to your school, of the community college graduates? [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: I don't, Senator, but I know that the colleges work at finding...they're working with the community colleges for transfers. For example, here in Lincoln, Peru has an office at Southeast and is working on programmatic issues there, as well as having students be able to come in and say what do I need to take to be able to enroll in Peru or one of the other two institutions in the State College System as well. So I know that the transfers from community colleges are very important to us. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Well, as a rural senator, I would like you to win that battle because it seems when they go to Lincoln, they never go back home. We need to keep them in Chadron. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Well, no. But, you know, one of the things that I think is important to mention is that most of our students graduate and go back to rural Nebraska. About 60 or 65 percent of the education graduates from our institutions remain in rural Nebraska. You're aware of the RHOP program, the Rural Health Opportunities Program, that is a partnership between our institutions and the medical center. And that is to create doctors and dentists and others in the medical field to go back to Nebraska. And there is a large number of those that do go back to rural Nebraska, not all of them, but a large percentage of them do. So we're trying to maintain rural Nebraska. As I've said to you all before, the state colleges anchor rural Nebraska from the

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northeast to the northwest and southeast. And that's important for us to make sure that rural Nebraska remains vibrant and vital. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: So you're in those community colleges trying to recruit those kids?
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes, sir. Absolutely. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: That's good. Thank you, sir. Lou Ann. Senator Linehan.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is going to maybe seem like an odd question, but is the...so NETV, all across the state we have different cable companies, people have satellite dishes. So how do we make sure, how do you make sure that even if they get a satellite dish they still have NETV? Is there some kind of agreement or how does that work?
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: I'm not certain about the legalities actually, because I don't practice law anymore. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Okay. No, I'm not asking about the legality, just how does it work?
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: But clearly what happens is the cable companies or the dish and whatever agree to pick up the programming. Whether it comes over the air, you know, just through like the old rabbit ears or whether it comes over cable or whether it comes through the dish. And as you well know, we have many translators throughout the state, that's why there's so many different call numbers and so on and so forth. So we don't have complete 100 percent coverage of the state, but we're pretty close. But there are some gaps in there that we're trying to work on, but we may not ever really hit 100 percent. But I know it is very important to western Nebraska that NET gets out there and provides its programming to folks out there, because there's a lot of folks who are interested in volleyball or other things. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: I would be interested in knowing where the gaps are and if we could...
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STAN CARPENTER: There's a coverage map that we can get to you, Senator. And it will show where the translators are and the circles that they cover. You're going to find some areas in there that are just simply not covered because of geography. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: But if they have a satellite or they have cable they're on it? They can get... [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes. To the best of my knowledge, that's correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Okay, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Senator, could I have one 30 seconds just to say how important both Gary Bieganski and Cap Peterson are to my board. Gary is the current chair, Cap has been the chair, Cap has been the chair of the finance facilities and audit committee, Gary has been the chair of the academic affairs committee. And so in these kind of difficult economic times that we have to look at in terms of programming and other kinds of cuts and tuition decisions, their history, their knowledge, their understanding of how the State College System works are very important to me as a chancellor and to the board as well. So I would urge you to confirm them. Thank you, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Could I ask you a question on that, because I don't know how that process works? We appropriate money to the State College System. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: I'm sorry? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: We appropriate money to the State College System. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: How is that reappropriated to each college? Do you do that?
[CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes. We go through a...we're not formula-driven. We go through a process where we look at the core needs of each institution that is what's it going to cost to pay faculty and staff, what's it going to cost to pay for health insurance, what's it going to cost to pay for utilities, new building openings, and things of that sort. We look at that kind of on a percentage basis and we look at them, what their tuition is because each of our institutions maintain, keep

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their own tuition. So we look at that state appropriation and say, okay, this year Chadron needs more money than Peru, or vice versa, because their core needs are different. They have building openings, they're opening a new program and they need to hire new faculty, so on and so forth. So it's not divided evenly. Generally, it's kind of like a 45, 35, 20 percent...25 percent cut. Kind of that's the way to think about it. But we just look to see what their needs are, and each one has different needs in every different year, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: And tuition, is it universal? Same credit hour? [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Yes. Same tuition at each institution across the system.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: All right, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

STAN CARPENTER: Thank you, Senator. Appreciate it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Good to know. Appreciate it. Jerry Meyer will be calling in here next so. Welcome, Jerry. [CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Coming in loud and clear. So you're a new appointment to the Board of Educational Lands and Funds. Could you tell us something about yourself and why you seek this appointment, or volunteer to take this appointment? [CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: Okay. I absolutely was approached about the opportunity to apply and look at this...look at the board. And I thought it was a unique opportunity to be able to take some of the knowledge that I have in ag. My family and my in-laws farm in southeast Nebraska, northeastern Kansas. And having grown up on the farm side of it, taking that knowledge and the appreciation of the land and all of those things involved with farming and then be able to incorporate it back in to provide and give a better opportunity and actually more revenue generated for the kids. I served eight years on the school board in southeast Nebraska. And the one thing I learned very quickly, we were not revenue generators within the public education side. We were people that were not necessarily demanding, but we were asking for money from the landowners and from the property owners to be able to keep schools open. And I just thought this was a unique opportunity to take my knowledge and be able to provide a little bit more revenue to help out the children that is. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR GROENE: Well, thank you, sir. Is there any questions from the committee?
[CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: None from me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I'll just ask one. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: All right. Senator Kolowski's going to ask you one, since you're a new appointment. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yes, Mr. Meyer, thank you. What would you say would be the major contribution from your own past in skill and ability that you bring to the board in this way?
[CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: I think I get the gist of your question. There's an echo there, Senator. But I think the biggest task that I see for the bureau to be able to take the land better underneath the board and the bureau's control, to be able to make those lands more productive and make them more sustainable, not necessarily for the short-term, but for the long-term. And if you know anything about my family or my in-laws, my, you know, we always revive farms. Well, my family revived farms and they would always leave them better than what they were. Now, they very seldom sold any ground. I can't remember the last time they had. So their goal was always to make that farm better because quite honestly, you know, that land is on loan to us, and we all know who is loaning it to us. But at the end of the day, being able to take the land, whether it be pasture, whether it be tillable grounds, dryland, irrigated ground and make it the most productive but do it in a sustainable way and looking at the long-term effects there, not just the short-term effects, but the long-term effects, to be able to accomplish that over a number of years. So that's what I know. Having been in ag, having still being in ag, that's my background. I'm a farm kid, grew up on the farm. I don't have the right degree, I have the degree from Kansas State University, rather than from the University of Nebraska, but please don't hold that against me. However, it's the knowledge that I've gained there more important than the knowledge that I can bring to the board to be able to help and sustain and make sure we got...we're doing the right things to make that land the most productive in a cost-effective measure. [CONFIRMATION]

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

SENATOR GROENE: Well, sir, this is Chairman Groene. I think you have the right degree. Agriculture, economics, and marketing, that's the one I have too so. [CONFIRMATION]

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JERALD MEYER: Okay. Good, thank you. Appreciate that, Chairman. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Do you understand that we have a little dispute between western Nebraska and eastern Nebraska because we still have our school lands in the west, in the east they sold them? And I get a lot of comments from folks that rents are so high now that the rents we collect on our school lands are putting more money in the fund than the return on investment of the lands that were sold. Have you heard that? [CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: I have, but I mean, I tell you what I like what the board is doing, or what (inaudible) is doing, is that they're not using those lands tax-free. I mean, they're still generating money and paying that tax and the mill that's on that land that's owned by (inaudible). You know, I could say that to be the truth, or I see that as truth, but you know, they continue to generate revenue, and more important they pay their tax like every other landowner does in that district. So I think it's a kind of a trade-off, it is in my eyes anyway. (Inaudible). [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Well, with that agriculture, what it's doing, maybe the rents will go down and a return on the investment on this, the sell of the lands in the east might reverse. [CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: And that is true. And I do think you're going to see a correction in the cash rents, there's no question about it. But I think, you know, I've always had the rule of thumb, if you've got good land, farmers will always want to rent it. And that's what I want to make sure that we're doing, that this land is the best land that it could be from the standpoint of conservation, of the best pasture land, you know, as it relates to making sure that the (inaudible) and there's good. There's just, you know, we just got the best product out there that the growers and the ranchers will want to rent this ground and pay that premium. So that's what I really want to try to bring to this board so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you, sir. You'll know soon. I think we'll exec today on it, you'll be fine. [CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: Very good. Thanks, guys, it was a pleasure. Have a great afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

JERALD MEYER: All right, bye now. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR GROENE: Clay Smith for a reappointment to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission. [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Clay Smith. I live in Lincoln, Nebraska, with my wife, Beth, and our three teenage daughters that are all IB students at Lincoln High School. I'm actually the grandson of a "Kinkaider." My grandfather homesteaded out in Stapleton and then most of my family grew up in Custer County, outside of Broken Bow and Callaway. But I was born and raised in Lincoln and I attended public schools here in Lincoln. I also attended UNL for one year as a swimming scholarship recipient, so I was a state swimmer. But after one year, I decided to transfer, and I transferred to Stanford University out in Palo Alto. I finished my degree at Stanford in economics and graduated with distinction. I also went on to get a master's in engineering at Stanford in engineering management and industrial engineering. While at Stanford, I was very active. I was on the student senate there. I served two years on the board of trustees. I was the teaching assistant both at the graduate school of business and also the graduate school of engineering. I was an intern with IBM and also worked in the planning department at Pan American Airways back in New York City. Upon graduation, I went back to New York and joined a company called Booz Allen Hamilton. They're an international management consulting firm in New York City and across the world. I was an associate there and then graduated to the position of a senior associate. We actually had clients that included General Electric, GTE Sprint, American Can, Timex, United Technology, AT&T, and Western Electric. I left New York and then became a principal of an investment banking firm in San Francisco called Hellman and Friedman. In that investment banking enterprise, we worked on restructuring corporations in financial advisory services. I worked for Hewlett Packard, McKesson, American President Line, Federated Department Stores, Computer Land, and McClatchy. But then I returned to Lincoln to our family business in 1990 and rejoined my brothers in our family business with my parents. I serve as the president of Speedway Motors here in Lincoln. We're an international catalogue and internet merchant of performance racing parts and antique car parts based in Lincoln, but we have operations in Indiana, as well as Michigan and offshore. Working alongside my three brothers, we have over 400 employees and we are celebrating our 65th anniversary. Our company was founded by my parents. Humble beginnings because my mom loaned my dad \$300 to get started on graduating from Nebraska Wesleyan. I also served as a general partner for a real estate partnership called B&J Partnership for Speedway Properties. We are one of the largest property owners here in Lincoln, Lancaster County, and we actively support historic preservation throughout Lincoln, and we are celebrating our 56th year in business. I was honored to originally been asked to serve on NET Commission by Governor Heineman. I have a long and passionate history of being a consumer of NET's services, both television and radio. Like many of you, I grew up with NET as it offered the superior quality television that teaches, enlightens, entertains, and inspires each of our households. But I also was exposed to NET on a very personal level because I grew up across the street from Ron Hull, who was their first creative director at NET in its founding. So

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Ron and Noni were my neighbors, their son, Kevin, was my best friend. So many of the evenings when I would be over at their house they would invite me to stay over for dinner and we would always have someone really interesting for dinner. I can remember having dinner probably three times with John G. Neihardt and a couple times with Joe Orduna. But as a young man, that makes an impression of a bigger world and that's what NET delivers. My term on the commission this past year has been really exciting. NET continues to build on its national reputation of success. We've successfully navigated the Spectrum auction; we recently are relocating underway right now the UNO tower off of the UNO campus to collocate, and that will benefit the strategic plan for UNO. We also made the conversion from analogue to digital. We've also had longstanding, award-winning documentaries produced locally; and we've expanded our coverage of sports, both high school sports across all sports, as well as Husker, Creighton, and UNO. I feel that I've been successful as a commissioner and look forward to serving again if so honored. I served the last four years on the executive and finance committees. I also served two years as the chairman of NET Commission. I assisted in updating our strategic goals, and we also had our congressional days where I was an ambassador for NET back in Washington. My wife and I previously served as the southeast Nebraska co-chairs for the fund-raising efforts to create an endowment to privately fund part of NET's mission. It was a \$25 million campaign that I co-chaired. And I also was instrumental in creating the Stories of Nebraska, honoring Ron Hull. So NET is a very complicated, public/private technology-driven partnership and it takes a while to understand not only the communications and the governance, but also the acronyms and the cost cutting...or the cutting edge technologies. And so having multiyears on a commission like this is actually very beneficial because you really get up the learning curve and you can be more effective. I will continue, if reappointed, to support NET television, both in its technology advancement and also its educational services. I think I'm uniquely qualified in a couple respects. Our company is very digitally savvy and also socially connected. Our company has over 1 million followers on Facebook. We actually distribute videos to our consumers and users that have had over 30 million views. So from a business perspective, I can bring that to the NET board and bring those insights. As you know, Nebraska is a very special place. We have many things that bring us together as a state. I view the Legislature as being one of them; public power is another; our university system is another unifier, especially under volleyball and football. But I think our statewide NET network is also a great unifier because we connect the state under one common message, and not all states are organized like ours, where it's a statewide network. And I think we as Nebraskans benefit from that network. I want to thank you for your support of NET historically and going forward, and I welcome any questions you might have.

[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Sir, could you give me a breakdown of how your funding comes from the federal, the private, the state? [CONFIRMATION]

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CLAY SMITH: Well, we have two foundations at NET; we have a radio foundation and a television foundation. The boards of those for efficiency have actually been merged together. And so that part of our organization does some funding for the organization. Then we actually...the complicated part of it is that we are part of the university system, so part of our funding comes through UNL. And the advisory comes through oversight through University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We also get direct funding through the commission, and the commission actually has funding coming in. I can't tell you the specific ratio of dollars that we have that are supported by both, but it basically comes through...it comes through different networks. We have the benefit of having longevity in our financial team at NET, where Randy... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: What about federal money? [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: The federal money, there is matching moneys. It has changed over time. We used to get tower money, there was money...it's basically for each... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: But you don't get programming money? [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH1: Programming money? We actually pay for programming. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: That's what I thought, Sesame Street and stuff. [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: Yes. So we have to pay for all of those services, that actually is not coming to us as grants. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Are your employees, employees of the University of Nebraska or are they separate? [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: Mixed. There are employees of the University of Nebraska and there are employees of the state. And so from an organizational HR perspective, it's complicated because, as you know, the benefit packages that accrue to different employees, whether they're state or university, need to be managed separately. And so that's part of the complication of the system is that it has multilayers of responsibility. It's a little bit like running an insurance company or a hospital where you have control of a lot of people, but you don't have direct responsibility for, I mean, hiring and firing for some people, like you have in a hospital or an insurance company where they have (inaudible). So there's a structure that's very different and you have reporting responsibilities back to the universities. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR GROENE: Thank you. I noticed you said volleyball first and football second.
[CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: I did. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: I hope we don't get to the point you say volleyball, baseball, and football.
[CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: Well, I only say volleyball because I had the good fortune of meeting my wife. And our first date was a Nebraska volleyball game. And she had moved back from Washington, D.C., she was from Lincoln. And I think at the time she probably thought that that was a subpar activity to be invited on a first date, until she got there. And so we've been big supporters of volleyball ever since. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, sir. Any other questions? Senator Kolowski.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Yeah. Mr. Smith, thank you for your long-term service and for the high quality that NET stands for and constantly delivers to our state and to our region. I'm a big fan and you're doing the right thing. Just continue. [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: It makes a difference. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

CLAY SMITH: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: We have one more appointment: Cindy Gray to the Technical Advisory Committee on Statewide Assessment. She is a new appointment. [CONFIRMATION]

CINDY GRAY: Good afternoon, Senator Groene and members of the committee. My name is Cindy Gray. I'm the associate superintendent for Elkhorn Public Schools, and I'm seeking confirmation for the Technical Advisory Committee on Statewide Assessment. I'll give you just a little bit of background that I think may be relevant in terms of assessment and knowledge of some of the challenges and needs of schools across the state of Nebraska. My background is that I grew up on a farm near Stromsburg, went to a very small school. There were 12 students in my graduating class, so I had the misfortune of having a National Merit scholar in my class. I was

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second in the class, thus not in the top 10 percent and did not get scholarships. So I understand what percents mean in terms of numbers for small schools. Went on to graduate from Nebraska Wesleyan; taught middle school for a number of years; and then was a high school counselor in Springfield, Nebraska. And high school counseling helps you understand helping students as they move to college and career-ready. You get to meet students with challenges and students for whom things come very, very easily. But I feel like it really helps you understand the needs of students. During that time, I was also seeking a Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. That background is in school psychology, which has a lot to do with educational measurement and determining students with disabilities, but also general measurement kinds of things. So in order to accommodate that, I took Saturday school for seven years, so I met some of our most struggling students and spent a lot of time with them. Following...at the conclusion of the degree, the Ph.D., I spent a couple of years in internships. One of those internships was at Clinton Elementary here in Lincoln, and then I spent one year in Omaha Public Schools working at McMillan Middle School, Benson West Elementary, Rose Hill Elementary, and I also did evaluations with preschool students in north Omaha to determine if there were needs that would warrant preschool for those students. Following that, I've spent the last 17 years at Elkhorn Public Schools, have had a lot of opportunity to meet superintendents and assessment directors from across the state. Have been president of the Nebraska Association for Curriculum Instruction and Assessment, have been a president of a couple of other organizations, have been involved throughout the years with the Learning Community and with some of the assessment that has gone prior to NeSA and some of the changes that are happening with ACT. I also have taught at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, taught the assessment cohort and assessment degree through the University of Nebraska. That really has allowed me to meet a lot of people from across the state who are superintendents now and assessment directors. And so I feel like I have good connections with those people and certainly much work with the Learning Community. Are there questions that you have for me? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: You say assessment directors. What size school districts have assessment directors? [CONFIRMATION]

CINDY GRAY: It depends. Certainly there are small...in smaller schools a lot of times it will be a principal who is also in charge of making sure that all of the assessment work is done and is monitoring school improvement. In a Class B school district, they may or may not have someone assigned to that role. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you. Senator Kolowski. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Otherwise, the ESUs have services they give to other schools, depending on the size. [CONFIRMATION]

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CINDY GRAY: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: No one is overlooked on that, it's just a matter of how it's delivered. [CONFIRMATION]

CINDY GRAY: Certainly. When I taught the assessment endorsement, there were a number of people from educational service units that took that course. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Cindy, your long history with Elkhorn is through tremendous growth that has happened in the last 16, 17 years. Keeping up with that is a major task. [CONFIRMATION]

CINDY GRAY: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Do you have some assistants that help you or do you go to the assistant principals in the building or what's your connectivity within the district to help make things happen? [CONFIRMATION]

CINDY GRAY: Well, that has evolved over time. Initially, I began in the time of, if you remember, the STARS assessment. I think our superintendent at the time, Dr. Breed, looked at some of that information and thought he wanted some help, so I was hired at that point. And he told me that my job was anything that he didn't want to do and that that was the job description. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: That was a lot of things. No, I'm just kidding. [CONFIRMATION]

CINDY GRAY: No, not really. Since then, because our district is growing so rapidly, there are people who assist me specifically with technology and instruction. And I still do a lot of curriculum work. Next year we'll be adding a director of assessment and so I'll have help with that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Senator Linehan. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So in your understanding of this position, Technical Advisory Committee, you would work with the Department of Ed. How do you see this working, I guess? Maybe that would be a better... [CONFIRMATION]

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CINDY GRAY: Well, I know some of what has happened in the past. My understanding is that there are some gentlemen with expertise in testing and measurement. And I know...I think I know the two that are there. And my understanding is that they review and take questions and work with the Nebraska Department of Education to make sure that any accountability or assessment system that we have truly helps us determine are the students of Nebraska learning what we need them to learn in a fair and equitable way. To look not only at level of achievement, but to recognize that some districts facing challenges and how do we monitor growth, and are we making strong growth for those students who come to us with difficulties? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LINEHAN: Thank you, that helped. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GROENE: Any other questions? Thank you, Ms. Gray. That ends the part of our session on appointments. My brother's keeper (inaudible). LR98, Senator Wayne, are you ready? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WAYNE: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Justin Wayne, Senator Wayne, J-u-s-t-i-n W-a-y-n-e; and I represent District 13, which is the north Omaha, northeast Douglas County area. Welcome. I'm so used to saying welcome for my committee I forget how to testify in committees. At the request of Chairman Groene, we were going to have 150 people come down and testify today. But we worked out that it would just be me. But I do want you to know there are a lot of people watching. And I guess to give you background of how I got here and why this book is important to me is some of you might have read in the journal...or in the Legislative Journal Update about my history. My history starts with a program called Capital Leagues. Capital League Youth Basketball is a way to mentor kids. Judge Lowe, Fred Franklin was later on a part of it. But Judge Lowe, Arvin Frazier, and Elmer Crumbley were my mentors growing up. Most of them are in the education field; Judge Lowe is obviously a judge. They stayed with me all the way through life, still with me today. So when I got hit by a drunk driver and was upset because I couldn't play basketball no more and transferred to Creighton University, it was Judge Lowe who sat me in his office and said you're going to law school. I didn't want to do law school, but you didn't argue with him, so you went to law school. It's that that got me inspired by this initiative that was launched in 2014, because I lived it. I lived it where there were male role models around me who taught me a saying that stuck with me forever, "if you can see it, you can achieve it." And what we have here in Nebraska is many young men, particularly African American and Latino men, who do not have the role models that are in their household every day. Now, there's a lot of reasons for that, and I'm not here to get into that today. But if we can take a laser approach to this issue of working with particularly minority men, particularly African American men, and putting some guideposts around them, some support around them, I think they'll be successful. One study has shown that young men who participate in activities like I participated in crime is dropped by 44 percent and most of them graduated from high school. Many of you know I run a similar program right now where

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we have 100 percent graduation rate over the last 25 years. And so the fact of the matter is when I got this resolution brought to me by Black Men United locally was the organization, but nationally my organization, Kappa Alpha Psi, responded to this initiative by responding to the call was their initiative. We went out and mentored over millions of kids throughout the country. Black Men United has taken this approach locally to do training and to do initiatives to make sure young black men are successful. So what this resolution does, and I won't go into too much detail, but I want to harp on one or two of them: one, it ensures that people who enter into schools, young men who enter into schools have the ability at the pre-K level. We talk a lot about pre-K, so I wanted to bring that up here. But I also wanted to focus on one other thing, the second point: third grade reading. Now, this resolution does not say how we will get there, but this resolution says third grade reading is very important. Because, statistically speaking, especially for African American males, a kid who cannot read by the third grade is four times less likely to graduate. And if he's poor, it actually jumps up to six times. Now, the problem that we have with these statistics is that, as we saw the debates on the floor just today, we're numb to statistics because we don't recognize the face. But the fact of the matter is, is this is an alarming statistic that we have to fix nationally and here locally. So all I'm asking you to do today is narrow your focus, because I know Senator Linehan is doing things, I know this committee is doing things around this achievement gap. But I'm asking you to narrow your focus on LR98 by just saying here are some guideposts, here are things that we believe we can do or that we should be trying to look at to close the achievement gap. Now, this doesn't get into details of how, when, and what needs to happen, but it's guideposts and aspirations that we should try for. And that's all they are. And with that, I would ask for your support out of committee on this and I'll be here to answer any questions. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: Senator Wayne, this isn't an organization like the Boys Club or the Y or there's a lot of them out there. This is an initiative brought by... [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: Well, it's interesting, the first initiative started like this was under George Bush with No Child Left Behind. There was actually an initiative before that. This initiative started across the country in 2014 with President Obama and all it was, was saying here goes some guidelines that I think were critical data points. And that's what they are: early childhood, reading, making sure kids graduate, and we want all kids to have some type of education. So it was actually a federal just initiative; not mandated to date; not mandated to cities, states, or any organization. Just saying here's some critical things that we think and it's up to individual localities to adopt them or individual organizations. And so the city of Omaha has already done a resolution. Many other organizations within Omaha have done a resolution just saying, hey, we're on-board with these aspirations. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: We do this down here, but in your district is there Judge Lowes out there doing this? [LR98]

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SENATOR WAYNE: Yes. I mean, there are lots of people out here doing these, committed to these aspirational goals, and are doing it in different ways, yes. And what we're saying, what I would like the state to say is that these are important goals. Although we haven't got there yet, these are important goals, and that's what this resolution says. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: Senator Kolowski. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: How is this different, Senator, than...Boy Scouts were mentioned, or scouting was mentioned, the 12 points of the scout law? Trustworthy, loyal, and (inaudible)? Is it much like the same points that the scouts would point out or try to work around as far as a philosophy and a statement? [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: The philosophy and statements are very similar. It's just we look at the gaps in achievement. We know...I mean, there was, when I was in high school, that's 1998, 50 percent of the African American males at Omaha Public Schools were not graduating high school. So when you talk about the gang violence and things that my generation have seen, there's a direct correlation. So all we're talking about is narrowing our focus to African American male students, My Brother's Keeper, making sure that we have some aspirational goals that people can look for to make sure we narrow-in that focus. Boy Scouts covers all ranges of demographics. We are just saying, hey, here are some things that we can aspire to, to make sure African American males can succeed. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And homing in on African American males versus other students of different colors including white, would there be a spectrum where this could be...you reach out, your teams have a combination of kids. I've seen your materials and the years we spent together on the Learning Community you've been very active in that, very successful in that. But it's more than just black kids. You've had great success with a whole range of kids. The common denominator with most of them seems to be poverty. [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: True, but there still is a difference in the data. And so by focusing on African American males, I don't think we take away anything else. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: No, not at all. [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: And let me be clear, the state is not committing to anything. But this is for organizations to support and say here's what we're trying to do to close the achievement gap. While I think all kids, no matter where they are, what zip code they live in, should have a high-quality education and should be able to walk across the stage and graduate, I do think there is

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something to...we call it local control down here; in the school districts we call it autonomy; at the school level...at the teacher level we, you know, call it the teacher's classroom prerogative. At some point, we have to be able to narrow down and say with a laser of saying... [LR98]

WEATHER ADVISORY ANNOUNCEMENT [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: So I don't know if that means we're ending the hearing early or not. But I just...this is just a way for our state to call that we're taking this seriously and the achievement gap seriously. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: That's good. [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: And that's one thing we can do, is to support this kind of resolution. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: Any other questions? Senator Erdman. [LR98]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Okay, so this is my first option and first opportunity to what happens now. We vote to take this out to the floor and then we vote on it there? What do we do? Is that what we do? [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: Similar to what you did on Senator Vargas' and Bolz's. [LR98]

SENATOR EBKE: It's a sense of the Legislature. It's more than congratulatory, it's a sense of the Legislature. Sort of a symbolic statement. But because it's a sense of the Legislature and not just congratulatory, right, it has to go through the committee hearing process before it goes to the floor and then actually voted on. [LR98]

SENATOR ERDMAN: So then do we have assurance from the Speaker that this is going to get an opportunity? [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: The second to last day all resolutions that are still pending will be on the agenda, by my understanding. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: That's tomorrow. [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: Tomorrow. So we would have to kick it out. Yeah. [LR98]

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SENATOR EBKE: So we'll need to push it out today. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: Yeah, we're going to exec today. [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: And the other reason is, is there are other states that are doing this, and other cities. So Detroit, Michigan, have done similar things. And so from a funder standpoint, from funding in a nonprofit world, they look to community organizations and elected officials to work hand in hand to do things. And so this is just a small step saying that we're taking this seriously. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: So... [LR98]

WEATHER ADVISORY ANNOUNCEMENT [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: So my brother lives in north Omaha, he's been doing it for 30 years--flag football teams, basketball teams. He's got a van, he takes kids to church, and they live right down there in Senator Chambers'. He's doing this, how is he going to know this exists and how is he, him and his wife, how is he going to even know this happens? And he's been doing this all his life. [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: So what will happen is from...if this is adopted, it will be pushed out that at least in Omaha, Omaha and the state level have all done it too, all organizations or all individuals. And then there will be a conference here in Omaha. I guess let me tell you about the My Brother's Keeper initiative across this country. There's a conference and at that we talk about more things we can do, best practices on how to make things better. But from this, we are also ranked. There's an actual ranking in here about how African American males and how things are going across the city. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: So how are you going to get the word out to all those people who are out there doing their thing on their own and trying to help people? They know when they come to your conference? [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: Social media marketing, all the things that you would do for a conference. We'll get the word out. And last year we did a smaller one at 114th and Maple...why am I not thinking of the rental hall right there? Stone Gate. And we had great attendance from all over the state actually. And it's just trying to share best practices because every culture, every student, everybody needs something a little different and this is just one way for us to have some laser focus on what these students need. [LR98]

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SENATOR GROENE: Thank you. Any other questions for Senator Wayne? Senator Kolowski. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Just one last one. Do you plan on connecting highly with the Omaha Public Schools? [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: Yes. [LR98]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: And neighboring school districts that could zero in on African American male students (inaudible)? [LR98]

SENATOR WAYNE: Yes. [LR98]

SENATOR GROENE: Thank you, sir. Any proponents? Opponents? Thank you. We're going to go into exec session so. [LR98]