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Transcriber's Office

Floor Debate
January 18, 2019

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LINDSTROM: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the eighth day of the One Hundred Sixth Legislature, First Session. Our chaplain for today is Pastor Ben Meyer. Please rise.

PASTOR MEYER: (Prayer offered.)

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Pastor. I call to order the eighth day of the One Hundred Sixth Legislature, First Session. Senators, please record your presence. Roll call. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have a quorum present.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Are there any corrections for the Journal?

CLERK: I have no corrections.

LINDSTROM: Thank you. Are there any messages, reports, or announcements?

CLERK: Mr. President, a Reference report referring LB313 through LB377, that's signed by Senator Hilgers. The Rules Committee report offering proposed rule changes for consideration by the body; that's offered by Senator Crawford as Chair. Hearing notices: Transportation Committee; the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee; those signed by the respective Chairpersons (also General Affairs Committee). Government Committee has selected Senator La Grone as Vice Chair. I have a conflict of interest statement from Senator Lowe; that will be on file. And the lobby report as required by state law to be inserted in the Journal. Finally, Mr. President, acknowledgment of series of agency reports that are available on the legislative Web site. That's all that I have.

LINDSTROM: Mr. Clerk for new bills. Mr. Speaker for the announcement.

SCHEER: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, if I could just get your attention for a second. As I have done historically the last couple years, it's Friday morning, so I will try to make announcements on the upcoming week. For those that have not looked at anything in the future, Tuesday will be-- in the morning, we will be starting the rules debate. And as well, on Tuesday we will be starting hearings as well for this week. There's no bills for us to work on. We have

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three Revisor bills at some point in time when we get done with the rules debate, hopefully next week, we will probably start with those. Committees will start their hearings, and hopefully they will have some things that they can agree upon next week to get out of committee so that the following week we may have some floor debate that is available to us. But other than that, remember that we are off on Monday, so enjoy the long weekend. And thank you very much.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Speaker Scheer. Mr. Clerk for new bills.

CLERK: Mr. President, new bills: (Read LB406-LB415 by title for the first time.) That's all that I have at this time, Mr. President.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. (Visitors introduced.) We will now proceed to the first item on the agenda, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Matt Hansen would move to withdraw LB72.

LINDSTROM: Senator Hansen, you're welcome to open on your motion to withdraw.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President; and good morning, colleagues. Colleagues, I'll keep this very simple. LB72, which I introduced, is substantially similar to Senator Crawford's LB211. I told and encouraged Senator Crawford to introduce LB211 and then introduced LB72 as well after our conversation anyways. So seeing that, I would like to withdraw a LB72 so her LB211, which I'll point out has more cosponsors, can move forward as the lead bill on the issue of nonpartisan county elections. With that I'd urge your green vote. Thank you, Mr. President.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Senator Chambers, you are recognized.

CHAMBERS: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the Legislature, a motion of the kind that Senator Hansen is offering generally is just accepted, and I am one of those who will do so. But there are a few things that I want to say. I haven't had the opportunity, because we have not been offering motions and I didn't want to do any of this on a point of personal privilege. The work that was being done, such as it was, was not that significant. What I'm saying is being said for the record and for the people who might be watching us and not for the people in this Chamber. As some people are aware, I often quote from the "Bible." There's a verse that says, all liars shall have their part that burneth in the lake of fire, which is the second death. Well, I don't have a superstitious bone in my body, I don't have a religious corpuscle in my body, but sometimes you hedge your bets. So I could never say that pledge as you all call it. First of all, I think it's inappropriate in a democracy to have people pledging allegiance to anything. I think it is

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simpleminded, juvenile, childish, and grade schoolish for grown people as old as some of you all are to stand up here and say a flag salute. I take it as a personal affront. I think all black people see it as an affront. Native Americans may or may not see it as an affront. But since I'm saying all liars will have their part in the lake, I detect at least six lies in that so-called pledge. You start by pledging allegiance to a cloth, to a rag, which is what I see the flag as being. When I have traveled, in the early days of my youth, when I was as young as some of the people here, giving speeches around the country to various universities such as Vassar, MIT, and some of those you all think are exclusive and elite, I would always have second thoughts when I went into any building or any room in a building where they had an American flag. The flag has never been anything that gave comfort to black people. There was a black woman named Rosa Parks. Lincoln has a parkway named after her. White people don't understand what happened in that situation. Down South they had, on the bus, a section of the bus where black people sit and a section where white people sit. Rosa Parks was a person reared in the south and she adhered to those requirements. So she took a seat in what was called the colored section. And it was plainly marked with a sign. She took her seat. But then as more and more people like you all got on the bus, they didn't want you to stand up, so they told the people of my complexion who had complied with their racist rule, their dehumanizing rule, their anti-American, if America were what it is supposed to be or professes to be, their anti-American practice. So as the white people got on, they didn't want to stand up. They didn't want to sit with black people because we contaminate them.

LINDSTROM: One minute.

CHAMBERS: It would seem to me that whatever about us would contaminate them would contaminate the seat. But you know what the bus driver does? He gets up and he takes that flag-- that sign and he moves it farther to the back so white people can sit where black people were required to sit and where they had sat. And Rosa Parks refused to move. I've never talked to her. I've never read that she said this. But being black I imagine she thought, now, I've let you degrade and humiliate me, and I'm not going to let you degrade me further. I sat down where you said I have to sit because I'm not fit. Well, I'm not moving to another place and let one of these pure white people sit in this seat and be contaminated. How hypocritical they were. So you know what they did? They called the police to come and arrest this middle to elderly black woman. And you know what all those racist...

LINDSTROM: Time, Senator.

CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President.

LINDSTROM: You're next in the queue, please continue.

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CHAMBERS: You know what all those racist cops had on? Uniforms. And you know what was on that uniform? An American flag. In the name of America, in the name of Americanism, in the name of white Christian Christianity these big, beefy, cowardly cops with their guns got on this bus and took that black woman, offending nobody except the racists, off the bus, placed her under arrest, and she had to go before a judge. A judge in a courtroom where before any activity took place and a person testified, they put a copy of that "Bible" in front of this person and one of these foul, white-Christian Americans would hold it and make anybody who testified put his or her hand on that book and say at the end of the incantation, so help you God. What god? What kind of god is that? But that's what they did. And this sanctuary where God lived, a white, Christian god, a white-racist, Christian god. White, racist, Christian judges and jurors and cops and bailiffs to charge her with a crime for not wanting to be doubly humiliated. And they wore the flag of this racist country to let all black people know that when you see that flag you know that it's telling you, you are not a human being. You certainly are not a citizen. And that's what the flag has always meant. So whenever I go someplace and I see that flag, I'm on high alert because it certainly does not provide sanctuary for black people. So what lies are in that pledge you say? You pledge allegiance to the rag of the United States of America. First of all, they're not united. That's one lie. And to the republic for which it stands, one nation; that's lie number two. Under God. Based on what you profess God to be, that's lie number three. You don't practice it. You got some person in the Legislature who's bringing a bill to put "In God we trust" in the schoolrooms, and you know what he said during an interview? If it was good enough as a slogan for the Founding Fathers, it's good enough to be in school. That was not a slogan from the Founding Fathers. He doesn't even know American history. That was put on the coins and the money in the mid-'50s when they were trying to fight what they call godless communism. And that's when they put this "under God" into the flag salute. But that's lie number three. Indivisible--it's more divided now than at any time I can remember in my 80-- this is my 82nd year. Lie number four, with liberty; five, justice; six, for all. Seven lies that you would want me to come up here and tell in order not to offend some racist hypocrites. Then you got a man who is representing people by being in this Legislature who does not even know the origin of the slogan he wants to put in the schools. "In God we trust," that was not something that was put there by people you all call your Founding Fathers.

LINDSTROM: One minute.

CHAMBERS: So we need to find out what organization he's talking about and who the corporate giants were who founded it because he certainly is not talking about the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, so called United States. But he's going to lead you all down that primrose path. It's another one of those simpleminded, rural-originating notions. Just like the idea of telling all teachers and employees in schools, or whichever ones the school decides should do it, to carry guns, because there's a problem with guns. When I'm recognized again, I'll touch on that. Thank you, Mr. President.

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LINDSTROM: Thank you, Senator Chambers. You're now recognized, Senator Chambers.

CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Some people know that malaria is spread by mosquitoes. So if you went according to the philosophy of these geniuses in the Legislature, you have an epidemic of malaria, and they find out that malaria is spread by mosquitoes. So this genius in the Legislature says, aha, I have the solution for malaria. Malaria is caused by mosquitoes, so the answer to malaria is more mosquitoes. Bring more mosquitoes, and that as counterintuitive as it may seem, is how you will fight the epidemic of malaria. In these schools they've had resource officers, some of whom are armed, they didn't do anything. And that one down in Texas or New Mexico or wherever it is, there are so many of them, I get the location mixed up, but there was a deputy who would not go in to the school. Then a member of the Legislature thinks if you put a gun, strap it on to a teacher, then you're going to have these teachers do what deputies won't do, what armed resource officers won't do who are law enforcement people. I'm in favor of letting the students put guns on. I want the students to be able to wear guns in these schools. You know why? To protect themselves against these racist teachers. But mainly because they need to protect themselves against sexual assaults at the hands of teachers and administrators. So if we're talking about protecting the students, let them carry guns. This is some of the nonsensical stuff that I have to waste my time dealing with down here. I shouldn't even have to talk about a flag salute. All you grown people older than dirt standing up here like little children in grade school because somebody said some years ago, you ought to salute the flag. You know why I won't come up here and sit down? Because I don't sit down in this room! And the only way I can show my contempt would be when you all are standing up being hypocritical is to sit in this chair. And I'm not going to let the flag make me do what I'm not going to do. What about the prayer? Whoever you're praying to can take care of that himself, herself, or themselves. But that's a waste of time too. Every prayer you all pray, I listen to you downstairs because I got to keep an eye on you. Every prayer you pray can be answered by members of this Legislature if we would do it because we have the power. We can provide assistance, meaningful assistance to those who are mentally disabled, physically disabled, those impoverished, those without enough food to eat. We can do something about that, but we won't. But you think your duty is ended when you stand down here and say these prayers and have somebody up there pray over you. That's nonsense. Quiet as it's kept, in a way I'm kind of like God's surrogate down here. And since you all believe that God talks to people, you all believe that everybody's made in the image of God, is God black like me or is he white like you? Well, based on what ethnologists and other scientists and those who study human origins have come up--

LINDSTROM: One minute.

CHAMBERS: --Jesus looked more like me than he looked like you all. He's black like me, got frizzy hair like me; not pink like you all. The part of the world where he lived doesn't even have

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people like you all, unless you come there as invaders and exploiters. And that's what I have to listen to down here, then you get up self-righteously and pontificate about it. I will do more of what your Jesus said to do by accident than you do on purpose, not because I'm religious, but I'm not comfortable in the presence of other people's suffering if I can do something to alleviate it. It has nothing to do with nobility or anything like that. It just means that my mind, because I'm a human being, will not let me watch somebody thirsty if I got water that I can give them, hungry if I've got some bread I can give them.

LINDSTROM: Time, Senator. Senator Williams, you are recognized. Senator Williams waives. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Hansen, you're welcome to close on your motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President; good morning again, colleagues. Just as a reminder in my closing, this motion is to withdraw my LB72 which dealt with county elections. Senator Crawford has a virtually identical LB211 that I've talked with her and agreed should be the bill moving forward. So I'd ask for your courtesy and your yes vote to let me withdraw LB72 and save the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee one more bill hearing. With that I'd ask for your yes. And thank you, Mr. President.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Senator Hansen. There's been a request for a roll call vote. The motion before us is the withdrawal of LB72.

CLERK: (Roll call vote taken.) 34 ayes, 0 nays to withdraw the bill.

LINDSTROM: The bill is withdrawn. Mr. Clerk for a motion. Mr. Clerk for new bills.

CLERK: Mr. President, new bills: (Read LB416-LB439 by title for first time.) That's all that I have at this time, Mr. President.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. (Visitors introduced.) Mr. Clerk for new bills.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. (Read LB440-LB478 by title for first time.) That's all that I have at this time, Mr. President.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Lathrop, for what purpose do you rise?

LATHROP: A point of personal privilege.

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LINDSTROM: Please continue.

LATHROP: Colleagues, I made an announcement a few days ago about having Director Frakes come and speak to those of you who may be interested or your staff. That's happening still, it's still scheduled for 1:30 today. I announced that it was going to be in the Warner Chamber. It's actually going to be in 1525 at 1:30. Director Frakes will be here for about an hour and a half. Hope you can attend. Thank you.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Senator Lathrop. Items, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, notice of committee hearings from the Business and Labor, and the Education Committee. Motion from Senator Chambers to reconsider the motion to withdraw LB72. That will be laid over. Series of name adds: Senator Hunt to LB44 and LB66; Senator Chambers to LB170; Senator Murman to LB205; Senator Hunt to LB275; Senator Brandt to LB314; Senator Briebe to LB316; Senator Linehan to LB395; Senator Cavanaugh and Hilkeemann to withdraw their names from LB141. Announcement that the Reference Committee will meet in Room 1003 upon adjournment.

And finally a priority motion: Senator Howard would move to adjourn until Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at 9:00 a.m.

LINDSTROM: The motion before us is to adjourn. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. We are adjourned.