

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Judiciary Committee June 9, 2020
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LATHROP: Good morning, colleagues and fellow Nebraskans. We are here today for our second of two listening forums by the Nebraska Unicameral Judiciary Committee. We had a hearing between-- that went from nine o'clock till a little after five o'clock last night in Omaha. Today, we're at the NET studio in Lincoln, Nebraska, where we will hear from folks that want to talk to us about current events and their concerns, their experiences, and importantly, their ideas. I thought yesterday went well. We heard from nearly 100 people in the time that we were convened and today, we hope to have a similar experience and hear from people in Lincoln and surrounding areas. And with that, my name is Steve Lathrop. I am the Chairman of this hardworking committee, which is my honor. I also represent Legislative District 12. And before I start with a few of the ground rules, I think I'll have my colleagues introduce themselves and we'll start with Senator DeBoer.

DeBOER: Hi, my name is Senator Wendy DeBoer and I'm from District 10.

BRANDT: I'm Senator Tom Brandt, District 32: Fillmore, Thayer, Jefferson, Saline, and southwestern Lancaster Counties.

PANSING BROOKS: And I'm Senator Patty Pansing Brooks from Legislative District 28, right in the heart of Lincoln. Thank you.

CHAMBERS: And although I need no introduction, I'm Ernie Chambers and I represent the 11th Legislative District in Omaha.

MORFELD: Adam Morfeld, representing District 46, right here in the northeast part of Lincoln.

SLAMA: Julie Slama, District 1: Otoe, Nemaha, Johnson, Pawnee, and Richardson Counties.

LATHROP: We also have-- today, my legislative assistant Zack is here as well as Laurie Vollertsen, our committee clerk, who's going to keep a record, which is important to us. And I'll explain a little bit about that. Neal Erickson, legal counsel, is, is also here. And I see Senator Bolz has joined us. She's not a member of the committee, but interested in our proceedings today. For those of you that have not testified before the committee before, I'll share some of the, some of the ground rules-- they're very simple-- that we implemented for this listening forum. To begin with, you probably received a number when you came in. Is that right? OK. So you received a number when you came

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in. We're going to take people in the order that you came in. You have a number in your hands, so I'll call a number a little bit like a, a New York deli. We're going to call you up by number, not to be impersonal, but it helps maintain order here and keeps the process fair in terms of who we're going to listen to next. Each person will have five minutes to talk. We have a light system. Where is that light at, Laurie? Oh, right in the middle of the room-- in front of me. You will see-- we'll alternate mikes because they'll be disinfected in between speakers. When you come to the mike, you'll see a green light. That will be on for four minutes. That's like you'd expect; you're free to talk for four minutes. Then you'll get a yellow light. That means you have one minute left. And then after a total of five minutes, the red light will appear. We'll ask you to stop or wrap up your very last thought. And I will, I will share this with you because it's my job to interrupt people when the light turns red. And it really is uncomfortable for me, particularly when people feel very strong and they get on a roll. So I hope you'll abide by the red light and not put me in a position where I have to try to stop you while you're talking. And with that, it's that simple. We welcome you today and we look forward to hearing what your experiences, concerns, and your ideas are. And with that, we'll take the first testifier.

PANSING BROOKS: Could you also mention about computers; that people use them to take notes?

LATHROP: Oh, we do have people-- I don't want this to be misconstrued. We have senators that use computers to take notes. That's not people that are, you know, one ear on you and another on Facebook. People are taking notes with some of the ideas and some of the testifiers' names and things like that. They are permitted to. Finally, and one last thought, which is if you have a cell phone, please put it in the silence mode so it's not interrupting our proceedings. And with that, we will take up the first testifier. You're welcome to come up.

TATUM SULLIVAN: Hi, I'm Tatum Sullivan, T-a-t-u-m S-u-l-l-i-v-a-n. The Constitution gives you the right as any person to bear arms. The Constitution gives you the right to protect yourself. Why is it ominous when black people even talk about having a gun or when they defend themselves, they seem like the bad guy? I have lived most my life in a small town in Nebraska. A lot of my white friends there talk about guns, but if one of my black friends here in Lincoln were to talk about guns, it would seem alarming. The color of their skin should not be seen as a threat. Parents should not have to sit down

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with their kids and tell them they have to live their life in fear because of their skin color and what they do will always seem suspicious. Something needs to change and it needs to change now.

LATHROP: Thank you.

JAMY SULLIVAN: Hi, I am Jamy Sullivan, J-a-m-y S-u-l-l-i-v-a-n. I am a retired school board member that has served multiple years on the Americanism committee. And I feel like I want to speak today because the Americanism committee should be there helping define social studies and what we're learning. But from what I know, substantial conversations are not happening there and it needs to. I do feel a need to say that local school boards, NDE, teachers, admin are doing wonderful jobs. But I am here to suggest that education legislation is needed to address police brutality and systemic prejudices because before someone is in a position of power, they are a student that spends most of their hours with teachers, coaches, club leaders, et cetera. I feel like the Americanism committee could be a place where a lot of change can happen, but I don't feel like school boards are representative of what our communities look like in Nebraska. So I feel like it needs to come from the state, from leaders of different organizations because if it is left to just their Americanism committee to decide what history is studied, what defines civic duties, it is going to be very prejudiced. It's going to be biased. And again, I love the members I served. I love the school that I served in. But as-- the school boards members that I know, we do not represent, by color and by women, what our state looks like so I believe that the, the responsibilities that are largely left to an Americanism committee on a school board needs to happen at a state level, needs to happen even before it hits the legislation. And so I am here just to encourage that. And I was looking at what the NDE was proposing to legislation this year. I think largely, it didn't even approach racism. So I think that-- again, that is something that needs to have wide discussions. And I just believe starting conversations and early education with our toddlers all the way up on what-- and I think it's been a difficult conversation because what does an American look like? What is a civic duty? What is proper civic duty? And I feel like rural people might have a different idea of what city people have an idea of. And we have people coming from all over the country. And I feel like those voices need to determine that and should not be left to local school boards, although I am a proponent of local school boards. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: Thank you. OK, number three. Good afternoon.

JUDY KING: Hi.

LATHROP: Good morning.

JUDY KING: Good morning. Judy King, J-u-d-y K-i-n-g. I wasn't quite sure what to say today. I think I'm going to finish up with something that happened to me in the last hearing I was in that has to do with racism. And I appreciate what you said to me, Senator Lathrop. It gave me-- I appreciate what you said. It was-- I'm with a Nebraska gun violence group and I came in to testify against-- or for a gun bill and I was faced with 400 people that were carrying guns. And then we were told that we could only-- I brought in my testimony and then we were told that we only had three minutes to speak. So I had a World Herald article that I brought in and I listened to some of the speakers speak and all of a sudden, I heard the word David Pringle. And David Pringle was in an article that I had read or had with me that day. And so when you split it to just three minutes, I asked Patricia Hill if she would like to just split the article with me and I would read the first part and she would read the second part. And when we did that, Senator Slama threw a fit and left the room. And what it had said in that article is that he was a white supremacist. And she got up, left the room, came back in, and said-- let's see if I can remember it correctly-- but she stood up for the white supremacist. And then after we were all done talking in our, in our side of the issue, we left. And I pointed out the gentleman that was the supremacist who sat behind me and that must have made her upset. And she then gave that person extra minutes to speak and let him explain his situation. So I didn't get that time to speak, so I would like to have extra time today to speak.

LATHROP: Judy-- and, and for those who are going to testify, we had some of this yesterday. And I'm going to say every person-- you can stop the clock, Laurie, for a second because I'd like to, I'd like to say something before we proceed. Yesterday, we had-- when I called members of the committee and said I'd like to put together a listening forum, every single person on this committee said that's a good idea and I'll be there. And our role today is to hear from people about their experiences, their concerns, and their ideas.

JUDY KING: Um-hum.

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LATHROP: I'd like to keep the focus off of the members, OK? We have plenty of people that, that appreciated Senator Chambers. I don't have a problem with that, but I don't want it to turn into a forum to criticize individual members who, because of the nature of this forum, aren't in a position to stop the proceedings and defend themselves, OK?

JUDY KING: OK.

LATHROP: That would include Senator Slama. If you have something to say, we're happy to listen to you, but I would ask the people who are going to testify today to share their thoughts, their concerns, their experiences, and their ideas for change. And then that will, that will be more constructive than what I would regard as personal attacks on the different committee members, OK?

JUDY KING: OK, I--

LATHROP: And with that, Judy, I know you testify in front of the committee from time to time and we're always happy to listen to you. We'll give you an opportunity to deliver the balance of your remarks.

JUDY KING: OK.

LATHROP: Thank you.

JUDY KING: I appreciate that Senator.

LATHROP: Sure.

JUDY KING: It was all leading up to something and it has to do with the Republican Party, of which there are some members here in that. And the Republican Party, all the way from Trump to Governor Ricketts and some legislators are racist. And those-- that situation needs to change and-- it's going to be hard to keep up on this now-- OK. My other issue was with the political tactics of race-baiting in politics. And I know the Republican Party is sending out stuff in the mail that has Ernie Chambers on the-- on, on it and it is Senator Slama's opponent. So, I mean, if she could, if she could say something about that at some point to explain that and then-- I'm done talking-- but the Republican Party is, is-- they're straight KKK here and they promote it and I would like my extra time to go to Senator Chambers to

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Speak if he'd like-- if he desires or any person of color that would like to speak now, if I get extra time.

LATHROP: We can't do that, but I, I do-- thank you for coming today and we're happy to hear your opinions in a broader sense. But we kind of decided, as a committee, we were going to listen and not enter into exchanges or to answer questions or question the people who came up.

JUDY KING: OK.

LATHROP: It's going to be an opportunity where people can come to the mike, not be nervous they're going to be questioned by the committee, and just share their thoughts and concerns.

JUDY KING: They're important issues, I think-- they're--

LATHROP: They, they most certainly are and, and I think everybody on the committee would agree.

JUDY KING: OK.

LATHROP: Thanks, Judy.

JUDY KING: Thank you.

LATHROP: OK, number four.

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: Hello.

LATHROP: Good morning.

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: Good morning. I'm here representing my son, who is autistic. He has had challenges and incidents with the police.

LATHROP: Can you give us your name and spell your name for us?

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: My name is Vivian Filipcic.

LATHROP: Can you spell it for us?

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: V-i-v-i-a-n-n, Filipcic is F-i-l-i-p-c-i-c. I'm here representing my son, Austin Filipcic. OK, my issue is I'm the guardian of my son. I'm the conservator of my son. To do that in Nebraska, I had to pass a lot of tests. I have to have perfect credit. I have to have, you know, no criminal history. But the police questioned him

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with an IQ of what-- 61, in the sixth percentile in the nation, without my permission. And he'll say yes and he'll say no, not knowing what the answer is so he can go home. So my issue is I'd like the guardian to be notified when the police know that they're dealing with an autistic person. When the police know that I have filed with them, you know, that he is developmentally disabled, I should be notified. The last hearing he went to, I had to find out about the hearing myself, even though I filed as an interested person in the court. No notified [SIC] was given to me. I'm the one that has to make sure that I'm notified, that I'm the one taking care of him. And he'll say yes and he'll say no and he doesn't know what the answer is so he's guessing. Therefore, the guardians should be notified. And that's what I'm asking for. And other issues that we've had with the police, unfortunately, with his autism is-- besides the questioning part, is when he did go to the jail and I asked them to take him to the hospital. They didn't take him to the hospital. They took him to the jail, but he wouldn't behave because of his autism, all right? He's acting out. I'm having trouble with him at home. I want him to go to the hospital. Now he's got Blue Cross, he's got Medicare, and he's got Medicaid. He's fully insured-- triple, but they didn't do that. They took him to the jail and at the jail, he wouldn't behave and so they slammed his head against the wall-- sorry-- and they took a power hose to him and they stripped him naked and they tied him to a chair. Now I've never been able to get that video. Sorry--

LATHROP: It's OK.

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: So they shouldn't be doing that. If I'm asking him to go to a hospital and I'm willing to pay for it, that should be allowed. So many issues; the way autistic people are treated, you know? There's-- one man has already been killed for his autism in Omaha. I applied to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services for services for him. He graduated in 2012. He's 25 now. He can't get services in Nebraska. Now he can in Missouri. It takes about six months and he qualifies; boom. In Nebraska, there was a seven-year waitlist in 2012. There's a [INAUDIBLE] waitlist now-- in the waitlist. You are taking mentally-ill people that should be taken care of and putting them in jails. They don't belong in jail. They belong in the hospital. Now they take him to a six-month wait in a holding cell by himself, in solitaire [SIC], to the point that after this experience and after being in solitaire [SIC] for-- what-- six months, he finally gets to go to the regional center. But by then, he's schizophrenic. So now I have a developmentally-disabled autistic child

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who is schizophrenic, a permanent condition. He's under medication; costs \$40,000/year for medication now to treat him with this. That didn't have to happen. He had to go to a hospital. He didn't have to go to jail. He didn't have to sit and wait for eight months for care to go to the regional center. Now the regional center does good work. I've heard-- somebody talked to me-- I think, in March-- about, well, you can't really tell a county how to deal with their jail, but somebody's got to say you can't be doing this. And, and you don't try to curtail the services and make them rush through the regional center through people-- they can't. I mean, if they're going to do a good job-- and they do do a good job, all right? And in general, the police do a good job. Just in this particular instance, it wasn't working. And for most of the people, I think, that are in jail that are mentally-ill-- illness problems, they shouldn't be put there. Nebraska needs to be not the 29th in the nation for mental care, all right? That's what the lawyer said. The best opportunity for you, for your son is to get him out of here, all right? Get him out of Nebraska, you know, so he doesn't have these problems. So take him to Missouri. He qualifies, you know, he's got support for his living and everything else. You shouldn't be taking these people and forcing them out of Nebraska. You shouldn't be taking people like my daughter-- they're in the top one percent-- and try to recruit him here. She's graduating University of Nebraska, all-American. She went to her mom's alma mater. You know, they want to keep her, but the disabled people-- they're violating their constitutional rights by making them leave. I think I'm out of time.

LATHROP: You are.

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: Sorry.

LATHROP: No, but thanks for being here this morning.

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: OK.

LATHROP: Yeah.

VIVIANN FILIPCIC: Thank you.

LATHROP: Yeah, bye. Number five.

ANNIE SCHENZEL: Good morning.

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LATHROP: Good morning.

ANNIE SCHENZEL: All right. My name is Annie, but I'm here representing my friend Riah, who is an autistic black community collaborator from Omaha. And this format is inaccessible for her to be here so she asked me to come and represent her.

LATHROP: Annie, do you mind giving us your last name?

ANNIE SCHENZEL: Yes, my first name is Annie, A-n-n-i-e, and my last name is Schenzel, S-c-h-e-n-z-e-l. And Riah's name is Riah, R-i-a-h, Person, P-e-r-s-o-n. And I don't know which camera wants to see this, but this is Riah.

LATHROP: OK.

ANNIE SCHENZEL: OK? So you can picture her. Actually, maybe I'll hold-- OK, so earlier this month, Pete Ricketts was asked when he would have COVID testing sites for disabled people made available. His response included the quote, what we needed to do is to continue to work on getting the system down for the regular customers, so to speak. A few days later, when he was being held accountable for the response to the unjust killing of James Scurlock and his most, his most memorable remark was where in the hell were you people? This is not the first time Pete Ricketts has made it clear that he does not value-- have value for disabled bodies, bodies of color, or the marginalized communities that we often belong to. And as a disabled black person who cares for their communities, I take issue with that. While I'm not able to be here in person, by the time this is being read on my behalf, I will have already been up for a few hours collaborating with other disabled folk online to create community resource-- excuse me-- resources to better prepare for the large wave of disabled bodies that we are and will continue to be taking into the communities, specifically due to the events of 2020. This project has been one of the few things that keeps me from crying over how many disabled bodies and bodies of color we are losing because of the actions of those such as Pete Ricketts. Disabled bodies are lost at a much higher rate when communities, especially those already marginalized, don't have the resources required to be safe. Black bodies are being lost not only because of that same ableism, but also due to the overzealous actions of state representatives to turn peaceful protests into warfare. If testing and affordable treatment is not accessible for everyone, then we are communicating who is not

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worthy to live and cosigning lives lost. We need testing that is accessible to those who cannot drive or not leave their homes, especially for those who are in poor neighborhoods and communities of color. We need to make-- or we need more resources that are also accessible to the many non-English-speaking Nebraskans because it is not a choice to leave them out either. We need to know that while we are, we are interacting with these resources, we also won't be making ourselves more, more vulnerable because of malicious data collection. We need better funding for home and community-based supports because even now, we know that disabled and elderly folk in long-term care facilities, especially black and brown folk, are more likely to die due to close proximity and poor resources. Those lives lost should not just be expected casualties. We need more PPE for district or-- direct-support professionals and caregivers so we aren't just turning them into martyrs for preventable deaths. Most importantly, what we need right now is for those who have the authority to act to listen to the people of Nebraska during this current national grieving. And I realize that you're hearing me now, but are you listening? When we took to protest the injustice of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and many others by the hands of the police, we also found ourselves in the "heartaching" situation where we had to add James Scurlock to the list. We are not the enemy. We are civilians. We are only asking for justice and accountability and that is being met with aggression. If we can't ask for justice and accountability-- and when we do, we are jolted to the side as "you people," as if we're somehow deserving of our bodies being dehumanized and brutalized-- then how are we supposed to trust anything that is said about actions that are meant to keep Nebraskans safe? Won't you act in the interests of your civilians? Won't you demilitarize your current response? Won't you hold accountable yourself and the people who are responsible in uniform for necessary acts of violence? Because if not, we will not be silent about it. Our blood has already been spilled and it is on your hands. Would you like this written response?

LATHROP: We usually do when we're in the Capitol and having hearings on bills, but we don't need it today.

ANNIE SCHENZEL: OK.

LATHROP: We've got a record of your testimony so thanks for being here.

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ANNIE SCHENZEL: Yes, thank you.

LATHROP: Yeah. Number seven-- six.

PANSING BROOKS: Six, six.

LATHROP: Good morning.

ANDREW NEILL: Members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Andrew Neil, A-n-d-r-e-w N-e-i-l-l. I am deeply alarmed and saddened by the deaths and injuries of numerous people of color at the hands of the police who are often held unaccountable for these actions. The police are servants of the public community and should not be able to escape from prosecution for these unjust, unjust, unjust actions through the doctrine of qualifiable [SIC] immunity. The police officers are entrusted to protect and serve their community and should be held accountable to people that they serve. I urge members of the judicial community [SIC] to pass legislature reflecting the Police Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability Act, SB20-217, a new bill introduced to the Colorado State Senate this past week. I've emailed a fact sheet provided by the Colorado ACLU to the Judiciary Committee ahead of time. The bill includes the following measures. It mandates body cameras, introduces public reporting on policing data, rein in the use of deadly force by officers, and prevent rehiring of bad officers who have been involved in instances of police brutality in the past. And finally, it makes police officers unable to use the doctrine of qualified immunity to escape lawsuits from victims of police brutality. I believe that this bill prevent-- provides a step forwards in bringing bad actors within the police department to justice. Because while many argue that it's just a case of some bad apples, the whole saying is that bad apples ruin the bushel. We cannot allow the police department to continue with this culture of brutality; victimizing people they are meant to serve. And while the act itself does not create a whole solution, it is a step in the right direction. So for that reason, I urge the Nebraska Judiciary Committee to adopt the measures laid out in this bill for the state of Nebraska. I yield my time. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Number seven. Welcome.

RUBEN CANO: Good morning.

LATHROP: Good morning.

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RUBEN CANO: My name is Ruben Cano, R-u-b-e-n C-a-n-o. So I stand before you today, committee members, as a person of color, as an educator, as a principal of one of the largest high schools in the state of Nebraska. I have the privilege of representing almost 3,000 largely minority students, many of whom participated and continue to participate in the protests that occurred in-- and rallies that, that occurred in Omaha. As an educator, I'm proud of my students and I'm proud of all the people that have begun to find their voice. As a person of color, it breaks my heart because the work's not done yet. We cannot let the work stop once, once the protests are done, once we decide to return to our homes and go back to our lives and go back to school. We can't stop. I cannot continue to welcome classes of students every fall and tell them that they can achieve an American dream because the truth is that for people of color, when we pursue the American dream, we're pursuing an American dream that comes with an asterisk behind it. When we begin to use our voice, we are quickly discredited. We are quickly seen as rabble rousers. We are quickly viewed as terrorists by members who are supposed to represent us, by elected officials. I encourage you, as an elected official, to continue to introduce legislation and seek out policies that will finally put an end to systematic racism so that we are not back here in a committee hearing of this nature again in a year, in two years, in five years. I ask you to consider laws that value every citizen, every citizen so that they understand that their life is respected, regardless of the color of their skin, regardless of their age, regardless of their economic background, and regardless of their legal standing in this country. We look to you as our elected officials to create a Nebraska that takes care of all of its citizens. And I applaud you for having conversations with us today and the conversations you had yesterday, but we have to continue to have the-- that open dialog and communication. Please continue to listen to us. Please continue to invite members of the marginalized communities, but all communities to speak and to be part of the conversation and to be part of the solution. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. I'm just going to say, you know, normally in a committee hearing, we don't allow applause. But yesterday, we noticed that a lot of people applauded and not today; everybody's kind of doing this. And you don't have to be quiet today, OK? I think your response is part of the experience so I don't want you to feel like you have to observe the usual hearing rules. We'll take the next person to testify. Good morning.

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KAREN BELL-DANCY: Good morning, members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Karen Bell-Dancy, Karen, K-a-r-e-n B-e-l-l-D-a-n-c-y. I am representing myself, as a private citizen, as well as the executive director of the YWCA-Lincoln and also with recognition to my sister chapters in the state of Nebraska; YWCA-Grand Island and Hastings. The YWCA has the mission of the elimination of racism and the empowerment of women. The YWCA is a movement because we are working toward young women and girls in more than 100 countries for their empowerment and leadership potential. The members and supporters include women from many different faiths, religions, backgrounds, beliefs, and cultures. We have been engaged in this work in Lincoln, Nebraska for over 134 years. Our advocacy work consists of voter registration, census reach, legislative work, and all the while, we are promoting an anti-racist movement. I'm here today in response to the systemic racism that prevails in Lincoln, Nebraska. Racism comes in various forms, such as the recent police killings-- or I should say, those that have been videotaped-- of residents across the country. And they are part of a longer history of fatal police killings against black people in America and require action immediately. Due to the murder of George Floyd, it has shed a light on the level of police brutality, violence, and misconduct by law enforcement. Abusive police practices coupled with devastating violence is consistent with brutality and fatality upon black people since our nation's founding. Nebraska is no stranger to this effect. Additionally, too often, police killings involve officers with a history of misconduct and complaints for that misconduct. The police administration should require information about the misconduct, histories of officers, before hiring them, which underscores the need for a national public registry of law enforcement officers that compile the names of the officers who have been terminated or decertified. This publicly-available registry would in-- for data, sorry-- would inform hiring decisions and would allow the public to know who is being hired to work in their community. Hiring culturally-sensitive and competent officers will work to build for the community that they are charged to serve and protect. Today, I am demanding meaningful police reform legislation. Here is some data to consider. Though black Americans make up about 32 percent of the population, they make up 56 percent of the incarcerated population. Black males make up 14.6 percent of the population, but are six times more likely to be detained for driving or walking or breathing. Black women are consistently occupying the bottom rung for being hired and salaries. I am demanding public policy that incorporates statements and directives from public institutions such as the Unicameral, the

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mayor's office, the Governor's office, the health department, the school systems, and other administration. Here is what I recommend: end to racial profiling, officers must wear and deploy body cameras, gerrymandering, prison reform, felons' voting rights, funding to educate black and brown citizens, training for cultural sensitivity, ensure diverse administrations on boards and management bodies, training for trauma in form, and rights for tenants. These need to be immediate, actionable items. I also urge you to continue these reforms when you reconvene in July, which should not stop at legislation to ensure racial bias training for officers, but also support legislation to have action to the items of-- listed above. At the YWCA, we will continue to get up and do the work until injustice is rooted out, all institutions are transformed; until the world makes women, girls, and people of color the way-- see them the way that we do; equal, powerful, unstoppable. This past week, I had the opportunity to reach a milestone birthday in my life. I turned 60. I remember as a small child, this same type of movement, these same issues being brought to the administration and the leaders of the city. It is time now for us to do something meaningful; make a change. And I appreciate the opportunity to be here this morning. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. OK, we'll take number nine, testifier number nine. Good morning.

KEVIN ANDERSON: Good morning. My name is Kevin Anderson, s-o n. Would you like me to spell more of it?

LATHROP: Yeah, you better.

KEVIN ANDERSON: All right. K-e-v-i-n A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. Thank you to members of the committee and NET for hosting this. I know it was kind of difficult to put together last minute. I'd like to focus my testimony on actionable, specific suggestions for police reform. I think so many of the other wonderful people who have come to testify today can, can handle speaking more eloquently and powerfully than I can about, about the needs so I'm, I'm here to just kind of bring forth some ideas for, for actionable solutions; 80 percent of what I'm going to say today is taken directly from an organization called Campaign Zero, Z-e-r-o; it's spelled out. If you Google it, it's, like, the first three results. They are, in my opinion, leading the national discussion on police reform, both on a full national level as-- and individual city level. We all want safe, equitable communities for people who call Lincoln their home. So I'm just going

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to get right into a few specific suggestions. I think we should try to recruit for the, the police department with a focus on women and people of color. Currently, the police academy in Lincoln has a 21-week program that's done in-classroom Monday to Friday. And from day one, you are paid \$20.26/hour. And then after that 21-week classroom program, there are 22 weeks of on-the-job training and evaluation where you are still paid, by the hour, over \$20. So I think we should-- if we have problem communities or areas that need additional police enforcing, let's recruit from those communities. The Army and Air Force; they recruit from high schools, people with good backgrounds, history of nonviolent crimes. Let's also bolster our, our police force using that same resource. And this might create an influx of new recruits to the police department and that is good. Across the nation, there have been more and more police departments that have specific parts of their force that specialize in mental health and domestic crises. This has been tried in several cities, notably in Eugene, Oregon. They have a CAHOOTS program. It's a long acronym, CAHOOTS. I don't have the time to get into it. Topeka, Kansas also has a very successful mental health/domestic crisis response team as a part of their police. In a 2015 study, whenever there was a call put in where the origin of, of the call-- at the heart of it was a, a mental health issue, police force in those cases dropped by 40 percent. So this is, this is an actionable thing that we can implement with just having a specialized mental health force to be moved-- or to be brought out on those appropriate times. And I do have some information of-- that article if, if you would like it. We need to train the police force with a focus on de-escalation. Missouri, just statewide, requires two hours of de-escalation training every year for all active police officers and two hours of training for mental health crisis solutions every year. Nebraska has zero. We need to train our academy to be able to learn with or to, to be able to deal with English language learners and people with mental health issues and conflict resolution. Conflict resolution training is de-escalation training. If it never becomes an issue, police force never has to be used. We need to revise some specific police policies. I think that officers need to be able to establish objective justification for every stop they make. We need to require a report, even-- no matter how brief, for every stop they make that includes location, race, and gender of the citizens that they do stop just so that we have that information so that we can actually find out how bad of our city's policing bias-- or find out how bad the situation is. We cannot ever allow stops based on a generalized description such as a black male,

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age 20 to 30; no other descriptors. We cannot police communities, just stopping people on something as vague as that. That is basically one step away from stop and frisk. We need a wider use of body cams and explain to citizens that they are being recorded and they have the option of requesting the camera be turned off or if it-- or if the footage needs to be used in court, if they want to be anonymous, that is an option for them. Just make sure that people understand their rights while they are being recorded and make that body cam footage available to the public upon request. Refusal to give a name or badge number or covering up body cams needs to be a punishable, punishable action with the penalty upwards of termination. It needs to be a very serious infraction of police, police protocol.

LATHROP: Mr. Anderson.

KEVIN ANDERSON: Oh, wow, that went really fast.

LATHROP: You have the red light. You and others are free to send emails to the committee; so the, the resources and the list. Our emails are all on the legislative website. Feel free to send the balance of your-- or any information to us. We get that and we look at it.

KEVIN ANDERSON: OK. Yeah, thank you for your time.

LATHROP: No, thank you for being here today. Welcome.

KEVIN ABOUREZK: Hau. Hihanni waste. Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Lathrop and the rest of the Judiciary Committee for allowing me to speak before you this morning. My name is Kevin Abourezk, K-e-v-i-n, last name, A-b-o-u-r-e-z-k. This morning, I would like to share with you the story of Zachary Bear Heels, a 29-year old Rosebud Lakota man, who on June 5, 2017, encountered four Omaha police officers at a convenience store in Omaha who proceeded to shock him 12 times with a taser; striking 13 times in the face and take turns putting their full weight on his back while he lay face down on the pavement with his hands zip-tied behind his back. When they turned him over to put him on a gurney that night, Zachary was gone. And yet we are expected to believe this unarmed, mentally-disabled man died not from the gauntlet of abuse he suffered at the hands of officers sworn to protect those innocent like him? But that he died from a medical condition called excited delirium, which only seems to be applied by coroners examining in-custody deaths, though it is not recognized as a legitimate medical

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condition by a single professional medical association? I truly believe the tragic death of Zachary Bear Heels and the utter failure of state prosecutors to hold accountable the only officer ever tried for it-- in his involvement in Zachary's death could be used as a case study to better understand many of the failures of our justice system here in Nebraska. From the lack of crisis intervention training given to the four officers who were called to help Zachary that night to the incestuous relationship between the Douglas County Coroner's Office and the Omaha police, the failure to hold a single officer criminally responsible for Zachary's murder should serve as a clarion call to all who seek to ensure justice is served in Nebraska. Are we truly, truly to believe that county coroners, who undoubtedly receive much of their funding from their contracts with local law enforcement agencies, can be expected to deliver truly independent autopsies when it comes to in-custody deaths? Indeed, I believe Nebraska should be willing to fund independent autopsies that are requested by families that have lost a loved one to police violence. At the very least, the state should ensure such families are made acutely aware of their rights to request independent autopsies following the in-custody deaths of their loved ones. To understand the importance of an independent autopsy, we need look no further than Minnesota, where the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office initially ruled out a diagnosis of traumatic asphyxia and strangulation related to the death of George Floyd. It was only after an independent autopsy found Mr. Floyd died because of an-- because another grown man put his knee on his neck until he stopped breathing-- something we all saw happen on that horrific video-- that charges against Officer Derek Chauvin were increased from third-degree murder to second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter. Had funding or information been, been made available to the family of Zachary Bear Heels about their right to request an independent autopsy, I am certain that that autopsy would have found a much different cause for Zachary's death. Yet another systemic failure that has plagued efforts to hold the officers who murdered Zachary accountable is the right of police officers to appeal their firings to independent arbitrators who ultimately get to decide whether fired officers will get their jobs back or not. In the case of the four officers involved in Zachary's death, three will get to walk the streets of Omaha as officers once again; a cold reality for many native people living in our state's largest city. Because of this, I call upon the Legislature to dismantle the binding arbitration requirements currently in state law. Perhaps this process could begin by examining the impact of binding arbitration in Nebraska and asking

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questions such as this: how often are fired officers and other unionized government servants in Nebraska granted their jobs back because of independent arbitration? In Minnesota, Chicago, and Houston, researchers discovered more than half of all fired public servants were given their jobs back by independent arbitrators. I can't imagine Nebraska would fare any better under close scrutiny. And if the same does hold true for Nebraska, we must then ask, ask ourselves, do we really want to grant ourselves such little power to hold our police accountable? My answer that to-- my answer to that would be an emphatic no. It's time we stop protecting our police from accountability. You know, it's long been said that Native Americans are akin to the canary in the coal mine. We are the first to suffer from society's systemic failures. And the tragedies that befall us as a result of those failures are too often ignored by the greater society until it is too late. I truly believe Zachary's murder won't be the last at the hands of police officers who know all too well the protections that are afforded to them, including well-funded police unions, binding arbitration requirements, and county coroners who seem more interested in protecting their bottom line than delivering truly independent medical assessments. Please don't let police use Zachary's death and the complete lack of accountability for those responsible for it to justify future in-custody deaths of Nebraska citizens. I implore you to use his death to seek ways to ensure this doesn't happen to anyone else in our state and to hold those officers responsible for killing innocent civilians accountable. Wopila tanka; thank you.

LATHROP: Number 11. Welcome.

SCOTT FERGUSON: Hi. My name is Scott Ferguson. That's S-c-o-t-t F-e-r-g-u-s-o-n, like the city in Missouri. I'm a Nebraska state employee and work for the Department of Labor, but I'm here on my own time today, representing myself as a private citizen. I'd like to start my testimony with a few quotes you may or may not have heard before: I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about, in any way, the social and political equality of the white and black races. I am not, nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people. There is a physical difference between the white and black races, which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. Of course, that was Abraham Lincoln; spoke those words during a debate in 1858. Ten years later, the city of Lincoln was founded in his name.

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The city we're in right now was named after a white supremacist. And we have streets named after indigenous tribes we've conquered: Otoe, Pawnee, Dakota, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Nemaha, all leading up to the Indian Village Shopping Center, a rundown, low-rent strip mall. In 2007, we renamed a stretch of Capitol Parkway Rosa Parks Way. One of the selling points of the renaming was "there are no houses or businesses on that stretch so nobody has to change their business stationery." Another selling point was that it goes by the city's bus storage station, considered a "teachable moment." We don't even have a bus route that runs on that street. This sounds a lot like the 8 Can't Wait campaign; something that sounds good to some people, but is ultimately an empty road to nowhere. The city of Lincoln was named after a white supremacist and 150 years later, we have a white supremacist as Governor. Governor Ricketts has made that clear in the last few months with his response to the pandemic. Recently talking about meatpacking plants, he said, if I had known things two months ago that I know today, I would have done things differently. Well, on March 19, he was authorizing state employees to start working from home due to the pandemic. It wasn't until April 20, a full month later, that Tyson put up dividers at the meatpacking plant in Lexington. Governor Ricketts knew people were in danger for a full month and did nothing. When race and ethnicity case data was released for Douglas County a few weeks ago, he pointed out at one of his news conferences, "Caucasians make up about 20 percent of the COVID-19 cases, but about 80 percent of the deaths, which"-- and he actually said this-- "shows us that the virus does not discriminate." He twisted the math from a sample size of just 24 deaths to make white people out as the victims. I want to jump quickly to the Lincoln Police Department's social media. For years, they've been retweeting and tweeting their officers' tweets that demean and joke about their interactions with the public. There's the tweet about an officer joking about being grossed out by a feminine hygiene product falling out of a woman's pant leg. Check it out, it's still, it's still up. Or from Officer Mead, who's an SRO who tweeted out pictures of her handguns, saying took the girls out for some practice today #pewpew and posted a picture of her custom-built rifle saying isn't she adorable? I could go on with a dozen more examples. And lastly, I just want to say to young people, especially kids in high school, you don't have to put up with any of this. When adults want you to go back to school in the fall and be guinea pigs in their experiments on how they're going to institutionalize thousands of kids during a second wave of the pandemic, you don't have to say yes. You can resist. You

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can make your demands. You can march in the streets. I've seen you do it just last week, right past Lincoln High. You know how to do this. Start up the world you want to live in and demand it. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Testifier 12.

SIERRA KARST: Hello.

LATHROP: Welcome.

SIERRA KARST: My name is Sierra Karst, S-i-e-r-r-a, then K-a-r-s-t. So I'm a senior journalism student at UNL and I don't normally speak out on political issues because I'm a journalist, but I think these are extraordinary times and I think that it's a case in which I would like to do so. So I would like to say that through reading black history and black theory recently, I've come to see that police brutality is only a symptom of the sick system. We need to defund and disband our police forces and criminal justice system and imagine new solutions instead that are going to protect and care for our communities from the community, rather from an oversight force that doesn't get any convictions or any oversight from anyone else. My thoughts on this issue are inspired by black theory and history, like Angela Davis' texts or the documentary 13th on Netflix, which I suggest you all watch as our representatives. We need to be looking into history of all our people. We should be doing our deep readings on black theory that should have been taught to us in school. It wasn't, but now is the time to change that. So my reason for saying that we should disband it, because I know that's quite a statement, is because the current prison system is only a continuation of past slavery. The 13th Amendment was written to say that slavery and involuntary servitude should not happen except as a punishment for a crime. That has allowed for the creation of a second class of people in our United States. Essentially, being a criminal removes your rights to vote, get a job, gain credit, get loans; do all these things you need to survive in this country. And to be able to allow that is to take away the rights of a huge class of people in our country. And we have the most incarcerated people in America compared to anyone else in the whole world. This is a system that does not need to survive. We need to change it and reimagine it is something that's going to support us all. Essentially, there's other things, too, like the fact that our prisoners are used for almost unpaid labor. In Nebraska, prisoners earn between 16 cents to \$1.08/hour for their labor, according to the Prison Policy Initiative. Furthermore, the justice system earns money

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off the people being imprisoned and being prosecuted. There is bail, there's tickets and fines, even a phone call in Nebraska to an in-state for 15 minutes costs about \$6/hour for inmates. We're charging them to be imprisoned. The conditions of prisons themselves are insane. You've heard already the police brutality, the prison brutality. People are being beaten senseless for no reason. There's little to no contact with the outside world. So how are people going to change and learn? There's solitary confinement and now people in those prisons are getting exposed to COVID with little to no protection because they are overcrowded. There's countless opportunities for the police and for people in the justice system to abuse the citizens with no oversight. As a journalist, I can't even look at the internal complaints in the police department because they're not public record. There's no way to report on this. There's no way to keep people accountable in this system. It needs to change. I'm disgusted even that our tax money-- my tax money was used to attack citizens with tear gas, with rubber bullets, and that the state has not even tried to pay for those damages to the people's faces. People's faces were blown off by rubber bullets and no one has paid for it. I'm disgusted that we've been imprisoning people for 400 years, essentially, from slavery to Jim Crow to now this prison system, and I want it to end. And I think that this is a great chance now that we can all listen and learn and change this once and for all. I think that the label of criminal has been taking away the rights of people since the 1800s and delegating them as a second-class citizen and that needs to change as well. Now is our time to acknowledge our wrongs, learn from black voices in media, and imagine a world without systematic racism and oppression. We need to look towards abolition as a solution. And I think that's hard to consider that, but we should. One way to imagine that is instead of having police, we can have other parts of our community, other parts of our workforce start to address those issues. We can have mental health care, drug rehabilitation, rape and domestic abuse counselors, trauma-informed crisis deescalators. We could even get public transit. We could fund more food. We could do so many things with the money that is going toward police departments. And instead, our police departments are spending it on riot gear and on tear gas that's going to be used against us. I don't want my tax money going to that and I think you shouldn't either. So we should follow the steps of the Minneapolis City Council and start to imagine disbanding our police department and funding community-first solutions. We already have nonprofits that know the community. We already have community members that know what we all

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need and we should be listening to them and not to the police that have been abusing this system and abusing the people for years. I think even the U.N. High Commissioner spoke and said that at all times, but especially during a crisis, a country needs its leaders to condemn racism unequivocally [SIC] for them to reflect on what's been driving people to a boiling point, to listen and learn, and to take actions that truly tackle inequality. The world is watching. The U.N. is watching. The world is protesting along with us and we need to start listening and acting because if we don't, we're going to learn to regret this and be back here in another 60 years and I don't want to see that. Thank you for your time. Thank you for listening. I hope you make the changes.

LATHROP: Thank you. Number 13. Welcome.

JONATHAN REDDING: Thank you. I am Reverend Doctor Jonathan Redding, J-o-n-a-t-h-a-n R-e-d-d-i-n-g, and I am a professor of philosophy and religion at Nebraska Wesleyan University, but I am here today as a concerned citizen. I do not speak for Nebraska Wesleyan. I speak only for myself. I'm also speaking today as a person of faith because that is what has compelled me to come before you today. I'm a Christian and a Baptist from the South, not a Southern Baptist. That means I am a fierce advocate for the separation of church and state and when the state intervenes in such a way that is unjust, my faith compels me to come before each of you and say no. It compels me to come before each of you and say no more because black men, women, and children have been treated like dogs from this country's inception. They've been treated like animals and their voices and cries go ignored every day, every day. Like so many have said here before, we've, we've been here before. This is not new. Black men, black women, and black children have been treated like punching bags and shooting targets by police officers throughout the nation. And y'all, it's time to change. Enough is enough. I'm here because I follow the teachings of a man who preached peace, taught love, and begged everyone to treat each other like they were made in the image of God. And what did that get him? The state nailed him to two pieces of wood and left him there to die like a dog in the street. It's not enough for Lincoln police officers to kneel and to dance with protesters. It's not enough to acknowledge that systemic racism exists. We have to be proactive. And I have three points for us to be proactive about. Point one, we have to become anti-racist in every single thing that we do, including and especially the police. We have to be proactive as a community and we have to train every single officer to go through anti-racism training. I

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myself participated in this training in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, with active, on-duty police officers. At the end of that training, I heard an officer say word-for-word-- and it's something that keeps me up at night, still to this day-- I had no clue how much racism was affecting me and my job. This training has changed everything for me. Point two, as said already today, I want to highly, highly, highly recommend the starting point in reconciliation with the 8 Can't Wait recommendations from Campaign Zero. We need to ban chokeholds and strangleholds. We should require de-escalation. We should require warning before shooting. We should exhaust all other means before shooting. We should prioritize the duty to intervene and we should ban shooting at moving vehicles. We should require a force-- use-of-force continuum and we should require comprehensive reporting. 8 Can't Wait is not perfect. It is far from perfect. The people who came up with it said so themselves. DeRay Mckesson said it's not exactly what I want, but it's a darn good step forward. It's the first step for us and I cannot recommend it enough. Point three, more resources for the formerly-incarcerated Americans to know their rights and to be able to register to vote. If we are a country that loves to tout itself as the land of the free and the home of the brave, then we should grant people the right-- to have done the time that they've done in the system, who have come out, who have followed the rules, who have followed the laws and who have been "rehabilitated;" we should give them what they need to vote. To wrap up, police answer to us, y'all; not the other way around. Every single one of you in this room, you answer to us. If we ask you for something, you should give it to us. If we need video from a police interrogation, we shouldn't have to beg for it. We should get it because our names are on the receipts. We shouldn't have to say stop killing black people. We shouldn't have to protect ourselves from the people who are there to protect us. The police and you answer to us, not the other way around. You know the problems. You know that what we want is real and doable. We've been here before and enough is enough. And I would also like to point out that in the middle of a global pandemic, Senator Slama and Senator Brandt are not wearing masks. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. I will make this point about the social distancing. We are very-- went to great lengths to make sure that we spread people out, finding a venue where we could spread out and be more than six feet apart took us a little bit of time. And that's why you're seeing some of the members, including myself, not with a mask on today, but next testifier.

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BOBBI TAYLOR: Good morning, everyone. My name is Bobbi Taylor, B-o-b-b-i T-a-y-l-o-r. I'm going to take off this mask and I'm going to just be very transparent and organic with you guys today. I'm not in a professional setting. I don't have a piece of paper in front me. I just want you guys to know my truth. I'm a mother of three biracial children and since the day they were born, I've been trying to figure out how to prepare them for a world that was not built for them. And so I've been speaking positivity into them: Tyson [PHONETIC], you're handsome. Tyson [PHONETIC], you're smart. Lorell [PHONETIC], you're smart; you're kind. And it got to a point a couple of months ago that their response was I know, mom, I know, and they continued to go play. And I feel like I, I have failed them. Yesterday, I was, I was driving. I was actually speeding-- don't send me a ticket, anybody watching-- and, and a police officer kind of pulled out behind me and changed into my lane. And I tried to-- I was dropping my kids off to a babysitter and I tried to prepare my son; hey, we might get pulled over. Mom was driving too fast. And his response was are they going to shoot and kill us if they stop us? He's four years old. His innocence is gone because people in your seats have not done their job to protect our kids from that. When I was in high school, before I went into juvenile justice and foster care, we went over a lot of black history. And I can say that I've been in a lot of spaces where when tough topics are covered, there's transparency that this is a hard topic that we're going to cover and if you need to walk away or step away, you can. And we're going to debrief afterwards. There's nothing like that for black history when it's taught in high schools. There's nothing like that. These kids have to sit through horrible, horrible lessons of history and there's no debrief. There is no understanding that their feelings are hurt. There's also no acknowledgment of the amazing things that black people, Native Americans, any race, color have done; maybe one or two. We have to stop it. We have to stop it at the root level. I feel like, you know, I speak positivity into my children because I, I want them to believe that. And I want them to believe it so much that when the world pushes back on them when they go out into the world, that they can push back. And I feel like white supremacy is a problem. It is people teaching their children that because they are white, they are privileged. And they are better than anybody else in the entire world. That's a problem. How are we going to change that mental model? When is that going to start? This is, this is me talking to you, but I would, I would really appreciate, like, dialog. This is not authentic, organic engagement. This is me speaking to you about the problems. This is not you guys telling us

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well, here are the barriers; what can we do? This is what we know. We've seen the data, we've read the books; what can we do to change it? You guys are just letting us speak to you. That's a problem. The young people have lost their faith in a system with voting because you guys have not gone out there to speak to them, to engage with them, to go to their schools. Maybe you have, maybe you haven't, but have you been there to listen to them? Have you gone to the communities where you see poverty and listen to the people and sit on a bench next to them and have an organic conversation? No. I haven't seen, I haven't seen any of that. I'm going to conclude and just wrap it up because I, I can go on all day, but I just really-- I really want you guys to listen, but also engage. There should be a whole table around this place where people can sit with you and not feel uncomfortable that they're standing speaking at you. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, number 15.

JEFF STALLWORTH: Good morning. Thank you for having me and providing the opportunity to speak--

LATHROP: Sure.

JEFF STALLWORTH: --Senator Lathrop, committee. My name is Jeff, J-e-f-f, Stallworth, S-t-a-l-l-w-o-r-t-h. For the last 22 years, I've been a public school teacher. I teach high school social studies. I've taught in Lincoln, Nebraska and in Omaha. There are three-- as you indicated earlier, I'm going to give you a little bit of my experience. I'm going to talk about black stress and I'm going to hopefully offer some solutions that may not be law based, but may be solutions, nevertheless. I'm a native of Omaha. The word "Negro" is on my birth certificate. I went to segregated schools until I was 13 years old and didn't know about racism until I got to middle school. Being from a segregated background, you know where your place is. And in the 1960s and 1970s, that was the, the norm in Nebraska. My parents and grandparents are products of the first and second Great Migration so I have a lot of Southern roots and a lot of Southern things that are part of my makeup. As a, as a part of a segregated society, you understand what's right and wrong and good and bad. And I never knew that racism was as profound as it was until the late-- mid to late 1970s. Now of course, I had to hide under my grandparents' rollaway bed when there was rioting going on in Omaha in 1966 and 1968. I mention that because last week, I saw David Gergen on CNN. And David Gergen is a former adviser to four U.S. presidents and Mr. Gergen was

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asked, what did he think about all that we are experiencing? And he, he kind of chuckled and smiled and "it, it reminds me of the 60s." This time should not be nostalgic. This time should be terrifying. I'm married. I have five kids. I have two grandkids. And my grandson is seven years old. I don't want my grandson to have to have that same type of black stress that I have grown up with. Being a Lincoln resident and traveling to Omaha every day, I've commuted for 19 years. I can't wear a hat when I drive. I have to make sure the cruise control is on when I drive. The same threat that exists for every black man in this society exists for me. I had a conversation in one of my classes and I mentioned black stress and a student said, Mr. Stallworth, what's black stress? And I explained it's the anxiety, it's the apprehension, it's the sometimes depression that exists when you're a black male in this society. And of course, I've used humor as a way to diminish any potential unfavorable situations in my life. And the student said, I've never heard of that before. My grandparents and my parents have never told me about black stress. I said that's because your grandparents or your parents are not African-American. They don't know what black stress is. I would know and I've lived it. From a solution standpoint, I don't know how many more laws we need. We need people to recognize when they are being unkind, when they are being intimidating, when they are not being the type of person that they can be or should be to everyone, especially people who are brown and black skinned. The first couple of weeks of the pandemic, when I was like this [MASK OVER FACE], I had no idea how much more threatening I was versus this [MASK REMOVED FROM FACE]; didn't even think about it. I'm trying to protect myself from getting COVID and the coronavirus. But people looked at me with my mask on and my hat on as if I was more of a threat than I would be in any other circumstances. My suggestion to you, more than anything else, ask yourself how do you treat people who are not like you? People are asking themselves now what have I done? What could I have done? We can always do more and that's what I would implore you to do aside from or in conjunction with legislation that you may pass. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

LATHROP: Yeah, thanks for coming down. Next testifier, number 16. Welcome.

KAMRYN SANNICKS: Welcome. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Lothrop and senators of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kamryn Sannicks, K-a-m-r-y-n S-a-n-n-i-c-k-s. I'm a proud member of Legislative District 27. I'm here today because I'm tired of actively living in a

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state that ignores issues staring it right in the face. These issues have impacted me from the moment that I was welcomed into this world, whether I like it or not. As a black, queer woman, I am also here today because I have been lucky not to fall victim to police violence or be lynched by a white supremacist in my own community. I could use my time here to share the times that I've been profiled for police simply because I live while being black, such as being falsely pulled over by an officer who kept his hand on his weapon throughout the duration of a stop where I was speeding, which most people would consider routine. But it is not routine if you are stopped while being black. Instead, I'm here with three legislative proposals that could be tackled by this committee, the Appropriations Committee, and several other committees within the Legislature to ensure that people who look like me are able to live safe and productive lives in Nebraska. First, I implore you to go to your colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and ask that they downsize the Nebraska State Patrol's budget to necessary-only spending for the next two years. As many people have mentioned, 8 Can't Wait isn't enough. It only reduces police violence by 72 percent. We need abolition, but the closest thing that you can give us this next cycle is by cutting their budgets so that they cannot frivolously spend money on unnecessary policing equipment that we have all seen on the news and that they can only employ those that are currently employed. Second, next session, a priority of this committee should be to create a statewide registry of all law enforcement officials within our state, regardless of the agency that they work for. This needs to be something nationally, but we can do it within our state. This registry should flag officers who have been fired for misconduct and implement a lifetime ban on ever serving in a law enforcement capacity going forward. This registry will keep all communities in Nebraska safer, not just Lincoln and Omaha, but every community west of here. Offenders of misconduct should be removed from the force and not allowed to go from agency to agency. Finally, during the interim, this committee should conduct a study to look into community safety alternatives to policing across the state. Current policing methods are failing minority populations, especially black and brown populations in our communities and across the nation. The institution of policing stem from slave patrols and it has been steeped in white supremacy ever since. This study should encompass all alternatives to enforcement agents-- law enforcement agencies, especially abolition. It is possible to live in a state without the police. And this report should-- report on potential budget savings and ways that that spending can be implemented for

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mental health and for other community safety alternatives. We have a problem staring right at us in our community. The problem is not my brown skin or the brown skin of anyone else testifying today, but it is the problem of inaction of generations of legislators that have had the power to do something and from us not wanting to be "Nebraska Nice" or failing to be "Nebraska Nice." Looking away from the ways that racism is embedded in our institutions and impacts black Nebraskans is no longer acceptable and never has been acceptable. When the Legislature resumes later this summer, I hope that each of you seriously takes a look at the suggestions made by myself and others today. As the inscription reads above the North Capitol door, the salvation of the state is watchfulness of the citizen. Thank you for your time today.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier is going to be number 17. Welcome.

JESSICA WILKERSON: Hi, my name is Jessica Wilkerson. That is J-e-s-s-i-c-a W-i-l-k-e-r-s-o-n. We are here to talk about criminal justice system. But the criminal justice system is connected to education. It is tied to social learning and development and tied to nature. What I'm saying is that everything is connected to health. We are natural beings, yet we forget that food is still important for our bodies to process, to think, and to grow. Those in prison are more likely to suffer from foodborne illnesses than the general population and they are more likely to develop PTSD after they leave prison than the general population. There are 16,000 meals served in Nebraska prisons daily, yet last year, nearly 800 people in prison signed a petition complaining about receiving breakfast a night before insect bags squished. Look at our society and the prevalence of food deserts and the access to nutritious foods. Nature is our life, but we have barred nature. We are so far away from it. We bar people. The way we allow our children to eat highly-refined foods and sugar in schools-- we can choose to make the world better, even if other people have decided not to do so. More than four gardening prison programs were shown to increase self efficacy, decrease stress and anxiety, and reduce recidivism rates, yet we don't have them here in Nebraska. We think about building more prisons, but do we think about building up our education systems? Food is really connected to everything. Being close to nature is connected to everything. Our health is everything. We need to do more within our prison systems to rehabilitate people and in our school systems because they're all tied together. Why is there a book ban in prisons and why are books banned in schools? Why do people in prison almost eat the same food that children eat in our

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schools? Why do our communities still have food deserts? Why do we still have communities that have-- that are low income and have a lesser chance than all the other communities in Lincoln to live longer? Why are we not doing more in our communities? Because they are all tied together. They are all tied to our health; our mental health, our physical health, and our emotional health. If we are really here to rehabilitate people and build communities, we need to look at our community all together. We need to be doing more in our communities; cracking down on food deserts, cracking down on low income, and really trying to help people in our communities and in our prison system because they're going to be back in our communities because they're people. We are all people. What can we really do? Can we really go into those communities and go into the homes and look at the inadequate housing and how that ties to someone's health? Can we also go into the prisons and look at how being tied into little small rooms ties to health and also ties to the same thing about people who are living in inadequate housing? We need to look at multiple systems; our education system, our prison system, and our communities. We need to really think about what we're doing. We need to have more access to mental health as well. Why is it so hard to get access to mental health in prisons and why is it so hard to get our students to speak to a counselor to really get them the help that they need? And why is it so hard to have emergency mental health counselors ready instead of us calling the police for something that we really need that is a mental emergency? Where's the access? That's the real question when you think about our systems; access. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, number 18.

MADISON WHITNEY: Hello.

LATHROP: Good morning.

MADISON WHITNEY: My name is Madison Whitney. That's M-a-d-i-s-o-n W-h-i-t-n-e-y. I don't have much to say, but I just wanted to share this. Over the past week, I've been able to learn from, listen to, and march with the Black Lives Matter movement in Lincoln. Although the turnout in response to these protests have been mostly positive, I'm disgusted and scared to see the amount of white supremacists in Lincoln and the state of Nebraska threatening this movement. I want the Judiciary Committee to do everything in their power to fight

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against white supremacy in our state and find and charge those that spread this dangerous ideology. That's all. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: Thank you. Number 19, welcome.

SOPHIA OLSON: Good morning. My name is Sophia Olson, S-o-p-h-i-a O-l-s-o-n. I live in District 46, Senator Morfeld's district, and I'll get straight to my point. As a white woman, my experience with police has not been a negative one. However, my experience with police is not the same as my peers of color and it never will be. My experiences with police have not been one of life and death and it is for that reason that I stand before you today; because I do not fear for my life and being pulled over, because my parents have not taught me to keep my hands visible when I'm pulled over, but have had to have that talk with my brother, who has a darker skin tone than mine. And because I do not fear a burnt-out headlight, I'm here before you today. But I'm more than just here. I'm here to say that it is for those unequal reasons that we need to abolish the police. Police have and will continue, despite any reforms, stand for the systematic oppression of people of color. I ask that instead of these smaller police reforms, we invest money into schools, mental health services, housing services, counselors, and other social services. It is by doing this that we can stop the criminalization of skin color. By doing this, we stop using police reforms as short term Band-Aids on our larger wounds of 400-plus years of systematic oppression. Once we arm teachers, counselors, social workers with the tools to invest time and empathy into the lives of our communities, we can begin to build a more just and equitable system. Two days ago, post announcement of the Minneapolis City Councils'-- the president of the city council, Lisa Bender, said our efforts at incremental reform have failed, period. I agree with Lisa Bender and you should too. Incremental reforms have not and will not create change. Until we disband and abolish the police, my white skin, and many of yours as well, will still be rewarded with the ability of not fearing for our lives. As Ms. Lorde once said, "I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different than my own." I will continue to fight until all shackles are gone and I hope that you will too. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thanks. Number 20, welcome.

REID GAHAN: Hello. My name is Reid Gahan, R-e-i-d G-a-h-a-n. I'm here on behalf of myself, but I just want to start off by telling a story of one of my friends. He is a minor, so I won't be using his name. But

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when he was 16, he was arrested in Lancaster County and was charged as an adult. And for the next 11 months, he was held at the juvenile detention center pretrial and I visited him every week. I was mentoring him. I knew him through church. And I did not understand how the bail system worked. He had his bail set at \$5,000 and his family was unable to afford that bail. He came from a low-income family and I thought that that was just a thing; that it was, it was, like, oh, this sucks, but you can't afford bail so you have to stay in jail. And then these past couple weeks, I have been just researching a lot of bail reform, specifically here in the state of Nebraska, and I read LB259, which Senator Chambers worked on in 2017. And it explicitly says that you can't be held in jail pretrial if you are financially unable to pay bail. You can only be held on bail if you choose to not pay bail, yet that is not being enforced. This, this friend of mine, he had multiple hearings where he tried to reduce his bail and it didn't happen. And I know through emails with Senator Morfeld that we want- Morfeld wants to change this if he-- yeah. Senator Chambers is going forward with LB646; wants to change this, wants to eliminate cash bail. But as I've been reading it, it should already be gone. No one should be in jail because they can't afford to pay bail because that's what the law says. We are not enforcing the law. I have been to numerous hearings for juveniles, specifically, where they are told if they are released, they have to pay a monthly fee to do drug testing, which has not been proven by data to help. Drug testing is not helpful. There's plenty of data to back this up, but they can't afford to pay this-- these drug tests, pay for these drug tests so then they go back and sit in jail. But LB259 specifically says if you are financially unable to pay for your pretrial or post-trial release, we're going to waive these fees. We're going to waive these court fees. We're going to waive these fees for testing, for electronic monitoring, for all these things, but it is just not being enforced. These juveniles don't know that they have the right to challenge these fees. Why would they? They're 16 years old. Some-- they don't even know how a drive. Why should they know their legal rights? But the judge isn't offering it to them. I've listened through, I've listened through plenty of those hearings and the judge never says anything about by the way, you can challenge these fees. If you can prove to me that you can't afford this-- I know these kids who are out here living on their own because they got kicked out of their house. They have no, they have no money-- not even their parents' money that they have-- yet they're expected to pay for drug tests? What are they going to do? Get them in more trouble? Come on, that's not OK. And the law says

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that's not OK, but our judges aren't being held accountable and to actually giving these people what their rights are. Our, our-- Lancaster County's Public Attorney specifically said-- when he was presented with the fact that the research shows that cash bail is not effective, his response is that data didn't come from Nebraska, so I don't trust it. What-- nowhere is that allowed; that you can say, oh, there's a hailstorm, the house next to me had hail damage. Mine doesn't because-- they're next me, but it's not mine. Like, that logic just doesn't follow anywhere else. But we have a state-- a county prosecutor who is trying to hold that, like, carry that belief forward in the areas of bail reform. And so I, I love the work that Senator Chambers has done on this. I love the work that Morfeld says he's going to be doing on this, but we just need to see it get enforced. It doesn't matter what the law says if the judge isn't going to listen to it. If the judge isn't giving-- especially these juveniles that I've been involved with, he's not reading them their rights. The laws don't matter because he's making them up on the spot right there. And so I would love to see more judges held responsible for some of these things. I don't even know what it will look like, but to make sure that, especially these juveniles, understand their rights to have some of these fees waived because the law says that they can. And that we just shouldn't see anybody held in jail pretrial because they are financially unable to pay bail. That's just not acceptable; not in Nebraska, not anywhere. Thank you.

LATHROP: OK. Next testifier, number 21. Good morning.

SHAR'ON L. GLENN: Good morning, committee. Thank you for having me here today. I knew my life would be a little bit complicated. I came from a family of six and I was a "carrot head." And I grew up in Chicago, from the projects, but I always had in mind if I did the right thing, what could go wrong? And I'm going to start by bringing up a name. I moved here- we got stationed-- military orders. I'm a veteran and--

LATHROP: Can you give us your name?

SHAR'ON L. GLENN: Oh, I'm sorry; Shar-on. S-h-a-r-'-o-n, middle initial "L", last name, Glenn, G-l-e-n-n. I want to start by saying we received military orders here July-- no-- August of 1994. And that following July 5, a gentleman named Renteria, he was choked to death by the Lincoln Police. My case number is CR-0612849. We can't breathe: a family's nightmare, 4 July 2006. The total incident was less than a

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minute. Victims: Jason M.D. Wakefield; black male, age 24, a good son, college graduate, care provider for me, a friend, a father to a daughter who he's had custody of for ten years, and is now a math major. Shar'on L. Glenn-- I was age 45 at the time, 100 percent disabled veteran with fibromyalgia, unable to work since 1998, a preacher's daughter, a mother, a sister, an aunt, a college graduate, criminal justice degree, homeowner for 26 years, and a grandmother. The setting was a Fourth of July block party with attendance of 200 or more white people, two black people; a mother and a son. Police arrived at midnight and the people were told to disperse. Jason went into a two-car garage with four white male friends and I went to the restroom. When I came out of the restroom and walked into the garage, I saw six police officers, Jason, the four friends, and two cars. The attack: Jason's story; my knees were kicked out from behind. I was handcuffed. I fell to the ground. I was elbowed in the face and placed in a chokehold. I told the officer I could not breathe. I managed to tap the officer three times before I almost blacked out. The officer had not released the pressure. If the officer had not released the pressure on my neck, I would have died. I was lying in a pool of my blood; three seconds to live or three seconds to die. Shar'on's story: I've always been small built and very fragile. And I'm going to tell you-- from the deposition as the police officers spoke. I was attacked by an officer that was 6'6, 350 pounds. I will let the officer words from his sworn deposition in trial speak for itself. I grabbed her with my left, left arm to throw her back. I then hooked her body with my left arm. I then, along with another sergeant, forced Ms. Glenn's face and pelvic into the car. I was used as a human shield. I hold her by her handcuffs from behind her shoulder. I grab her coat and basically put a blockade between me and the rest of the crowd. She is the blockade. After being beaten by the Lincoln Police, we were both arrested and charged as convicted felons for assaulting the police officers and resisting arrest. They even said-- the 6'6 dude-- that I climbed up on his back, even with my disability. Well, none of that came into play. No Miranda rights, no witnesses, no defense was offered, no first phone call, no fair trial. My attorney told me to move over; I was sitting too close to him. They tampered with my medical records, missing photos, and no medical attention when I was in the hospital. My pictures were taken of-- the police took pictures of me in the hospital room that they denied that was taken, but they are in the hospital records. And it's almost like a rape victim to have been raped and they have your pictures and you cannot have them. Shame on Nebraska. You do not have clean hands. Beating us up does not

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make us criminals. We are an honorable military family, not able to breathe, not even on the Fourth of July. We have a 14th anniversary coming up. And for me now, I will have to be in a safe place because I have PTSD; the police, the smell of fireworks. I'm scared of police. And military people, we have a code. We don't cross the code. Police is in their station and we are in ours. But it's very painful to live here and be tortured, have light shined in your house. And I can't help the way I look. That's out of my hands, but there need to be major changes. The system is completely broke; diversity training, whatever it takes. And there's other families where families together have been beaten up in front of each other where you can't protect each other. I couldn't protect my son and I feel very guilty for that. And he couldn't protect me and I was disabled and I just-- we are human beings and we're good citizens. And I thank you for taking my testimony. And also, part of it was caught on a video, but the officers tried to break the camera and get rid of the cell phones so nobody could see it. But we did catch some of it and I do have that if anybody would be interested. Thank you and be safe.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier.

MAR LEE: Hello, my name is Mar Lee, spelled M-a-r L-e-e. I go by Mar, Mar Lee, my pronouns are they/them/theirs. I am here today to represent myself and my own individual experiences with police officers.

LATHROP: Do you want to share your last name with us?

MAR LEE: Lee is my last name.

LATHROP: Oh, I got, I got it.

MAR LEE: Yeah.

LATHROP: OK, sorry.

MAR LEE: I'm here to speak to my own individual experiences with police officers as well as bear witness to the peaceful protesters who were attacked by police officers over the course of this last week as well as the first aid responders that I've been involved in organizing and helping lead efforts to respond to these protests as police violence has broken out and made them turn into riots, basically. People are blaming the people on the street for that, but I saw there-- in the streets, responding to this personally-- that police

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were escalating this to violence. I want to start off by also saying thank you for being here today and acknowledging that we are here today, not just because of you people all wanted to have us here, but we're here today because there were black organizers who took to the streets and made sure that they had a voice and were represented and that people would have an opportunity to speak on police violence. This is all your jobs to be here. It is not their jobs to have to take to the streets as young black people and organize and fight for their lives. It is your jobs. So this should have been taking care of a long time ago. And so I'm here today to talk about my experiences as a queer and trans person and a person who has had interactions with the police dealing with mental health crises and how those have only escalated. Having police respond to mental health crises have only escalated those situations and made them worse. I mean, I have had experiences with police officers where I was pulled over and everything was fine. I had a headlight out. I was speeding. I got a warning. I got sent on my way. I had other experiences with police officers that yelled in my face and screamed at me for defending myself in a case of domestic violence. I've had police officers who were incapable of properly prosecuting a sexual predator who sex trafficked me when I was in high school because they did not know the laws and were unable to then put that person behind bars. And years later, when I finally understood the legislation behind that, they could have prosecuted that person. We did not have the evidence and the statute of limitations had been met. So police have had a lot of issues. Police systems, U.S. governmental systems, Nebraska, Lincoln are founded in oppression of black and brown people, indigenous people, immigrants, people with disabilities and mental health issues, members of the LGBTQIA community as well as survivors and victims of domestic and sexual violence and impoverished people. And we know this. This isn't news. These systems aren't "broken." They were founded and meant to work this way; operated by white supremacists and misogynists in these systems who work to actively oppress these communities. We are aware of this. There is a reason there is this response that has happened with police presence on the streets to peaceful protesters putting their hands up yelling, don't shoot in adverse to the masses of people who showed up at the Capitol with fully-loaded weapons to testify on a gun bill. There is an obvious and stark difference there. When I responded to the first aid-- to give protesters water and first aid, I am coming from a background of five years of first aid experience as a lifeguard and two years as an organizer. And I could hear from down the street what was happening. I

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could hear outside my window. It was four a.m. and I had a friend who was on the ground that said we needed water, we need first aid, people are hurt. And I got there and police were advancing upon protesters who were treating on the sides; who were not in the middle of the street, who were not near the EZ-Go. They were on the north side of 27th-- of O Street at 26th. I was treating a young woman who was concussed. When police started firing rubber bullets at us and I yelled, stop, stop, we're administering first aid. Stop, we have injured people. And they launched tear gas directly at us that hit my friend who was helping me administer first aid in the leg; left a gash and a bruise across her thigh as well as-- and we were teargassed. I have respiratory health problems and have been having issues since then and this has not ended. I contacted police department. I contacted Sergeant Richards and told him what happened and that we would help first aid responders out on the ground, clearly marked with red crosses over the course of the rest of the week. And I asked him why they would advance on injured people and first aid responders and he said it was protocol. That should not be protocol. Tear gas should not be used. In the Geneva Conventions, it was said that tear gas was not to be used against people in a state of war. Why is it being used against citizens? Why is it even legal to be in the state of Nebraska, especially in a respiratory pandemic? People are risking their lives to be out on the street, risking their lives to be here today, and this needs to change. We can't be coming back here time and time again. This shouldn't be happening still and unfortunately, it is. That is my time, but thank you and I will be sending you all reports of instances that first aid responders have experienced with police brutality over the course of the last week. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Number 23.

MIKKI RUSS: Good day, committee.

LATHROP: Hello.

MIKKI RUSS: My name is Mikki Russ. It's M-i-k-k-i R-u-s-s. My comments are going to be very brief. I saw in the news and heard reports in the community that there were two sisters crossing the road a couple of weeks ago-- you probably heard something about it-- and then a truck ran over them and then backed up again. And the police thankfully took that person into custody as of Friday. But it brought to mind being out among people with-- expressing your First Amendment and the imminent threat of someone driving their truck into the crowd, which

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we have seen throughout the country. And I would just implore you to consider legislation enhancing charges for people who use their vehicle against people gathered for their First Amendment rights. And that's really all. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, please. Welcome.

BILLIE DOUGLASS: Hi. Oh, OK. I can see why people are doing that now. Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Billie Douglass, B-i-l-l-i-e D-o-u-g-l-a-s-s, and I prewrote this testimony. And in regards to Senator Lathrop's comments, I have addressed particular Judiciary Committee comments, including Pansing Brooks and Slama and Chambers as well. These are not personal attacks. This is me in response to written, already-discussed kind of discussion. So I am in District 28. I am a full-time student and a full-time worker; 65 hours/week-- at Nebraska Wesleyan University. I don't work there and I don't represent the university. I am studying secondary education for social studies, specifically, and I graduate May of 2021. As a future educator and a resident living right along S. 17th Street, 17th and B, I have heard the cries; the cries of my peers, the cries of my former students, my future students, and cries that have been around since long before I was born. These cries have been ignored, perpetuating a continuous system that prevents success in those I long to see succeed. While I cannot speak professionally on a majority of this system, I can talk about one aspect: education and the safety of our schools. Our schools are not safe. They are not safe due to the presence of police officers. Police officers have no place in schools. Senator Chambers has already presented a bill to address this issue, LB589, and I urge you, Senators, to take this bill to the next step to be debated and passed. Police officers-- or as they are called, "peace officers," which is more ironic due to the current state-- have no place in our schools. Their presence and methods fail to coalign with the proper learning environment and the professional skills of actual professional educators and children behaviorists because remember, these are children in these schools. The best conflict resolution when a student got loud and physically violent that I personally witnessed during my student teaching was best resolved by a black employee who was employed specifically for conflict resolution in the school. It was amazing. I've never seen a student go leave the classroom so civilly and well done. They did not call the police officer that was present on that school. However, that car still sits out there. It tells those middle school students that there's police here and you should be afraid; that you must fear, that you cannot not relax. And

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even if you do not believe in LB589 to abolish the presence of these police peace officers, you must at least consider LB391, which was brought to your attention in February 2019 by introducer Senator Matt Hansen. LB391 takes Senator Chambers' bills a step backward by still allowing police officers in school, while enacting restrictions on their power within that school. So no child should have an interrogation without a police officer notifying their parents or guardian and the child needing to have a Miranda warning. This is their constitutional right. Senator Slama discussed a concern that this will allow students to get their story straight with their guardian, where Slama was concerned, and with their guardian would be an older sibling to take part and help. Family situations are complicated and I would suggest a change to the bill language, line 19, that "relative" change to "relative over the age of 18;" not because I do not believe siblings are not a proper guardian or relative to call in a time of crisis, but because "over 18" allows a child in custody to have access to someone who would hopefully have the experience and recognition of what steps should be taken to ensure the best interest of the child. And I need to address the "get their story straight" comment. Isn't it unconstitutional and a violation of our Sixth Amendment to have officers interrogate before someone fully understands their rights? It is unconstitutional, which is ironic considering LB399, which was to address and help students better prepare and understand the rights as a citizen. Perhaps LB30-- this is my own personal comment-- perhaps LB399 was really not meant to bring up blind-- was perhaps meant to bring up blind patriotism, but I won't go any more into that today. And one more thing regarding LB391, Senator Pansing Brooks brought up an excellent point of including language that is more accessible and understood by young students. I agree with this along with that within our legislation system. So I am a teacher. I'm concerned about my future textbooks. I'm concerned about the lessons I'm going to have to sit in front of students and tell them about. And no student works well under fear. No student works well under the "safety" of a police officer. They have weapons at their side of their disposable [SIC]. Tasers are weapons. Batons are weapons. Handcuffs are weapons to these students. These are students. We're establishing a comfortable environment for them to be in and it does not start with the inclusion of police officers. It's why I'm going to school. It's why I've spent a lot of my money to teach these kids and I have the tools to do that. I don't believe police officers do. Thank you for your time.

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LATHROP: OK. The next testifier would be number 25. Anybody have number 25? All right, how about 26? Good afternoon or good morning.

RONNIE TURNER: Good morning.

LATHROP: Welcome.

RONNIE TURNER: Can you all hear me?

LATHROP: Perfectly.

RONNIE TURNER: Awesome. My name is Ronnie Turner, R-o-n-n-i-e T-u-r-n-e-r. I was born in Omaha, but I've been living in Lincoln for the last five or six years and I just wanted to give a pretty quick testimony. Nebraska has never had a black governor, a black United States senator, a black member of the House of Representatives. I'm not sure that we've ever even had a black mayor in the entire history of our state. Most of our government representation at the highest levels have been Senator Chambers. That doesn't excuse the white government officials from being responsible for what happens to black people in this state. I know from working in politics for a while that a lot of you work and are from primarily or almost entirely white areas and small towns. You still have a responsibility to the black people who live in this state because they're your constituents too once you're in the State Legislature. I recently started a petition on Change.org. It's change.org/BlackLivesMatterNebraska. We laid out a long list of criminal justice, education, prison reform, healthcare reforms that we think you should all take a look at and consider adopting as laws and policies. Because while we're focused on police brutality here, black people face brutality and barriers in almost every single area of public life and all of those areas need to be addressed. We can't consider ourselves successful if we stop at body cameras and stranglehold bans. What we need is reforms in our education system, which focuses largely and almost entirely on Eurocentric views of American history. What we need is reforms in our healthcare system, which makes black women multiple times more likely to die during childbirth and be misdiagnosed. What we need is reforms in our immigration enforcement, which takes thousands of Latino Americans and deports them for nonviolent crimes, breaking up their families. What we need is an end to voter restrictions and voter suppression, which we have even here in Nebraska, where we don't allow for same-day voter registration or automatic registration because we're afraid of the way that it might impact people's election

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chances. And, you know, there's a long list of things and I don't have all of the answers, but what we have with these people who have protested and what we have with the people who have taken their time to come here and provide testimony is a long list of resources for you all. So if you all are here in good faith to go beyond these hearings and go beyond police reforms at the basic level, to try to transform and dismantle institutional racism in the state of Nebraska, then we all need to reach out for these people and take all of what they've said into account and not just come here and provide limp service. And I'd like to end by telling you guys a story that I haven't told that often. It's something that's been on my mind a lot. The first time I was physically assaulted on the basis of my skin color was when I was a grade-schooler. It happened in school in Omaha; a public school, a place that's supposed to be safe for black students and it wasn't for me. And I was assaulted physically in front of numerous white children. And I just wonder how many of those kids and how many of the black kids that I had gone to school with were desensitized in that moment because the moment we allow ourselves to be desensitized, we take away the power to change things for the better. So I hope that you all will consider whether or not you've been desensitized and how you're going to make major reforms going forward because it's not enough to ban strangleholds and provide body cameras. Thank you.

LATHROP: 27; welcome.

JASMINE TAPIA: Hi, my name is Jasmine Tapia, J-a-s-m-i-n-e T-a-p-i-a. I am a board director of the Justice Coalition of Grand Island. I've been seeing a lot of racism going around lately, popping up all over, all over Nebraska, so please allow me to remind you all the origin of the very words-- the Great Seal of Nebraska's State Flag and what it means. The origin: resolve that the party, which is triumphantly sustained and vadicated the government of the United States and carried it safely through four years of sanguinity, war wages, and by the enemies of civil and religious liberties, owes it to itself-- excuse me-- it's cherished principles and humanity to secure liberty and equality before the law of all men. Nebraska only, only gained statehood in 1867, only after agreeing to accept Congress' demand and it removes a white-- whites-only voting restriction from its state's constitution. The motto "Equality before the law" reflects Nebraska's willingness to extend suffrage to black Americans. Change started back then and although it, it began with the black man's right to vote, the words still ring true. Nebraska owes itself to its cherished principles and humanity to secure liberty and equality before the law

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of all men. And yet over 150 years later, some of you still carry around the hate in your heart and in your racist ways. Let me tell you something. It's, it's not the Nebraska way and it hasn't been for a very long time. Thank you.

LATHROP: Number 28. Welcome.

SETH MOCK: Thank you. Thank you so much, committee. My name is Seth Mock, S-e-t-h M-o-c-k. I am a community leader here and also the founder of the Midwestern African Museum of Art, which is also a cultural and a resource center. Some of you might be aware of it. The recent protests have shed a light on what many of us have been feeling for a long time in regards to systematic racial inequality and the racial injustice on black men and women. This needs immediate change since we still can't breathe. I have been amazed by the resilience of the American people who pray and have peacefully protested on behalf of people who look like me-- the treatments-- so that these treatments can end and the systematic racial inequality can, can have an end to it. I still will have to say that this is still by far the best country in the world, but the systematic inequality and racial injustice has been painting a different picture. For myself, I opened a childcare in-- a facility in 2014. And to my knowledge, I did everything well that I knew how to do, but I was surprised when I lost my privilege of my license. When an accounting, when an accounting was done by the state forcing me to sell, to sell, I paid back the overpayment, which as of today, I only owe \$500. My dad being a pastor, and also pastored large congregations, planted in me a heart that wanted to serve and give back. I was surprised that my servant's heart was not what was being seen by the color of my skin. There were-- there was-- during this time, especially coming to America, I never believed that there's anything called racism in America. And when people used to tell me that there is racism in America, it was the last thing for me to believe. I argued several times with my fellow Africans about racism in America until it landed on me myself. I grew up in Omaha and I had heard of other African-owned businesses that were being closed. I thought there must be something different that I can do or something better to help my community. Little did I know that there were targets. With only having a high school diploma or training, I was quickly given a license to own a childcare based on me not having a criminal record. I came to realize many years later, this was not a task that I was well-prepared for. Based on a lot of information, it became clear that black/minority businesses and childcares were being targeted with investigations that were only

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targeting black/minority-owned cares that-- and many of them that I know of today have been closed and the owners have been charged. I also came to find out that there was-- this types of investigations also started investigating Midwestern African Museum of Art and also other nonprofits owned-- businesses and so forth. The information I received later that there was this investigation did not only start here in Nebraska. These are some investigations that started outside of here in Nebraska. These types of practices of targeting one minority group has made the black, African community groups still unable to breathe. There has been a grant that has just came out from Lincoln Community Foundation to try and see how they can start helping minorities understand and operate businesses, but it is not a practice that is being done on the state and the federal level. We are pleading that instead of law enforcement trying to find ways to shut black/minority businesses down, they should, in either way, find means to offer better training and accountability practices. The state needs to do a much better job in training and communicating to ensure that none of these black owners of childcares and other businesses are unnecessarily prosecuted for trying to run a business that is desperately needed in their neighborhoods. When there is a lack of communication and a target on black people, it appears that the state and federal governments are setting up-- are setting black people up to fail. There should be support system for community businesses, rather than finding ways to destroy them. Police officers as well as government officials and federal agents all the way up to the top need to be held accountable for types of practices that are racially biased and also those types of investigations. There has been a pardon that has been shown that as-- that black men like myself and women are fearful to even start businesses or even nonprofits because-- and it is directly affecting the growth and the sustainability of the black neighborhood. I am asking for more accountability on the state and federal level and that when the government is focusing on black people and closing their businesses, others need to stand up and ask why and not be afraid. I am a voice speaking on behalf of many on the racial injustice. My accent might be different. My skin color is black, but my life does matter and my voice does matter and my brothers and sisters' voice does matter. I believe that it is a time for change and I am ready to be a part of this change that many of you are listening to. Let's make the American dream come true and not just for some, but for all of us. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, number 29.

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MAUREEN ECK: Good morning, senators. My name is Maureen Eck, M-a-u-r-e-e-n, Eck, E-c-k. I'm here as a private citizen and I will not take up much of your time. How many black people have to say I can't breathe before we get off their necks? When will my neighbors feel it's safe for their black son to go for a run? White people have a hard time admitting it, but we are all a part of this racist system. We benefit from it every day. We need to do a better job recognizing our own biases and do the work to unlearn them. We need to call each other out, educate each other. That goes for our friends, our family members, and our colleagues. It's not just the police who need to be reformed because there is no industry or profession that is immune to racism. We need to demilitarize the police and decriminalize things like poverty, mental illness, and addiction. We need more body cams and fewer guns. We need citizen review boards, not just internal investigations. We need to divest funds away from the police and invest in things like education and social services. There needs to be less policing and more keeping the peace; that goes for neighbors as well as uniformed officers. Anti-bias training, de-escalation techniques, and redefining excessive force are just the tip of the iceberg. No mother should fear for her child's life when they go, when they go for a run or attend a protest. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, number 30. Good morning.

COLBY WOODSON: Good morning. I appreciate you guys holding the panel. It's good to have an opportunity to come speak. Today-- oh, my name is Colby Woodson, W-o-o-d-s-o-n. I wanted to share a story of something I encountered about three and a half years ago when I was working as a taxicab driver. I got rear-ended over by the federal building and the car pulled up beside me and I looked over. It was two young, teenage, white girls and they looked over at me. They saw I was all right enough and they drove off. And I drove and I followed them and I took a picture of their license plate and then they drove off again and I called the police, filed an accident report, gave them the description; you know, two young, white girls probably out joyriding, rear-ended me, took off; hit and run. So they took everything down, they left, and then a few months later, I got a letter from a prosecutor at the courthouse asking me to come down and talk with him a bit more about what happened, some information-- additional information as to how it all played out. So I go, I went, I was talking with him; sussed over, you know, where I was, when I was there; pretty basic stuff. And then towards the end of it, I asked him, so who was it? What was their name, do you know? Who was this

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person that hit me and took off? And they, they gave me a name. It didn't sound like a young, white woman's name. It sounded like, you know-- I don't mean to sound small-minded-- it sounded like sounded like a black guy's name. I'm like, well, you know, is that, is that a young, white teenage woman, you know? And they were-- they told me no, you know-- the prosecutor told me no, it's a, it's a black guy. I'm, like, well, why did you, you know-- why do you do that? It was a couple of young, white gals that hit me. And he said, well, when the officers went to the owner of the car, which was a, you know, young, white woman-- the prosecutor told me that the young, white girl told the officer that it was, it was this black guy. So they cited the black guy, which, you know, I don't know. Why did it work out like that? It doesn't really make any sense to me. A few months later-- never heard back from the prosecutor-- I reached out to a friend that works at the courthouse-- is a public defender. And I asked him, you know, whatever, whatever happened with that case? He looked into it for me. He said, looks like it got dropped. So this gal who rear-ended me, took off, never got prosecuted for the crime. And not only that, I guess she was able to point a finger at a black guy and say nope, he did it. And they believed her and they cited him. So I don't know to what extent, you know-- bias hasn't been addressed. I think you put forth some legislation regarding bias training for police officers, which is good, but yeah, I wanted to share that story. I think it really is worth hearing how quickly, you know, somebody can be believed or not be believed or not get prosecuted for a crime they actually committed. So, yeah, thanks for the opportunity.

LATHROP: Thanks for coming down. Next testifier, number 31.

WILLIAM HENSON: Hi, my name is William Henson.

LATHROP: I'm sorry we couldn't hear that, sir.

WILLIAM HENSON: Sorry. My name is William Henson, H-e-n-s-o-n. I spoke to Senator Morfeld on Facebook. I'm sorry, but your-- I'm going to ask for a little leniency as-- because of what I'm about to talk about. I just pretty much got my life destroyed. My wife filed for divorce because of what I'm fixing to tell you about. See, I was a professional jockey. I've lived in 18 different states. I've traveled all over the US. I moved here to Seward, Nebraska. And to just put it this way, my children were being abused and I'm not going to ask the camera to turn them. Well, my 13-year-old son had some of the worst things possible happen to him. They did nothing to protect my

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children. They have falsified search warrants to harass me, to threaten me. I face false charges now. They don't care about the law. They answer to nobody. They do what they want when they want. As I told Senator Morfeld, I went to the Attorney General's office years ago. They wouldn't give me the time of day to protect my children. I lost my wife today. I couldn't protect my children years ago. There's a serious problem. See, I know people can live through racism. I know people can work together. As a jockey on a racetrack, it's its own world. And I'm sorry, I'm shaking. I never knew race, color, sexual orientation. I've worked for gay trainers, lesbian trainers. I mean, I-- maybe it's not the politically-correct term, but the most disturbing thing happened a couple of years ago when my son turned and looked at me and he goes, Dad, do you like white people or black people better? And it's a really disturbing thing that the division is that simple, but my point is the corruption. Something needs to be done about it. The police academy shouldn't exist; it shouldn't. My uncle was a K9 cop. Police academy shouldn't exist. You have a National Guard, right? Why don't these officers go through a military-style boot camp, through that type of training, through the National Guard? Why aren't they given rules of engagement like the military in a war? Why is it shoot first, slam somebody on the ground first? I've had numerous injuries. I've had this shoulder operated on nine times, being a jockey. My arm doesn't bend behind my back. When I told the officers that, do you think they cared? Or do you think they took it-- jammed it up like this? It's a hatred. They don't like you. They don't like lies about you. They'll make them up. Again, I sit here with documentation that's been denied. I face charges right now that shouldn't even have happened. It's disgusting and it's disturbing. I asked Senator Morfeld to go to the Attorney General's office with me. I turned around and I contacted-- I don't even know the guy's name. The senator for Seward, he contacted the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman came back and said, oh, no, you're a felon. You're a felon in Florida because Wendy Elston said you are. No, I'm not; I've got documents to prove it. So these people can just lie to each other, bury whatever evidence they can, whatever they want. I asked the Public Defender before I need you to stand up in front of the judge. I need an investigation into this prosecutor; malicious prosecution, falsified documents, false evidence. She wouldn't do it so I did and he turned and looked at her and said you need to handle that. Think she's called yet? No. Do you think they care about protecting my children? No. So my children have to suffer for the rest of their lives with nightmares because people-- they took and swore an oath,

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don't care about that oath. All they care about is their own personal agenda. I've got a list of witnesses. I've only got two officers in Seward County that ever protected my kids; one's still there, one quit and left the state. The DHHS officer that tried to protect my children quit her job and left the state. My children were kidnapped out of this state. I have documents signed by the judge that said their mother perjured herself. She fled the state without the court's permission, hindered a sexual assault investigation by DHHS, hindered a Seward County sheriff's investigation into abuse and molestation into my kids. And you know what the prosecutors said? Well, that's not good enough evidence. So you telling me documents signed by a judge aren't good enough evidence? But you can use false documents to threaten and harass me with no consequence to get me to plead into something because you know I can't risk going in front of a jury that you handpick to send me to prison, to leave my kids in a house of abuse? So I have to cop-out and I have to take your B.S. plea because my life isn't mine; it's my kids' and I have to do everything to protect them. And what is this woman still trying to do to this day? Put me in prison on bogus charges to put my children back in a house of abuse. People need to have-- like the one woman said earlier-- you have juries for people that are charged. Well, why don't we have 15, 17, 19 citizens brought in like a grand jury and not tell them this is a claim on the officer, not tell them this is a claim on what the person did? Why don't we let the people go in and look at the video without bringing predetermined-- what to think and let them decide and see what the people think?

LATHROP: OK. We appreciate your views and how strongly you feel about them and we appreciate you coming down here today.

WILLIAM HENSON: And I'm going to ask right now, each of you take your phone, contact the Attorney General's office and tell them I'm coming because I'm going there right now.

LATHROP: They'll probably know that. This is all on TV so--

WILLIAM HENSON: I greatly appreciate your time.

LATHROP: OK. Thank you, Mr. Henson.

WILLIAM HENSON: I am more than happy to come back and speak to you and work with you at any time.

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LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier.

ROBERT WAY: Hello, my name is Robert Way, R-o-b-e-r-t W-a-y. I live in Lincoln, Nebraska. I appear before you today to challenge you to pass LB176, LB646, and LB924 as the first order of business when you return to session in a few weeks. These bills were written by a champion of justice; someone who has dedicated his life to the service of his constituents. Many names of police brutality have been brought to you here today. I would like to mention another name: Vivian Strong. Back in June 24, 1969, Vivian Strong was shot in the back of the head by an Omaha police officer. The facts of the case were never in dispute. The outcome of the case was the same as it would be 48 years later. The killer walked free. Police brutality is an accepted part of our state culture. It was and it is; that has not changed. The only difference between 1969 and 2020 is now we are supposed to be outraged and surprised on how it could happen here. It's always been happening here. There wasn't a period where it wasn't happening here. Most of the time, terrible things happen. And there is a system in place to delay it, to push it, put it in committee, to make-- wait till the story dies down and then pretend like we're going to make serious steps to change the situation. But the Unicameral and this committee has a moment right now where there are very few days left in this legislative session and there are a bunch of lobbyists who want their bills still. And the legislators who I know believe in making this state better for all its people, if they unite behind someone who has fought for decades on these issues and just says nothing else is getting through until the three bills pass, they'll fold. They don't care. They-- there are a bunch of people who only address this sort of thing when it happens on Facebook or when it-- experiences them and they don't realize that it keeps on happening every single day. It just doesn't happen on camera. But after 12 days of nationwide protest, this is your moment to be-- that nothing else happens. These three bills get passed and then you can deal with everything else. And if you stand there and you look the-- your constituents in the eye, you'd look your fellow colleagues in the eye and you're, like-- that's what's going to happen. They won't risk the things they want done to keep these bills from getting passed. You have a moment to make a change and I hope you take it and I thank Senator Chambers for his years of service.

LATHROP: Thank you, Mr. Way. Next testifier would be number 32.

PANSING BROOKS: Three.

LATHROP: 33, pardon me. Hey, Zach? Will you come here when you're done with that? Welcome.

ANGELA BARBER: Thank you. Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing. My name is Angela Barber, A-n-g-e-l-a B-a-r-b-e-r, and I'm here today to bear witness to the inherent racism and the violence of the police during the protests this weekend. I, I wear this shirt today because I do believe that capitalism and white supremacy and the colonizing mindset are the deep root of the problems that we're experiencing right now. And I think it is the responsibility of every leader to do the deep work of dismantling white supremacy within themselves before any change can happen. And I know there are resources out there right now that are available. The White Supremacy and Me handbook is one that I have worked through with friends and is the reason that I could stand up in the protests this weekend and, and witness what I witnessed. I was arrested on Sunday night with the peaceful protesters. I was at the Capitol Building and witnessed the young leaders negotiating with the sheriff and the state troopers to stand down, to take off their masks, take off-- you know, to be with the people, to be human, to be vulnerable, and walk with them. And as I listened and supported, I heard the message that they were going to walk with us peacefully. And so, and so I walked peacefully. It wasn't my intention to even stay out all evening that evening, but I followed the lead of the leaders who were working with the sheriff and the police department. And so we walked and as we came down-- I think G and around 11th-- that's when the troopers advanced at us. And instead of running, I decided to stand my ground listening to the voices of the young, black leaders who insisted that we were not with them if we were not willing to stand with them. I was with my friend who is a teacher. I worked as a substitute teacher this last year deciding whether or not to renew my teaching degree because I think the system, as it is, is very harmful and difficult to work within. And as a born people-pleaser, I, I don't want to learn from this old system anymore because I know it does violence to children unconsciously and consciously. So I stood my ground and the officers advanced towards us. They did not shoot at us, but across the street, they were shooting at the young people, shooting rubber bullets. That was the night where the girl lost her nose trying to help her friend who had been-- had tear gas in her eyes. So I have witnessed the violence of the police towards the young people. They came to us and I said, you have an agreement with these leaders. We have been peacefully

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protesting. What do we need to do to get to safety? And my arm was ripped behind my back and the police yelled at me: is this what you teach your students; you teach them to break the law? The zip ties were not tied around my wrist in a way that cut off my circulation, but my friend suffered that because she is outspoken. And what I witnessed is that the more vulnerable you are and the darker your skin color, the more violence is placed upon you. I witnessed that time and time again with the young women who had been-- Jada [PHONETIC], who had been run over-- asked to sit and sleep on the bench instead of given a mattress to sleep on in the jail. When women of color ask for soap, the officer says there's no soap. We have to tell them you are lying because you just gave us soap when we asked earlier. In this system, you are treated like a criminal and your words are not believed and it is very dangerous. And I know that the first step that needs to happen is you doing some work of dismantling the white supremacy that is in you because nothing will change until you do the work internally. I think it should be required for every public official to do that work in order to run for office. I think every police officer needs to be required to have that and the-- please demilitarize the police. Please, please do this work. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier would be the person holding number 34.

ALEX MUNSON: Hello, everyone. My name is Alex Munson; last name is M-u-n-s-o-n. I wanted to thank everyone for providing this space. Also, I want to thank the gentleman who's been wiping these microphones down and making us feel like we can approach you. I think I'm going to be echoing a lot of the things I tried to speak to in the city council meeting yesterday. I also am a teacher. I teach at Nebraska Wesleyan University, Concordia University, and used to teach at the University-- excuse me, UNL. I don't-- I come as an individual, but as someone who has, you know, put the words of my students above many. I feel like they, they are always worth listening to. I always learn from them and, and if they don't feel like you are listening to them, why should they listen to you? And, and I, I wish this is the response that we would have seen last weekend when we were instead met with, with force. As, as someone who wanted to stand for, for all of my students and, and experienced this, I knew that many of the people at the forefront of these protests were going to be young folks who would-- who had-- I would either see eventually or I already do see in the classroom. I've already had interactions with my students and, and they-- and we appreciate each other's presence. So that's part of my

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reason to want to participate in every part of this movement, in, in all of its facets. I've tried to-- I was there among the medics, people trying to pull those away from tear gas, who were fired upon while we were trying to help those. We, we did not do anything to show any sort of aggression towards the officers, but we were still fired upon when we were just trying to, to help our friends and loved ones. And I think one of the main reasons why I'm up here is because I want to believe that I, I love many people of color. And yet one of the things I'm really tired and don't want to hear anymore is never trust a white person to care. And, and we're a majority of white people and the majority of, of the people that we say or claim to love don't believe us. And, and it shows through our, our actions. You know, one of the people I love the most, you know, there is, there is a thought that we maybe one day would have a kid. And, and then you start to realize-- you start to think about all those things. They were a person of color and you start to realize all the things that you'd have to consider as a parent. What am I going to have to teach my children to be afraid of; their identities, et cetera? And, and some of the people I love the most from, from being a part of the Nebraska Water Protectors, which is primarily a native group who's been opposing the, the Keystone Pipeline, is, is I see a lot of children continually at rallies and movements and protests that go to these rallies more frequently than I went to high school dances. I mean, we talk about how children are supposed to listen to music in the womb and how that affects them. Well, think about all of the trauma that, that their parents and grandparents-- you know, it's years and years and years and years of course. Now who we should be listening to are the young ones, the youth people of color and minorities, because they're the ones who have experienced their grandparents, their parents, and now their own trauma at the hands of the very people that they are supposed to be protected by. And something else I want to speak to-- because I think it's something we can all empathize with now after experiencing COVID-- is, is isolation. Good golly, it's terrible, right? This, this question of, of how, how am I supposed to show how much I love someone? Am I supposed to stay away from them? Am I supposed to be near them? Oh, my God, I could finally get to hug someone or be in the presence of other people. Like, it's all a very confusing time right now for everyone. And we're all trying to figure out how to love and, and I, and I feel like that's the experience that we have right now when we're trying to interact with all of you and with all of the "peacekeepers." We don't know what love looks like anymore. So, so it all-- it's all fear. It's all fear and it creates

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this big mess and those tactics that were used against peaceful protesters are meant to incite fear. That's all it was. We couldn't think straight. We-- and, and when we can't think straight and all we feel is fear and all we want to do is be heard-- and I'm speaking "we" very generally, because I know I can't attest to the, to the experiences of many that were at those protests-- but, but it is still a fear. You don't know who to trust, you don't know what to think, and it creates this big mess. And, and so I think that we need to-- those first responders don't need to be the police officer that we've learned to fear. It needs to be people that we, that we trust, you know? If there's folks who are willing to go against COVID-- not, not disrespectfully; respectfully-- we understand the threat that it is, but we, we feel like the fear of systemic violence and racism is worse. We're more afraid of that. We, we are not afraid of the KKK members that are open and outwardly, you know, interacting against us while the police are leaving them alone. We're not afraid of those. We're afraid of the systematic racism and, and the things that are, that are building up this fear continually. So it shouldn't be-- if there are folks that are willing to be out and open and unafraid to represent each other in protest when we're afraid of the police and the KKK and et cetera, there's certainly going to-- people who are willing to put themselves on the line to, to help those with mental instabilities, problems that, that don't need violence as the first responder; that don't need that fear. So I guess all I want to leave you with is you're hearing these things over and over again. We've been hearing them for years and years, the hundreds of years and over again, because they are there; they're true. Please listen to us and please do something about them. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier would be number 35.

GREGORY C. LAUBY: Good morning. Senator Lathrop and members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Gregory C. Lauby, G-r-e-g-o-r-y C. L-a-u-b-y. I'd like to commend you for your responsiveness to the injustices that are being manifested and the lack of justice in Nebraska recently and in the past, as well as your goal in-- to improve equality for all. Given the statements that you've heard today and yesterday in Omaha, I'm going to refrain from addressing the need for changes or trying to repeat the sensible improvements already requested. But instead, I would like to offer additional recommendations for legislation which could contribute to your goal. The first is to remove immunity in state courts for tort claims against a Nebraska official arising out of assault, battery, false

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arrest, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, abuse of process, libel, slander, misrepresentation, or deceit. All of those are protected actions under the State Tort Claims Act and the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act. Such actions leading to damages should at least require justification and be subject to a civil lawsuit. A second recommendation is the adoption of Senator Dorn's LB747, amended to include LB951, introduced by Senator Bolz, and further amend it to include state court judgments based on a denial of constitutional rights by a government official. That bill would allow an injured, innocent person to file a claim with the State Claims Board for the amount of the final judgment exceeding the resources of a local entity. Without fiscal responsibility, the executive branch lacks motivation to improve law enforcement training and the development of other reforms required to protect the rights of the innocent. Both bills have been heard by the Judiciary Committee and could be advanced to the floor. Third, make audio video records made by law enforcement of citizen contact public records subject to the provisions of the Nebraska public records statutes after an arrest or the filing of a complaint, rather than being excepted from disclosure. Removal of the protected status upon completion of the investigation increases accurate disclosure, a key element in identifying and correcting false-- fourth, establish a new state agency, the Office of Constitutional Rights, with jurisdiction over all government units in the state whose function and goal would be to preserve the constitutional rights of all Nebraskans from infringement by state officials, provide the authority, funding, and staff to investigate all complaints against government employees who act on any level, and to prosecute established violations of constitutional rights. Such agency could be the response to the age-old question: who will guard the guards? None of these actions will end racism or address the other needs that have been requested here before you, but they would insist on identifying incidences when racism is inflicted upon citizens by government officials and help curb its practice. They would motivate improved conduct and increase the remedies for the harmed. If there are no questions, I would thank you very much for your attention to myself and to the others who have appeared before you.

LATHROP: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Lauby. Next testifier; that would be number 36.

RACHEL KERMMOADE: Good morning. My name is Rachel Kermmoad. That is R-a-c-h-e-l and then K-e-r-m-m-o-a-d-e and I am a long-term Nebraskan. My family homesteaded here in this state. And I am also standing here

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before you as the granddaughter of a really wonderful man that was incarcerated after stepping into-- and doing the right thing, though at that time, it was outside the law. I didn't anticipate ever finding myself in a similar situation. I stood on the steps at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday and I made the choice to follow the quote that was right above us: the salvation of the state is the-- is watchfulness in the citizen. And I'm here to tell you that if our state has any chance of salvation, you cannot look away right now. What I saw on Sunday night was a group of 20 and 30-year-olds equipping themselves to serve and protect a group of black teenagers that were simply trying to exercise their constitutional rights. But at this point, I want to take a pause and mention something that was already mentioned up here. We as white people are very desensitized, I think, to the fact-- to these stories of police brutality. So I want to highlight some of the really cool things that I saw while I was a part of these marches. And what I recognized, especially when we were standing right outside the Capitol, was that there was a group of folks that were invested in these kids' safety. And I don't say "kids" as a diminutive term. I say that to, to make, make it known the age of these organizers. And what I saw was them playing their music, playing-- you know, being able to engage and be in the streets that are their own. And there was no fear or, or anything of the sort that was also associated in those moments. And I also saw, day after day, young organizers learning on the spot; figuring out the best way to make this safer for everyone and fully being invested in the safety, but also organizing their constitutional rights. And in that same moment, I realized that they never have the opportunity to actually feel that way. So I hear you all talk about "brain drain" in the Nebraska Legislature a lot. I pay attention and you bring up employment, you bring up taxes, you bring up business opportunities. And I, I am somebody that has had the privilege of working at startups that were started by Nebraskans. I was educated at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. And, and, you know, I was able to, to do that and I choose to stay here because I don't fear for my safety. I don't fear that I'm going to be pulled over and, and wrongfully shot or-- and killed simply for existing in this state. And if you want to actually address that issue, you need to address that core, core problem that we have been dealing with for years. And in that moment, the state had an opportunity to extend an olive branch and meet those, those organizers halfway. And instead, what they did was choose to protect property. They chose to protect property over human lives. And not only did they choose to protect property, but they also chose to endanger those lives while doing so. Expired tear

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gas, rubber bullets, police dogs, and a military vehicle rolled down the streets of a neighborhood that I've lived in for years and love. It was a war zone. And, and I say that also acknowledging that Lincoln is a community that has an incredibly rich, rich community of folks that are first-generation refugees and immigrants. And so that was another added trauma that was-- that occurred in this moment. And, and not only were we protecting from escalating police, but we were also protecting from white supremacists that were absolutely not being met with an armed response. They experienced a horrific trauma and it's not the first for many of them. So I'm going to end this quote-- end this with a quote and a call to action from a book that I've been reading. It's called Beyond Survival. And it says, you live. Beyond that, you must also acknowledge that the relationships, organizations, and spaces you have moved through have survived you: a person, like other people, shaped by systems of harm. Breathe on that. This body is the person that these people have moved through. And if we don't take a second to recognize what that has meant, this, this "brain drain" problem, the safety issue, it's not going anywhere. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: Thank you. Testifier 37. Welcome back.

JASON WITMER: Hi. Jason Witmer, W-i-t-m-e-r. I've been listening to the people, so I threw away most of my testimony because it's unnecessary for me to-- at this moment, to repeat a lot of what's said or to share a lot of my trauma. I think it's been said well and we have a lot of calls to actions and I think that has been said well too. But I would like to present two cases within the criminal system that I think-- I believe that we take cases, we take individuals, and we use that to set precedents of what we do moving forward. So it's really hard to pick in this system because we have a slew of people that's been done wrong. So I picked two. And before I do that, I would like to say, having listened to the people and having listened to the lady, that-- like Don, like Don Kleine has dismissed them charges without the peers, without the jury system. I think all charges that has come from this protest that has not involved inflicting damage on the people should be dismissed as well. So this is what I came here to say. I come today to briefly present two criminal cases that represent the irrationality of the Nebraska justice system when it comes to prosecutor discretion, the sentences-- the sentencing restrictions, and the unwillingness of the system to retroactively correct these things. And I would like these names to be in the record, so I'm going to say them first and foremost. It's Derek Dixon, D-i-x-o-n, Earnest--

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Earnesto [PHONETIC]-- Earnest Jackson, J-a-c-k-s-o-n. I have chosen, in respect to the deceased of these cases-- both these cases are murder cases-- not to identify the individuals who have lost their lives for respect to them and their family. So in case one in 1984, a 76-year-old woman passed away of a heart attack that was determined to have resulted from the fright of having her door kicked in. A young man, 20 years old, Derek Dixon, burglarized this home and was convicted of felony murder. Felony murder is when, in commission of a felony, somebody dies, but you do not have to directly, in any way, assault that person to have killed them. In this case, the felony is burglary; the murder is a heart attack. Again, this is all due respect to the person who has lost their life. But 20 years old, Derek Dixon received life without parole, which is the equivalent of using incarceration as a death penalty. Derek Dixon, 40 years later-- about-- over four decades later, 36 years later, I believe-- is still in prison to this day. Case two: in 1999, three black males were charged with murder of another black man-- sorry-- age 17. Earnest Jackson was one of those charged; one of the three charged. He was first to go to trial. His two coworkers, as is their right, chose not to testify at his case because they had their own murder case to defend themselves against. Again, as was-- it was their right. They were not doing him no wrong. He maintained his innocence that he was not present at this incident that had occurred. He was found guilty of murder, not of a weapon, but he was found guilty of murder; 17 years old, received life without parole. The next person that came up to be tried admitted that he was the shooter; was acquitted because he acted in self-defense. Following, the third codefendant was acquitted because they acted in self-defense. The evidence was out there then. Both, I believe, were asked about Earnest Jackson and admitted that he wasn't there. But regardless, if he was there, the shooter was acquitted of self-defense. This happened in 1999. Earnest Jackson is still incarcerated. He was a 17-year-old male so he was a juvenile. As we know, as most of us know, and those who don't, that across the country, the mandatory life sentences that were given to juveniles involved in murder cases was determined to be intolerable so judges had to have some sort of discretion to give them an alternative sentence. So the state of Nebraska in 2016, I believe, had the opportunity to address this wrong; at least at the minimum, to give him a new sentence that would put him back with his family. They gave him 40 to 80 years, I believe-- or maybe was 60 to 80 years. The point being, he's still in prison. I believe he has 10, 15, 20 more years to do for a murder that did not occur. It was self-defense. A young man

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lost his life. All of these cases are tragedies, but what I'm presenting here is a system right here in Nebraska, but definitely across the country, that-- essentially, it's, it's-- we have a system that continues to lynch. We just do it in a civilized fashion now. We won't correct our wrongs that are-- some are quite obvious, retroactively. We barely will correct them presently. And I think we need to start putting some names to these because it has been addressed about reform needed on our prison system. But I'm feeling like dismantling this system is more of what's needed, but I am willing to start with reform. Reforms means admitting that some people should not be there. We don't want to hear about violent offenders against nonviolent offenders because I am a violent offender and because of the men who were violent offenders put faith in me and tried to make me a human again, they have done so. So Derek Dixon and Earnest Jackson are two of many examples I'd like to start with who are still breathing but are being suffocated to death by our system. So please put in these agendas of addressing these, regardless of how uncomfortable it makes us feel or how, as a representative, that the people of our community may not be backing this. The people who take hard stands in hard situations are the people who are really the leaders. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. We have a break at noon. What do we got? A-- I'll give you the option. We got a couple of minutes before noon. NET is going to break their coverage. If you want to, if you want to be heard, we'd be happy to take you or you can wait until after. We're going to take a 30-minute break; that's to accommodate allowing senators and the people at NET an opportunity for a quick-- relatively quick break. We'll be back. I'm-- I understand we have 59 people in total who have signed a form to speak. We have-- that would give us about 22 more people to hear plus anybody else that, that comes in, in the meantime. But we'll be back here at 12:30 and we'll resume hearing from folks that arrive to share their experiences and their concerns and their ideas. Thank you. We'll be adjourned for 30 minutes.

[BREAK]

LATHROP: You might have arrived since this morning. We do this on a five-minute clock. So once you come up, we'll ask you to give your name and spell your name for us. And then this box in front of me, you'll see there's some light-- lights on it. You get five minutes to talk. You'll have four minutes on a green light, one minute on a yellow light; just to kind of let you know that you're into your

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fourth minute. And when it turns red, we'll ask you, we'll ask you to wrap up your final thought and stop, OK?

___: [INAUDIBLE]

LATHROP: I don't think we are.

___: [INAUDIBLE]

LATHROP: OK. We're good to go if you're good to go. All right. Welcome back. We're on? OK. Welcome back. This is the Judiciary Committee of the Nebraska Legislature. We're here for our afternoon portion of our second forum. We built this as a listening forum. It is not interactive. The, the senators aren't speaking at these things and that's by design so that we have an opportunity to hear from more and more people. And when we broke for lunch, there were 60-- approximately 60 people on the list to speak and we had heard from 37 of those individuals this morning. We will resume our hearing. And with that, we'll take the next testifier, which would be the person holding number 38. Welcome to the Judiciary Committee.

JASON NORD: My name is Jason Nord. That's J-a-s-o-n N-o-r-d. What happened in Lincoln, Nebraska, on the night of May 31 was a grotesque human rights violation where we had peaceful protesters who were doing nothing, threatening nobody, not threatening property, not threatening anything, who were attacked brutally by police officers. If this had happened in Venezuela, if this had happened in Cuba, if this had happened in China, it would be on our news here and we would be pointing at it as evidence of the brutality of those dictatorships; how these countries do not respect the human rights of their people, how they do not value free speech. But it didn't happen in Cuba. It didn't happen in Venezuela or China. It happened here in Lincoln, Nebraska. And chances are very great that not a whole lot is going to be done about it; that the people who perpetuated the violence will not be held to justice because that's the long-standing tradition that we have with how we deal with policing here in the United States. I'm, I'm an educator. I, I had former students out there on those streets, right, being shot at; people who were doing nothing but standing up against white supremacy, who were doing nothing but making their voices heard, saying that they want to live in a world with greater levels of equality, where police officers cannot murder black people on a whim and get away with it time and time and time again. That's all that they were doing. And they were being shot at with rubber

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bullets, right, which is a misnomer because these are things that are designed to shatter people's bones. These are things that are designed to incapacitate people. We had a young woman who had most of her face ripped off while they were trying to provide medical help to somebody else who had already been injured by the brutality. Speaking to one of my former students, a young person of color, she explained how police fired tear gas over their heads so that there was a cloud of chemical weapons behind them, a chemical weapon that was banned by the Geneva Conventions back in the 1920s, that was reaffirmed to be banned in the 1990s for use in warfare; a cloud of chemical weaponry behind them before the police advanced on them with batons and rubber bullets so that the children, young adults, people in their teens, in their 20s, had a choice of running into the cloud of chemical weapons or standing; understood that they could be beaten and arrested by the police that were coming at them in Lincoln, Nebraska. And this atrocity, this grotesque human rights abuse is just a larger example of the types of violence that happen to people every day in our country, predominantly people of color who have to live in fear of the police that we say are there to protect and serve. But are, more often than not, actually just inflicting fear and pain in our communities. And it needs to end. It needs to not just be small, superficial changes. It needs to not be people-- cops taking a knee and dancing with people. We need to see real changes; the eight steps that people are putting out, fine. It's a great beginning, but we need to see serious defunding of our police forces. We need to get military-grade weaponry taken away from them. We don't live in a police state. We don't live in a dictatorship yet. We shouldn't have police with grenade launchers and assault rifles and full-body armor marching against peaceful protesters. These things need to be taken out of their possession. We need police out of our schools. As an educator, when I walk into a classroom, I realize that every single thing that I'm doing is part of the lesson. And what lesson are we teaching children when they know that they have armed people walking their hallways, keeping an eye on what they're doing? We're teaching them that they shouldn't feel safe. We're teaching them that they can't be trusted; that the people above them do not trust them. We are teaching them to, to live in fear. We need to take police out of our schools. We need to take things that should never have been dealt with by police, like our homeless problem, like people who have mental health issues-- we need to take these responsibilities out of the hands of police so that instead of being met by violence, people in these situations are being met with, with compassion. There's the old saying

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that-- right? If you have a hammer, everything in the world looks like a nail. If you have a baton or you have a gun, then everything looks like a target. And that's what we're doing to our larger community in so many different ways. It hurts all sorts of people in our community, but it obviously-- because of a culture of white supremacy that is still deep in our nation, it hurts people of color the most. So please don't listen today and then forget about it, as so often happens. We need to see sweeping changes. We need to see a dramatic change in how we do things. We need to defund the police and have them as a last resort as opposed to an armed force of the government that goes into trying to solve things with violence as a first measure. Thanks.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. Yeah, you can switch the mikes. Welcome.

MAYA KHASIN: Hi, my name is Maya Khasin. That's M-a-y-a K-h-a-s-i-n. I participated in a peaceful march for black lives that turned violent when riot gear clad police officers deployed tear gas on teenagers who threw water bottles. I went home as a protester, picked up my first aid kit, and returned as a medic. I'm in a good position to self-isolate as someone with a separate entrance to my apartment who can afford to get groceries delivered and who is not taking care of anybody who's elderly or immune compromised. I'm also 31 years old. These are teenagers. The crowds skew very young at these. They've grown up in the shadow of existential crisis, whether it's from climate change, police surveillance, or COVID. They're fighting for a world to survive in. They're fighting for a world to grow up in. They're fighting for their lives and for their communities. I was stunned at the immediate and disproportionate response by police. Their weapons were labeled tear gas and rubber bullets and bean bag rounds to make them sound innocuous, like silly toy weapons for bonking punks. But these weapons will absolutely maim and kill you. This was in response to water bottles, by riot officers in full gear. The argument wasn't will police with chemical weapons and guns defeat us? The argument was that the police force would, would use disproportionate force at the latest provocation. So they're not exactly winning in the marketplace of ideas here, but that's not the point, is it? The point is-- that the police are making is that they don't mind taking you down if you do something they don't like. They say we don't respond disproportionately and if you disagree, we'll call the National Guard. White supremacists joined the milieu in stronger force on Sunday and Monday nights. They shot at protesters alongside police. I invite the people of Lincoln to reflect on why

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they both targeted the same people. You can't "unteargas" and "unchase" kids through their own neighborhoods. You can't "unshoot" people in the ribs and heads. I was targeted by the police, despite being clearly marked as first aid when I was standing on a median on the south side of the Capitol with less than ten other people, as most of the crowd had yet to make their way in our direction. We owe it to these youth and children to defund, disarm, dismantle, and abolish a police force that makes this possible. Fellow white people, if any of this stirs you, at minimum, I need you to bring the "I need to speak to the manager" energy to this fight. I need you to keep police accountable. I need you to not let them get away with looting and intimidating black communities. Put your bodies, your words, your influence between these black youth and between police officers. I'm going to leave this on a personal note. As a Jewish person unaffiliated within the community right now, I call upon Lincoln's Jewish community, both official and unofficial, to add their voices to the impassioned outcry to disarm and disband the police. Never again is now. We must unambiguously declare that black lives matter. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. Number 40.

NATALIE WEISS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

LATHROP: Good afternoon.

NATALIE WEISS: My name is Natalie Weiss, N-a-t-a-l-i-e W-e-i-s-s. I'm appearing in front of you today as a private citizen to offer my voice in support of those in our community who are fighting and striving for a more just and equitable society in our state and in our country. Over the past couple of weeks-- well, let me begin here. I'm a lifelong Nebraska citizen. I am a graduate of public schools in our state's capital. One of the things that schoolchildren learn in the state of Nebraska in our social studies courses is our state motto, "equality before the law." Our state, of course, was founded two years after the end of the American Civil War and our motto was adopted as a signal from our state's first government and first citizens to our state's adherence to the principle of the abolition of slavery and to our state's willingness to offer suffrage to black citizens escaping from that slavery. I find it no small piece of irony that here, 153 years later, we are meeting to discuss the problematic police interactions with those who are striving for racial equality in our society. And I think that that irony should give all of us serious

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pause. Over the past couple of weeks, I have been witness to, to the police forces of our state's two largest cities-- our state troopers, our state National Guard-- engage in, in excessive force, in escalation of tensions with citizens who are assembling peacefully in accordance with their constitutional rights and who are unarmed. I have seen them detain members of the press who are clearly communicating that they are members of the press. I and others have been here in Lincoln helping protesters get out of jail who have been arrested at these protests. We've made sure that 58 individuals have been released from jail over the last couple of days. And several of those individuals-- and they've been released-- have explained to me that corrections officers have stolen from them; cash money that they had on their persons when they were brought into the correctional facility and was not returned to them in their personal belongings when they were released. That, of course, is theft. Any of these instances individually create a serious problem for our state. Collectively, I think that they, they, they represent a situation that needs to be addressed. Also, near the end of February, I was witness to a group of white supremacists enter our state's Capitol armed with fully-loaded semiautomatic weapons. I witnessed a member of this committee shake their hand and offer an invitation for one of them to utter 14 words that make up one of the most despicable sentences in our language and offers, offers up the support of white supremacy. That sentence was entered into our legislative record. I think that the discrepancy between how our government institutions treat and act towards separate groups who are both expressing and exercising the same constitutional rights to assemble and peacefully speak and protest their government is blatant and obvious and that that discrepancy must be addressed. This body is the one that needs to address it and I sincerely hope that all of you will rise to the occasion and not shy from it. We need your help now to address those discrepancies and we need to make sure that our state is a state that is communicating that we are for everyone; that we are for equality, that we are for justice. And this, this community needs to make sure that police are acting in a much more equitable, equitable way and that members of our elected leadership are not making optics or appearances that communicate a discrepancy between different groups of people that happen to be expressing the same constitutional rights. Thank you for all of your work. Please be kind yourselves and your friends and your family. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. Good afternoon.

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SAMAR AKINS: My name is Samar Akins and first of all, I'd just like to acknowledge the fact that--

LATHROP: Can we you have to spell it, though, just so we get a good record, if you don't mind?

SAMAR AKINS: It's S-a-m-a-r A-k-i-n-s.

LATHROP: Thank you.

SAMAR AKINS: You know, first and foremost, I'd just like to acknowledge Senator Ernie Chambers just sitting up there and the fact that, you know, it seems like, you know, he-- it's a lack of diversity on this committee right here. It's a lack of diversity within the Unicameral when he has worked there, you know, so long. So even though we're talking about, like, victims of racism through police brutality, I feel like Senator Ernie Chambers has been a victim of institutionalized, systemic and structural racism within the state of Nebraska and the Legislature. I don't understand how, you know, you can be entrusted to, like, eradicate racism. And in my opinion, you basically practicing racism yourself through the exclusion of people of color within the state Legislature. I feel that the state of Nebraska does not practice diversity. I feel that the state of Nebraska doesn't honor anything that got to do with people of colors, human rights, or civil rights. For a perfect example, when you walk in here, everybody that is working here-- patrolmen, the media-- everybody is white. There is no diversity here. And a few years ago, the state of Nebraska abolished affirmative action. So that was a choice that they made. The black population in the state of Nebraska is only or near 4 percent so that means that instead of abolishing affirmative action, instead of taking away our protections, we need more protection. We need, you know, federal protection. We need, as you say, like, affirmative action, we need something that's going to take place immediately. And I mean, you got to-- it is obvious. You know, so many people here, you know, complaining today, so many people in Omaha came out; just the sheer numbers itself should let y'all know that it's a problem. And, you know, I mean, I know a little bit about the law and I know y'all really have a, a duty to act, you know, as individuals and as collectives. All we can do is come out here and, you know, voice our grievances and things of that nature. You know, y'all have been appointed, you know, by the people. And I don't know if y'all have, you know, like, swore an oath or put your hand on a Bible or anything of that nature, but I know y'all have, you know,

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obligations and ethical commitments to uphold the law. And that's really what this is about. This is about law because as African-Americans and people of color, we have rights that are within y'all laws, within y'all United States Constitution, within the state constitution. And if a person can violate our rights, that means that, you know, they need to be held accountable. And sometimes, you know, if a person can't articulate it, but everybody has been articulating their concerns very well-- if they can't articulate it, it's because, like I said, we don't know. We just citizens, but y'all are the elected officials. Y'all know the law. You know, y'all know what's supposed to be done, what should be done, and y'all know what's not being done. So in all honesty, you know, we should be holding y'all accountable. And don't get me wrong, it's a few of y'all that I know and-- you know, not just Senator Ernie Chambers-- know y'all are good people. You know, y'all working for the public. But at the same time, I think y'all could be doing a lot more. And like Senator Chambers said, he believes that -- well, a lot of people believe that, you know, y'all enacted that law to limit terms, you know, just to get people like Mr. Senator-- Mr. Chambers out of the, out of the Unicameral. Y'all only had one person of color. He was the only person that was working at that time in the Unicameral. Y'all enacted a law that would get rid of him. So if y'all would have got rid of him, which y'all did-- so that means was that no people of color-- y'all didn't want no people of color in the Legislature. Now what, what type of state is this? You know, I've been all around America. I've never in my life experienced the racism that I've encountered in the state of Nebraska. Omaha is so segregated; you know, the prison system. I mean, everything here deals with racism. You know you, you are not judged on the, the color of your skin [SIC]. I mean, you're not judged on the content of your character, you're immediately judged on the color of your, on the color of your skin in this state. And me personally, I believe the only way to eradicate racism is to have a zero-tolerance policy for racism and discrimination, you know? And last-- one last thing I'd just like to say: in this state, you know, they feel that diversity is having, you know, any person of color besides an African-American. They cool with that here, you know? I even spoke to somebody at NEOC and they told me that it was fine, you know, that they satisfying a diversity quota by not having no blacks there. Why is it that this state will have any type of minority, whether it be LGBT, a Hispanic person, an Asian person, but they don't want no blacks here in positions? So I-- you know, I'd just like to say I feel that this state is very, very racist. And, you know, if, if

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y'all can't, if y'all can't do better than y'all been doing, I feel like the federal government need to come in like they did where, you know, JFK and Martin Luther King and them doing-- the civil rights era. I feel that the racism epidemic is that bad because the police couldn't do what they was doing without the-- basically, not the approval, but the mayor, you know, the city council, the governor, the government, the citizens-- you know, so the mayor-- the police department are not operating on they own. Thank y'all for letting me speak today.

LATHROP: No, glad you're here. Next testifier. That would be 42. Good afternoon.

LeeAARON BERKS: Good afternoon. You ready?

LATHROP: I'm ready if you are.

LeeAARON BERKS: Great because I'm about to hit y'all. My name is LeeAaron Berks. That is L-e-e-A-a-r-o-n, Berks, B-e-r-k-s. I am 19, black, and I speak about pain with pain, but don't let this pain be mistaken for a threat. I am outraged, I am angered, but I do not act on hatred. I speak on behalf of the organization Black Leaders Movement. I came-- I come to speak about mental health and education systems and racism in schools. This works at any level, but since I only got five minutes to elaborate on corruption in education, I'll focus on high school for today. We all know things that can cause stress, but what does too much stress cause? Anxiety, depression, lack of focus, overwhelmed; all major factors that can make it feel impossible to learn. Students are just barely passing classes to enter a new class that are even more difficult and they take, take in even less knowledge. To make these students struggle even more, bullying has never had a decline. And with social media evolving, cyber bullying evolves to stay alive. Outside school situations for most high schools to students? We'll just leave it at tough to say the least. This is where trauma plays a part in our school systems. How many students suffer silently from suicidal thoughts, PTSD, anxiety, bipolar, schizophrenia? I got a whole list, but students go about their day regularly because they don't even comprehend the depths of the mental pain they have suffered. If I lost a limb and survived, I will most likely go into shock, for where I'm in a state where my brain cannot comprehend the physical pain in my nerves that I feel. Today, we're speaking of mental pain. We need more mental health specialists and mental health awareness in our schools. This will be a

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major improvement for learning capabilities and in actual progress throughout the year, as many students-- "time as money"-- are wasting their time in school since they aren't learning. Graduation rates, graduation rates will increase, leading to more students in college and higher-level jobs. Educating mental health will help students' education progress overall. To make it more direct as to why this needs to come with urgency; the trauma by racism. For viewers' knowledge, there's three types of trauma: acute, chronic, and complex. Most trauma is caused by-- I'm sorry to use this language-- rape, domestic violence, natural disasters, severe illness, death of others-- not just a loved one-- and witnessing an act of violence. Research yourself how many views the death of-- a recently viral video of a murder had. Hint: the police was the murderer and that was millions of views across the world seen. When we speak of trauma, we think of soldiers who come back from war. There are over 20 million vets in the US. How many have suffered from depression, drug abuse? Because a lot are homeless, a lot were failed by the system, your system. And when we speak depression, drug abuse, and poverty, are these not symptoms of the black community too? I won't go into drugs and smoke devices that have taken over the youth and in recent years since it's the only stress relief many students have. But still, I am concussed from school systems that still are unequal for color students to learn, to thrive. We have been traumatized for the last 400 years-plus. It has already affected our DNA genetics. It wasn't acknowledged. It was ignored. This is how slavery survives, how segregation and racism has thrived in our school systems because now they know the school programs and systems that are here today-- the majority of the minority lands a spot in a jail cell than a spot in a college class. With the events around the world, black students are constantly traumatized; chronic and complex trauma. And you don't think, J.S.-- I won't say his name out of respect-- had family and friends who loved him? How do they go back to school in a few months to learn to be educated while they are constantly ignored? There is not enough acknowledgments of the history of black Americans. Black stress and racism in the education system exist here in Lincoln. And I don't have, I don't have paperwork to prove or credit my works, but my experience being in LPS, Lincoln Public Schools, for over 18 years-- I shouldn't need any more proof than myself because I am an example as I experience the racism myself. It wasn't thugs and gangsters who destroyed EZ-Go and downtown buildings recently. It was students. It was citizens of this-- of our community. It was also students and citizens who created a change, redirected the protests to a

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beneficial, healthier community, not the police or National Guard; y'all just made it worse. I call on legislation [SIC] to do your job because someone else will. The word under your name is not you; it's your title. Titles can change. With knowledge as my guidance and my people is my strength, these new leaders of the next generation will not fail. Just because the city doesn't riot doesn't mean we are being peaceful. A protest has many forms. It's not only black students who are struggling to learn our education system-- in our education systems. All of our races suffer in our unique ways. Next time, I'll be speaking of imprisonments and the corruption in Nebraska will be exposed. This is not a threat. This is a change. And change is coming. God bless.

LATHROP: Thank you, Mr. Berks. Next testifier, you may come forward. This would be number 43. Good afternoon.

TA'MIRCLE WASHINGTON: My name is-- oh, my name is Ta'Mircle Washington, and you spell that T-a-'-M-i-r-c-l-e. We believe public spaces, including streets, parks and civic, civic buildings belong to the community that play an important, I mean, they play an important role in free speech and are owned by all, regardless of race, social standing or belief. Because of, because of that, we believe that the use of force is, I mean, the use of force in those spaces against peaceful demonstrations is unacceptable. That's all I have for today, so thank you all for your all time.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, 44. Yes. Good afternoon.

DOMINIQUE LIUSANG: Good afternoon. It's me again. Hi, my name is Dominique, D-o-m-i-n-i-q-u-e, last name L-i-u-s-a-n-g. Now, I know I spoke on James Scurlock yesterday, but today I'm bringing a solution to the community that has a lot of controversy. And I just want to kind of give my pros and cons on it. And today I'll be speaking about medical marijuana, not recreational, but just medical. I want to start off by saying I was a bud tender for a year in Montana, and they have an extensive medical marijuana program that they started in 2001. The benefits that are brought to the entire state were unbelievably, unbelievably amazing. They had a decrease in opiate crises, they had a decrease in other illegal drug usage, and they had an increase in revenue for the state. Some things that Nebraska needs major funding on are, first, our roads. I think everyone is tired of potholes and losing tires. For two, we can put more money back into our schools to increase vocational studies and bring programs like home ec back, as

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well as give some formal adult training to students before they go. Because not everyone is going to go to college, but life is full of options. People don't understand that there are more options than just going to college. You can be a flight attendant, you can end up working for a firm, etcetera. In addition, we also need more funding for the community, having more community recreational centers, and increasing funding for state parks and recreation. For instance, there's not that many playgrounds in Lincoln. There aren't that many community recreation centers in Lincoln. There aren't many pools that are open to public in Lincoln. And this is something that we can do using funding from medical marijuana revenue. And to speak on behalf of money, since that is always the topic of hand, there are 23 states with medical marijuana programs in place. Some of them like Colorado, Missouri, who will be starting one very soon, and Illinois, Oklahoma, Montana, North Dakota, and so many other states. Within the first six months of sales in Colorado in 2014, they generated \$25 million. In 2019, they hit a billion dollars in revenue. Illinois's for two months, just two months that they had their program open, they generated \$75 million. That was dated back in March 6, 2020, is when that sale number went out. Nebraska can use that money to build Nebraska even better. I also want to talk about agriculture on this matter-- or not agriculture, first, hold on. I counted out that Nebraska can generate about \$100 million in revenue the first year if we open a medical marijuana program. So just take into account because Nebraska is a travel hub, it's at the center of the United States. Also, it is one of the hottest spots during the fall for Husker game day. Alcohol sales downtown are tremendous. Imagine having alcohol sales and medical marijuana sales increasing, skyrocketing. Nebraska could be one of the richest states out there. In addition, cannabis is more than just getting stoned. There's other things than just THC. If you're not aware, there's also CBD. And don't go to a gas station, go to an actual CBD store in Lincoln. They can give you in-depths on what strains do, terpene profiles, etcetera, because it also takes into account the health of each patient that comes through that door. Not everyone is going to need the same products, and so it would also educate the public on other resources than just pharmaceuticals and opiates that may have long-lasting harmful effects on them. All right, now I'm going to touch back on the agriculture portion of it. Cannabis also creates hemp fiber, which can be used to make clothing, linens, towels, papers, plastics and animal feed. Cannabis, cannabis oil can be used to make paints, lubricants, varnishes, and etcetera. It's also considered agriculture. So let me break it down for you, the

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agriculture behind cannabis. One single plant can generate around \$3 to \$8,000, just one plant. One acre can fit about 3,000 to 6,000 plants. So right there, an acre of land can produce about \$9 million at most in revenue just on flower products. So if we take that and make concentrates and other forms, tinctures, stuff like that, we're looking at \$10 to \$20,000 for a farmer to generate in their pocket just for marijuana sales. I'm sorry, cannabis sales, because there's just more than marijuana. It also had a lot of disease-fighting properties. I personally can name 100 strains that help with back pain, multiple sclerosis, autism, glaucoma, PTSD, fibromyalgia, schizophrenia, all of it. All of it without the need of pharmaceuticals, like I said. Which again, is much safer, because pharmaceuticals and opiates are a serious problem in Nebraska, as well as nicotine addiction and drinking and driving. I have too many friends that I know that drink and drive and go into a ditch, and I am tired of seeing it. And I know that there is alternative ways to help them alleviate the mental things that they are going through without the use of alcohol, because it is actually very dangerous. Cannabis is less dangerous than alcohol and tobacco. THC is less toxic than nicotine so. I'm sorry, kind of running through all of this. Now, I will explain the cons, because that is something that everyone's always worried about. What are the cons of legalizing this program? Well, first of all, marijuana is still a Schedule I drug, which is classified in the same tier as heroin. It is the most restrictive and the severest punishments for a plant that grows and is picked and is used just like any other herb like basil, thyme, mint, and so on and so forth. Another thing is that with the legalization of this program and people getting medical cards, some people would not be able to purchase firearms. But that's not saying that they cannot keep their current firearms. You just cannot purchase additional ones, which that shouldn't be a problem, seeing as how we have issues with people in the community with unregistered guns shooting citizens. And then fourth, and it's less of a con, but more of just opening up to why marijuana was even illegal in the first place. President Nixon made it illegal because it was seen as a harmful substance that made white women want interracial relationships with black men. And, you know, something to kind of take in consideration also is that alcohol was illegal. There was a prohibition and now it is legal. But cannabis is less harmful than alcohol so.

LATHROP: OK, we appreciate your testimony, and the fact that you came back for a second day. Thanks for being here.

DOMINIQUE LIUSANG: No problem.

LATHROP: Next testifier.

MALAYSIA PERRY: Hello.

LATHROP: Good afternoon.

MALAYSIA PERRY: Hi, my name is Malaysia Perry, M-a-l-a-y-s-i-a P-e-r-r-y. But I have a question. Why is it that a virus is more valued than the people, lives of our people? I am a young black woman who is living in a world same as you full of hate, inequality, and injustice. You have yet to comprehend what is like to be a person of color growing up in this world. I relentlessly work just to be able to survive and help provide for my family. I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. I am tired of me and my people being racially profiled, viewed and treated differently because the color of our skin. And as Governor Ricketts says, the problem that I have with "you people" is that you are trying so hard to direct people's attention back to the coronavirus and not even caring about the real virus, a.k.a. racial inequality, that has been going on for many generations. The real virus that you see us people fighting against for many, many years, we are still experiencing the same things, the same things our forefathers are still fighting to this day. And I say to you with urgency, change needs to happen. And by that I mean the militize-- demilitarized police officers, initiate de-escalation trainings, and mental illnesses along with PTSD trainings, especially for veterans on the force. And most of all, holding all officers in uniform accountable. But let's face it, it seems to me that you all are scared and upset because of a challenge and you are losing, right? Well, good. You should feel that way. As for me and my people, we've took a loss for the last 400 years. In the end, coronavirus was a global issue. However, racial inequality has always been a global issue that needs to be dealt with immediately. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thanks. Next testifier. This will be number 46. Good afternoon.

DARIO ROSSIN: Good morning. Good afternoon, you all. My name is Dario Rossin, D-a-r-i-o, last name Rossin, R-o-s-s-i-n. I'm speaking on behalf of the organization Black Leaders Movement. Today I'm going to be speaking about racial profiling. For many, many years, our people has been racial profiled and accu-- accu-- falsely, falsely jailed and

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accused of many things. The definition of racial profiling is described as the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of committing an offense. Racial profiling is central to promoting justice, equality and effective law enforcements and mass incar-- incar-- I'm sorry.

LATHROP: Incarceration.

DARIO ROSSIN: Yes, sir. According to that splcenter.org, it violates the Constitution and the peperate-- perpetuates racial inquit-- inequities in criminal justice system by fairly subjecting people of color to police surveillance, citation, and arrest. Race and ethniti-- and ethnicity should play no role in an officer's decision of whom to stop, interview, frisk, search, and arrest. In addition, in addition to racial profiling, it wastes police resources by leading police overscrutinizing innocent people, rather than focusing on people whose conduct poses a serious threat to public safety. A New York City Police Department policy and federal bill known as The End Racial Profiling Act all provides useful moderate, model definitions, including examples of scenarios in which an officer has engaged in racial profiling would increase the policy utility as a teaching tool. Black people only account for 5 percent of the number-- excuse me, of Nebraska's total population, but make up 25 percent of the incar-- incarce-- can you say it again?

LATHROP: Incarceration.

DARIO ROSSIN: Thank you. But yes, population, in according to the Prison Policy Initiative in 2018. Black Americans only make up 3.5 percent of Lincoln's population, but make up 9.6 of all traffic stops in Lincoln according to the ACLU in 2019. We should not only hold cops accountable for injustice and police brutality, police brutality, but also racial profiling and inequality. My people have had enough, have had enough. God bless. Much love to you all.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier.

SARAH AL-HILFYLEON: Hello. Good afternoon. My name is Sarah Al-Hilfyleon, that's S-a-r-a-h Al-H-i-l-f-y-l-e-o-n, and I thank you for allowing me to speak today. Nebraska, like many other states in this nation, has spent their better, better part of the last few decades funneling millions into the so-called "War on drugs." This effort has turned largely into a game of numbers, a game of numbers

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for our police departments. If they bring, if they bring in drug busts, they get more funding and the cycle keeps them sicken, sickeningly [SIC] happy. The race to arrest as many peaceful people as possible has led to the wrongful mass incarceration of countless individuals from minority, specifically black, communities. A black Nebraskan is currently 4.65 times more likely to be arrested on marijuana-related drug charges than a white counterpart, despite the equal amount of the usage. This has filled our prisons to the brim with wrong, wrongfully incarcerated. The ACLU Nebraska reports that many, that many have surpassed capacity at 159 percent. As a result, not only are our taxes being used to fund precedents in their, their endless pursuits of an undefiable-- undefinable and vague goal, but, but to all-- to support the dehumanization of thousands. As a resident of this state and this nation, I call you, the Judiciary Committee of Nebraska, to mobilize the defunding of drug units across our precedents and instead invest more into the drug rehabilitation and offer more accessible to psychological service to low-income and minority communities. I call to you to initiate the long-time needed reform that I will en-- that will ensure the safety of all members in this city and in this state. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier.

ALLISON KNIGHTLY: Hi, my name is Allison Knightly, spelled A-l-l-i-s-o-n K-n-i-g-h-t-l-y. I am actually here to talk about the perception that I got from yesterday's meeting. I was there for over five hours. And so that's what this is gonna be about. And I am a resident of District 7, and I grew up in District 12. So yesterday and now today, you have all heard so much powerful, emotional testimony, and I hope it stirred you. You were all given great advice. If you're truly listening to those Nebraskans facing the major brunt of police discrimination and brutality, I hope you take into consideration and be creative and innovative with your, what we demand to be, forthcoming solutions. That is what we, what we elected you for and what you are paid to do: To create laws to keep all of us safe, but particularly those who are in the most and most immediate danger. Considering this is a listening forum and not a debate stage, and considering my time limit, I would hope my following comments are listened to with wholly open ears by every senator here, and particularly Senator Slama and those who kept typing on their laptops throughout the majority of testimony yesterday. I suppose I should also preface by saying I'm a private citizen and earned my B.A. here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in ethnic studies and political

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science with minors in history and Native American studies in 2015. When I tell you I took thousands of pages of notes to an almost religious degree, that's not even the half of it. I understand the need to take notes. I would often try my hardest to write verbatim what my professors were saying, and I don't know about your notes. But even while I fear all the little moments I missed taking those notes, I always made sure to look directly at my speaker and particularly if what they were speaking on was regarding their experiences and their honest emotions about the topic at hand. So I hope you've been making, making sure to take note of these emotions, because those speakers and these speakers, your constituents, are now your professors. A majority of you senators being white or white-passing, you're now here to learn what has been going on in this state, not just recently, but for decades. But you should know and understand this by now. This is information that need not bear being repeated by me because it was not only told to directly yesterday and again today, but has been repeated to you over and over again in 2020 after decades and decades of this information being readily available but steadily ignored by so-called authorities. But I digress. My point in speaking today is to bring forth to your attention, not argue about your perception yesterday. It was hard not to notice how little you looked your constituents in the eye. This has nothing to do with you personally. I'm not critiquing that nor attacking you, because in all honesty, I don't know that much about you. But what I will say is that I felt compelled enough by your what I felt to be borderline hostile demeanor yesterday to drive 45 minutes to come speak with you again today. Again, this is a listening forum, so I hope you genuinely heard that. This was called out by speakers several times yesterday. At one point near the end of the testimonies, a mother asked everyone in the room to raise their hand so she could demonstrate her point. I was watching at home by this time, but the camera panned out to reveal that you were the only senator to not raise your hand. After that, a gentleman advised you that his testimony would be strictly emotional and asked you all directly to close your laptops so you could be witness to it. Again, I could not see the senators at this point, but when his speech was over, I saw the laptops were still open. Based on the experience yesterday, it is difficult for me to have the confidence that you sincerely listened to that man. And it is disheartening, to say the very least. I don't believe it to be impertinent to be critical of our perception of our elected officials, especially those serving on this Judiciary Committee. In fact, that is exactly what I believe I should be doing as a citizen. I'm not talking to anyone but you senators

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present. And I hope it is not foolish of me for-- foolish for me to believe that you will pass along and discuss these insights with your colleagues. I hope you understand that if I walked away without perception, knowing nothing about you previously, that I must not be the only one. And I hope I give voice to those that may have felt disrespected, unheard, or dispirited by your seeming lack of care and attention. As for demands, I demand you review your notes to defer-- excuse me. I demand you review and defer to your notes to remember the faces you saw and the poignant testimonies you heard when you discuss, litigate, and ultimately write this desperately needed legislation. Because we are watching. And to echo the gentleman earlier, if you aren't listening to us, why should we listen to you? Thank you.

PANSING BROOKS: I'm going to say something. Sorry.

LATHROP: OK.

PANSING BROOKS: I'm, I'm going to say something, because I didn't say something yesterday. I'm Senator Pansing Brooks. And, you know, some people, like our beloved colleague, Senator Chambers, handwrite their notes. It can take two weeks to three months to be able to get the transcript back so that we could review what to do. So if we are to do things, if we are to be able-- I put stars by the ideas that I like. And if people, if I am not looking up at exactly a point where somebody wishes that I did, I am sorry. But these are important parts of my being a senator and my being able to do my job. Remember, we had over 100 people yesterday. How do I remember everything important and said by a 100 people? But you know what? Somebody asked me, who is somebody that said such and such yesterday? I looked right back and said his name because I could do that, and I have very specific notes. So I am sorry if it comes across as impolite, but I will continue to do my work as an advocate for the people that came here today and yesterday, who came to teach us about racism and inequality. And there are others here. And we will continue to take notes because that is how I can best do my job. So, again, I, I'm sorry if I'm sounding frustrated. We didn't say anything yesterday. It is a significant part of my job each day. Thank you.

LATHROP: OK. We will take up number 49. Good afternoon and welcome.

CONNIE JONES: My name is Connie Jones, that's C-o-n-n-i-e J-o-n-e-s. For the past 18 years, I have worked in the state of Nebraska as a mental health practitioner and professional counselor. I know what

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anxiety means, I know what it looks like, and I know the effect that it can have on individuals. These days, I've had problems keeping my own anxiety under control, and it's not related to COVID-19, but our country's affairs as it relates to racism. Since the killing of George Floyd, it seems COVID-19 has taken a back seat and precedence. I realize within myself that, although COVID-19 remains out-of-control, deadly virus, racism is far more deadly than any virus. It has thrived in this country for centuries, and it has survived generation after generation. It has been transferred through the act of direct interaction, passive behaviors, and vicariously. All these factors point in the same direction, and that is racism is a learned behavior. My protest days began after the killing of Marvin Ammons by Officer Todd Sears in October, 1997. I continued to protest with grassroots organization to get lead testing started in north Omaha. I was also a member of the Triple One Neighborhood Association, bringing awareness to the education disparities in the public school setting. I do not know of one situation in history that positive change has not come about by protesting and of force. Nothing is freely given, even when it is seen as being right. In order for blacks to get any fairness and treatment from the establishments, it has been gained through sweat, tears, blood, and the loss of black lives. I understand that this forum and others like it would like suggestions from the community on what actions can be implemented to bring about change to the system. Let me say this first, anyone who is wanting real lasting change must first step outside of your own comfort zone. And you have to step outside of yourself without judgment and prejudice. Sometimes individuals use what we, as therapists say, a distraction technique. They do this to avoid dealing with the real issues. For example, example, Colin Kaepernick's decision to take a knee never had anything to do with the flag or dishonoring this nation or its military. It was and is to shine a spotlight on the racial injustice, as there has always been a separate America for whites than for blacks. There has always been a separate system for whites than for blacks. What I'm saying is nothing new. If anyone here feels an uncomfortableness in which your first reaction was some type of internal combativeness or denial, I challenge you to listen further, assess your own thinking, and acknowledge your own biases. That would be the first step in moving forward to change the system. You have to change your own thinking to renew your mind. In my family, we have over 50 documented family members, this is just on my paternal side, that have served in the military. My brother served in the Army; my father, Air Force. My uncle, a police officer until his death. I understand the importance

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of law, order and structure. I also understand, as Dr. King stated in 1963, that one day this nation will "live out the true meaning of its creed." I kneel and I have protested because this nation still has not lived out the true meaning of its creed. In my profession, you can look at my license number right here today and you're able to pull up if I had any infractions against me. A doctor, nurse, attorney, the same as many other profession, prefect-- professions. We have checks and balances in place and systems, systems in place to keep us accountable. In our government there are three separate branches that were given equal power as a form of checks and balance. Where is the accountability when you have police policing themselves? Because the heart of a man cannot be changed the regulation or legislation. We must have policies in place that we need to monitor consistently. Consistent transparency, annual required culture and diversity training, national data systems that keep track of an officer's offense, along with recommendations and the follow-through of those recommendations, scheduled annual community forms prior to major events taking place. This would foster relationships between the police and community through positive interaction, which promotes trust and mutual respect. I have had an opportunity in my time to work with some damn good police officers, and I'll be the first to say that. Yet there have been others that should in no way or no form been given a side arm. Did you know that suicide among the police is the highest of any profession in the nation? What does that tell you? Individuals who cannot self-regulate their own emotions, who cannot control their anger, they are ticking time bombs when dealing with other people in similar situations. A young black man was practicing at a church in north, north Omaha, where he was the lead musician. He was provided a key to the church by the pastor so he can come and go as he needed. He was working on music for the upcoming service. Sometime after 9:00 p.m., this young man headed out to the parking lot to prepare to leave for the evening. Two Omaha police officers that did not identify themselves, had positioned themselves in the shadow of the parking lot as not to be seen. All this young man could do was to make out their silhouettes. One of the officers then started aggressively questioning him. At some point, the young man saw these officers had guns drawn on him. Sometime later, this conversation ended with, OK, everything is good here, like nothing had happened. Officer Todd Sears retired from the Omaha Police Department under disability related to PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder due to the shooting of Marvin Ammons. What about the systematic trauma afflicted on black and brown people every day? This situation happens

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far too often to black men. Every situation in which an officer pulls out his gun should be documented and viewed. Now, this same young man had a permit and a license to carry, that whole situation have could have gone from bad to tragic. What if this young man had reached for his gun to shoot one of those officers who was hiding in the shadows and failed to identify themselves?

LATHROP: Ms. Jones.

CONNIE JONES: Yes?

LATHROP: We're going to have you give us your last thought. OK?

CONNIE JONES: OK.

LATHROP: We're on the red light.

CONNIE JONES: OK. I would like to leave you with this. The police department is not a place that only racism flourishes. It does so in our educational system, housing, judicial system, foster care, and health care. We need to start having these conversations, individuals in leadership and authority from the pulpits of my white churches to the Oval Office of the White House. It is a difficult conversation to have, yet we can. We are better than this, and we are better than what we've become even over 150 years later. Thank you for your time.

MORFELD: Senator Lathrop, can I just say something before I go? Real quick.

LATHROP: Yeah.

MORFELD: I just, I have to go in a minute just because of my, my day job, unfortunately. I tried to get out of it. But I just wanted to say that this, yesterday and today we've heard from almost 100 testifiers. It's been some of the most compelling testimony in my six years in the Legislature. I know that I'm committed to introducing legislation next year, next session when we're allowed to introduce legislation again, to, to really address some of these systemic issues that should have been addressed long, long ago. And I know that I'm going to be looking at the testimony and transcript after this. I know that I'll be getting notes from Senator Pantsing Brooks, too. But I want you to know that I really appreciate everybody who's testified up to this

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point and beyond. So thank you so much. It's been compelling and it's been really inspiring.

LATHROP: All right. Next testifier would be number 50. Yes, welcome.

JOELLEN WILLIAMS-POLZIEN: Thank you very much. JoEllen Williams-Polzien, J-o-E-l-l-e-n, Williams-Polzien, P as in Paula-o-l-z as in zoo-ien. I'm-- Lincoln, Nebraska. I was born in Omaha, the fifth of five kids, all accidents I understand. And I lived for two years in North Platte and moved here when I was 10 and have been here since. So I've lived in all three of our congressional districts. I'm the only one of the five who was determined to get out of Nebraska, and I'm the only one who didn't. My parents grew up in the northeast-- northwest Missouri and southeast Nebraska. They were born in 1905 and 1906. The first three, their first three kids were born during the Depression. And I was aware of that every day of my life growing up, because if you had parents who grew up in the Depression, you know it because it was a very hard time in our country. I was born just before one of our greatest heroes, Franklin D. Roosevelt, died. And the best thing about my birth was that there was extra food stamps for the rest of the family because I wasn't using them. And it was during the war. My first real memory of racial prejudice was when I had a friend who was Jewish. And I found out she was Jewish and then I found out that that's somehow different. I remember a cross was burned in Lincoln when I was-- sometime after I came at age 10. Charlie Starkweather, of course, was that, a terrorist that terrorized all of Lincoln, all of Nebraska. He was white and so was Caril Fugate. My eighth grade teacher was on Fugate's jury. I was changed by reading A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, but I was most transformed by reading The Diary of Anne Frank. And in high school, I participated in national church summer programs. I took a bus by myself to Washington, D.C. for a church conference of young people and then we traveled to get en route to New York City and visited the United Nations. We visit our Congress, individual congressmen in D.C. and we visited the United Nations in New York. I attended UNL, and every spring break I used my spring break to do civil rights work. I went to Charlottesville, Virginia. I went to Jackson, Mississippi. The last year, I went to Gulfport, Mississippi, to support Nebraska Mortar Board who had moved to Gulfport, Mississippi, to start their first Headstart program. They didn't have one. And while I was at my senior year, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, Stokely Carmichael started it, had been started at Nebraska by a group of graduate students who were pretty radical for Nebraska. But a few friends and I had pulled a

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coup because there were so few members and I became elected president and the rest of the five of us became the remaining officers. So I was president of the Student Non-- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Lincoln, Nebraska, which is pretty funny. At UNL we raised money, mostly, most of it came from faculty members to send to people in the south and support gulf, the Gulfport program and many others. My minister after college was Charles Stephen, and he was with the man, the Unitarian minister who was murdered in Mississippi following the protests of the famous three, Chaney. I can't remember the three names. One was from New-- a New York Jew, a black man, and I think another New Yorker. They were all students. And they were-- and Mississippi Burning, the film, is based on that. The incident, not, not the Unitarians who got beat up. I spent six weeks in college living in the Nebraska-- in Chicago's West Side, which had become a ghetto because of the highway system. When they put in the interstates that cut off West Side and made it turned into a ghetto. I took kids on city busses, little kids, black kids, it was a black neighborhood. And we took them to the zoo in Chicago for the first time in their lives. My mother was widowed when I was in college. She was pressured not to let me go on these trips, but she couldn't have stopped me and she didn't try very hard. My proudest moment of my mother was that after all this, she got on a plane and she-- Martin Luther King was there and she walked up to him and shook his hand and thanked him. And that's, my mother has never done anything that made me prouder in my whole life, and she lived to be 89. I have never been stopped driving while white. I have white privilege, I benefit from it every day. I am heartsick, heartsick and brokenhearted about what's going on. This is so much worse than the 60s, and everyone I know is heartsick about how, how desperate the situation is now. We must listen to stories of our friends and our neighbors and our fellow human beings who are people of color, and we are called to support them. I urge everyone to start by reading, reading, reading, then work and read through the 28-day workbook Me and White Supremacy. It's written for white people. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. We will take, we will take number 51, testifier 51. I'm told we're up to number-- 70 people are now on the list. Not 70 more, but we're at 70, and we're now on speaker 51. Welcome.

ABBY VOKOUN: I would first like to lift up the voice of Miss Connie Jones, I believe was her name, who was unfortunately cut off. She had a very powerful testimony, and I'd like to express that I'm lifting up

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her words first. My name, my legal name is Abby, A-b-b-y V-o-k-o-u-n. I'm taking an active role in support of the black community fighting for their lives here in Lincoln, as well as the state of Nebraska and the country. I want to recognize first that I'm able to stand here today without having to justify my own life or my own humanity in front of you in order for you to hear me. I've spent the past few years living in autonomous communities that have relearned how to govern themselves and hold each other accountable without the threat of police interference. Of course, defunding the police gets more complicated as community-- communities grow larger and larger. But if you are able to defund our schools, our local and state parks, our environmental protections, our disability programs, our food safety programs, our reservations and indigenous support programs, then you can absolutely defund the police. I've seen communities work time and time again that do not pay police to point guns in their faces and force them to behave. And I know that Nebraska can rise to the same success. First, I would like to address the white supremacy that reigns over this state and is actively ignored by government officials. Nazi flags being flown in McCook, trucks running over women exercising their First Amendment right, men being shot and killed at the hands of white men full of hate, white supremacists driving into the groups of protesters at high speeds over and over throughout the week, trailing, following and holding folks at gunpoint with no response from cops for over an hour. There was a moment on Sunday where I was standing by myself across the street from the police, treating my eyes from tear gas in what I assumed was a safe space, when four canisters of tear gas relaunched at me and I ran away and a large truck that was identified earlier in the night that was harassing protesters and flashing guns out of their windows. Can you imagine the terror that was felt when police were launching tear gas on two sides and trucks ready to shoot us on the other sides? If you were not aware of the large amount of white supremacists in this state before, I hope that you are listening to these testimonies and understand how much of a problem it is now. I demand that you do everything in your power to drop all charges made this past week against peaceful protesters in the state, including all tickets and citations, and that all court fees be paid back in full. I also asked the cops that participated in the unjust violence against the citizens of Nebraska over the course of this past week be charged. All cops with any mention of unjust violence on their record be fired immediately. You cannot let them get away with this. We need to invest in accountability and de-escalation programs for all citizens so that

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we can take care of our own communities without the police. A social worker is more equipped to handle most all police calls than the officers themselves. These accountability programs will save you the money it costs to buy tear gas and rubber bullets to shoot at us and train officers how to arrest law abiding cit-- abiding citizens for petty crimes. Let the people out of prisons who are charged with marijuana possession offenses. Just let them out. Take all that money you have saved and redistribute it to your local schools and education. Invest in education. I want to see inclusive curriculums in and out of schools that cater to the knowledge of black history in the U.S. and work to abolish the racist way that you have allowed children, including myself, in this state to be taught. We must see an increase in curriculums aimed at sparking conversations in classrooms about racism, racial identity and the way that these things shape the world we live in today. Teachers need to go through better training to learn how to facilitate and steer these conversations with the history of black folks and people of color in mind. Funding must be directed to school libraries that enriches collections with works by prominent black visionaries and change-makers, helping to redirect the narrative that is taught to students today. I would like to see an investment in community garden, gardening curriculum's and a greenhouse at every school in the state. Teach the children how to grow food in the winter and harvest rainwater for drinking. You need to invest in this food security of our communities. I want to see funding distributed to neighborhood associations aimed at providing food security and community building. There are 13 community gardens in Lincoln, which means that you expect 23,000 people to share each garden. In Omaha, the disparity is even greater, 63,500 people per garden. Think about that, does that seem right? You've created a system that suppresses the freedoms that we have elected you to fight for for every citizen. It is clear that I-- I know it's hard to let go of the power that you have inherited through generations of white leadership, but I ask that you do this today and listen to the people who are stepping up and expressing their testimonies. Thank you very much.

LATHROP: Thank you. Number 52. Yes, if you step to the mike and state your name and spell it for us and we'll start there.

JOLENE CISNEROS: I was so nervous that broke my glasses prior to-- I don't know my own strength.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office

Judiciary Committee June 9, 2020

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LATHROP: No need to be nervous today. We're not, we're not even going to ask you questions.

JOLENE CISNEROS: First and foremost, I want to state-- well, first and foremost, I want to state my name is Jolene Cisneros, and that's J-o-l-e-n-e, my last name Cisneros is C-i-s-n-e-r-o-s. I'm nervous, and regardless I hope, I pray that I get all the points. I want you to remember my number, which is 52, and my name, Jolene Cisneros. Also, I want change made today. Immediately. And I know to the point, you made a point in two to three weeks, but this action needs taken right now. So and also I speak with my hands and I talk fast, especially when I'm passionate about something, and especially when I'm upset. And also I'm trying to talk fast for all points to get in. But you will want to know of this. I hope it takes you aback, that you will want to make change today. Here goes. I also want to thank you for giving me this opportunity that God has blessed me with, to state what I have to state. I would like to say a friend of mine, which I'd like to consider a friend, always told me to keep my cool and don't let them rattle you, and which I'm going to try to do today. I want to thank God above and dear Lord Jesus for giving me this opportunity to speak. I've been a Nebraska resident all my life. I graduated at 16. I got my GED, high score top in the nation in which I got a scholarship. I was the youngest in college, and which if I went back to college, I would be a junior. I've worked for a Margeret Jurgensen, the election commissioner, I've been a paralegal, I've donated time in the community to homeless shelters. I'm known in the community, in the state. Matter of fact, nationally and worldwide, and that's not an exaggeration. I have two daughters, my oldest, she graduated from Creighton. She's a double major. She was 2017 National Cheer Coach Championship, and which she is one of the top paralegals at her law firm. I have, I have my youngest daughter, who is 14 years old. Me and my youngest daughter, we made world news. I don't know if you recall that four years ago there was the young, the young girl in which to the point she was descalped at the carnival ride from Cinco de Mayo, in which, by God's grace, she survived. There was a woman in which, and a gentleman who also saved that young girl's life. I am that woman. I don't say that in which to brag in any regards. I give that first and foremost to God. But with that, I want to use the God-given opportunity to let this be known of what I have to state. The state of Nebraska has with my youngest daughter, has illegally kidnaped my child. Nebraska is known as a top "pull me" state, in which to the point they take children out of the homes where they have no right to.

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DHSS-- DHHS and PromiseShip took \$26 million, in which they knew was not theirs, in which they are being audited, which goes to say the devious deceit, lies, and it's called stealing, in which they are doing to me and they have done with my child. I have proved it unfounded, unfounded in which three weeks later they still came and submitted false allegations, hearsay, and documentation in which they took my child. I had my youngest daughter at 19 years old, just turned 19. I am 46 years old. I have never in my life been without my children. I have people in the community that could attest to me. But mind you to the point, first and foremost, I proved it unfounded. Three weeks later, they had emergency ex parte. Called me and say, you never have to worry about picking up your child again. What? The detective that was on the case, in which I had a prior incident, totally different entity in which he was unprofessional, rude in his conduct, along with making false statements and documentation of this, was the same detective in which was on the case for my daughter. In which once again, in which I was treated. And there's false statements and documentation in which I turned over to the Internal Affairs. Internal Affairs investigated. Internal Affairs investigated, in which to the point the first allegation in regards with him being rude and unprofessional, which doesn't really make sense, they couldn't, they couldn't prove to the point because it was he-say, she-say. But yet, in regards of the point of him making false allegations and false statements in his report, and his report, it was sustained, which means he lied. That in itself speaks volumes. He lied. But yet then here's my child. My child is being held two years, May 23 was two years they have had my child. My child has been detained. She is now like a caged animal being held for two years. It states in the Nebraska Statute-- it clearly states in Nebraska Statute that no child of the age 12 years of age and under shall be put in the juvenile detention center. But yet what? My child-- evidently, Nebraska mandates their own rules and their own laws. But the thing about it is, is they cannot mandate over constitutional laws, liberties and rights. My daughter has a constitutional right to grow and flourish. It states in our Constitution, our children have the right to grow and flourish as a child. It's her constitutional right. But yet, how can she when she's being caged like an animal? They've come with frivolous charges after the point, or in which they hold her. They say to the point that she is a harm to society or to herself, but yet to the point, my child has been harmed, hurt, abused and traumatized under state's watch. My child in the first four months was put in 14 homes and five respite homes. That's 19 places in four months. I lived at my

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home for 12 and a half years and 14 and a half years prior to. Do you want-- where's the foundation? My child told them. Now, mind you, my daughter did think that the grass was greener on the other side. But then she realized, hey, things aren't true. It's two weeks in. I want to go home to my mom. But first and foremost, my child should have never been taken from me. Based on what? Based on false alle- which I proved unfounded. I did everything voluntarily, which I did not have to. But I did. Because I wanted proof.

LATHROP: Ms. Cisneros, Cisneros.

JOLENE CISNEROS: Oh.

LATHROP: If you can wrap up your last stuff--

JOLENE CISNEROS: OK.

LATHROP: We got a red light.

JOLENE CISNEROS: Oh, God. Dear Lord Jesus. First and foremost, I was, I was mauled and attacked by a dog on November 22nd. In which to the point an officer is supposed to be the first and foremost a first responder. In which to the point I was left in the parking lot where he stood over me and he said, I'm not going to touch you. I'm not gonna do a thing, and he walked away. Parking lot, Creighton University, on their drive, left. Also to the point, I went to the protest on Friday. Friday, where I was at, everybody is on sidewalk in which they requested, no water bottles be thrown. But yet arm in arm, stand by side, seven tear gasses were bombarded, in which I have video, right in front on people. If they're respecting the rules, in which we have a right to protest by the freedom of speech. I want to make a point in regards I have constitutional right.

LATHROP: One very briefly, because we--

JOLENE CISNEROS: Constitutional right.

LATHROP: We want to respect everyone else that's waiting in line to speak.

JOLENE CISNEROS: My constitutional right in, right in which to parent my child is my First and Fourteenth Amendment. I'm being violated in my right by my constitution, my child being violated.

LATHROP: OK.

JOLENE CISNEROS: Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you.

JOLENE CISNEROS: I'm sorry.

LATHROP: I hope that gets ironed out for you. 53. Welcome.

COLIN SIERT: Hello. Is this OK? Can you hear me?

LATHROP: Oh, yeah, sure. Let's have your name and spell it.

COLIN SIERT: Yes.

LATHROP: If you don't mind.

COLIN SIERT: Colin Siert, C-o-l-i-n S-i-e-r-t. So I'm here today to call on white people to talk about their friends-- to talk to their friends and family about what's happening right now generally, and specifically in Omaha with James Scurlock. The legislators should do their job here. We should do our job in the home, or else this will keep happening. Because laws are broken because of capitalism and white supremacy. Before I jump in, I just want to thank all the protesters that have forced this committee to call these hearings. It is important we do both protest and talk to legislators. So Jake Gardner, the white supremacist owner of the Hive downtown Omaha, murdered James Scurlock. His cousin, a doctor in sociology, spoke yesterday in Omaha. But before I emphasize what she said yesterday, I want people, if they do not already know, to know that the Hive's logo has 1488 cleverly hidden in it. For those that do not know, 1488 is a racist number. The H, with the four and the backdrop, and then the hive, the beehive part, there's 88 right there. Fourteen, or 14 words, spoken by David Lane, a white supremacist murderer "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." And 88, or "Heil Hitler", because H is the eighth letter in the alphabet. This man who wrote a post on Facebook saying he will be pulling a, quote, 48-hour military style fire, fire watch, then killed James Scurlock and claimed self-defense. The only man with a gun claimed self-defense. Come on. Now, I know the police have surveillance beyond cameras they conveniently turn off before they murder unarmed black people. So they definitely can review Snapchat and other relevant messages to find specific words that point to intent or wishes for

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some protester to dare confront Gardner and his ghouls. We already have 48 military-- 48-hour military style, style fire watch. Now, like Jake Gardner's cousin who spoke yesterday in Omaha, number 94, for those watching who want to look back later. I want to call on all white people to talk to their friends and family about what's happening around our country and around the world, for that matter. Paris, France; Berlin, Germany; one in Bristol, U.K.; Hong Kong; Milan and Rome, Italy; Barcelona, Madrid, Spain; Copenhagen, Denmark; Binnish, Syria; Mexico City, Mexico; Dublin, Ireland; Auckland and Christchurch, New Zealand; Tron-- Toronto and Vancouver, Canada; Krakow, Poland; Perth, Australia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Cape Town, Africa; and the holy city of Mashhad, Iran. There are many more countries, but if your friends and family don't like it, know they have the weight of the world that will come down on them. And although his wealth is disgusting, Warren Buffet's newspaper test should be incentive for us white people to avoid having our family's drug through the media. Maybe it should happen, but we should try to avoid that and confront them. It could help us avoid to have saying, yes, that is my racist uncle, that is my racist brother, that is my racist in-law. Maybe the Legislature can tax wealth or intangible wealth and divert it to struggling communities. I think that would require the Eighth Amendment of the cons-- our Constitution. So we white people have a lot of work to do. Because Drew Brees, veteran NFL quarterback for the New Orleans Saints, made some ignorant remarks, which he later apologized for, about why players need to stand for the flag during the national anthem. If Drew Brees, a white man who has worked amongst black men his entire adult life, did not understand at the time of his remarks that challenges black Americans' space then what remarks can we expect white people to make that haven't worked amongst black people? White people, please, please educate your family and peers, start with the most basic standard. I hate that I have to say this, but stop saying the N-word. Stop saying black people are well-spoken, because it implies other black people are not and use inferior language. It's disgusting. I don't know if white people with opposing views can handle it, though, because we are so fragile. But we have to try to convince them. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. This would be number 54. Welcome. Good afternoon.

ISABEL SALAS: Thank you. My name is Isabel Salas, I-s-a-b-e-l S-a-l-a-s, I'm a community organizer at the South of Downtown Community Development Organization. And I'm coming here as an advocate

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and community member who has seen the ways in which our institutions are set up to fail people of color, and especially black folks. And I have-- and talk to you about how I've seen and heard the way that our law enforcement continues to perpetrate violence towards our black communities. I wasn't able to get here as early as I wanted to because I was working on a project at county court to help with eviction cases. And during that time, it's on the same floor as where people pay their tickets and fines. And I saw maybe 15 people come in and out over the two hours that I was there, and I am trying to remember just to get a number, but I do not recall seeing any white people who came in to pay their tickets. And this is just the very low, minor level of the way in which we are overpolicing our communities of color. As a community organizer, my first job is to listen. I listen to folks who live in the very neighborhood that was terrorized a couple of weekends ago, not by protesters, but by police, the guard, and sheriffs who were using tear gas against peaceful protesters. There's already so much fear of violence that folks are seeing on a daily basis and mistrust that police will do anything except harm folks. And this is especially true, true for the black folks that I've spoken to. When I walk the neighborhood, I can remember all of the different stories and narratives that I hear when I, when I walk by each store that I've knocked on. And when I walk up and down Goodhue, the street that leads right past the Governor's mansion and to the State Capitol where we elect leaders like you to make laws about how we let our sit-- our various systems that are perpetuating the violence against their own communities, I can hear and see the neighbors that have talked to me about how much their street is policed and how they can't even sit on their porch without being disturbed by law enforcement. In the very center of our neighborhood, there's a police substation inside the F Street Community Center. The community center is a huge hub for folks catching the bus, for youth playing basketball, and for free meals for seniors and youth. How many other community centers, not even in our city, in our state, have a police substation within them? Why does our neighborhood, which is densely populated and filled with a mix of racial and ethnic backgrounds, more than the rest of Lincoln for sure, why do we have to share space with officer, officers who continue to perpetrate and traumatize our community with violence? Why do we have a constant presence at 13th and F of police officers? The only conclusion that I can come to is that it's there to instill fear. Fear that, should they step out of line, there's an officer right there ready to keep them down and do it forcefully and threaten their lives with that force. U.S. legislators cannot ignore the racial injustice,

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violence and disparities in policing on our communities and how we are all complicit in this system that preys on communities of color, and more especially black communities. Instead, we have senators like Senator Slama who introduced a patriotism bill mandating that our schools force our kids to pledge allegiance to a country, state, and city that does not care whether they live or die, washing over the fact that they will actually be victimized and violated by their own government and have been for hundreds of years. It is still happening. Furthermore, we cannot trust our institutions to know the nuance of our lived experiences if we are not guiding our goals and priorities with the community lived experience at the very center. You can not understand the black and brown experience if either you do not live it or spend serious time listening, going to where people are, and taking a seat and just listening. Organizing a listening session is fine and it's great, and I love that we have this venue. But why aren't you going to their doors, their community centers, their block parties and not campaigning, just listening? I've learned so much over the past almost three years about the impact that listening has. Once they realize you're at their door not to sell them on a campaign, on a product, or a party, and you're just there to listen, they open up because they trust you. And we all need to be doing more of that, especially to the folks who have been victims of this racist institution. That's all I have.

LATHROP: OK. Thank you. Next testifier, and this would be 55.

GRACE KELLY: Hello, my name is Grace Kelly, and that's G-r-a-c-e K-e-l-l-y. And I first have to begin by stating that I'm here as a private citizen and I do not represent my employer in any capacity. So yesterday and today, I have watched what I'm sure will be 16 or more full hours of many moving testimonies from the people of Omaha and the people of Lincoln. But I don't know how many senators and how many representatives outside of this room have been watching those testimonies. I do not come today with specific recommendations or concerns, because those have been provided over and over and over again. I am here to request that the entire Legislature and the entire legislative body, not just the people in this room, truly engage with and truly make all of the issues brought forth by these community members a priority, because they would be if they were happening to you and your own. If you cannot be moved to action by the pain of the communities of your own constituents, you should not have the privilege to represent them. It is not ridiculous for widespread, comprehensive and dramatic changes to be made, because black and brown

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communities have been suffering since America's founding. I also want to say that I am proud of the things that I've seen the Black Leaders Movement representatives achieve in these past few weeks. I want to encourage them not to truncate the list of things that they want to achieve in their community or rule out possibilities because they seem too ambitious or insurmountable, because they deserve better. Not just in terms of police brutality, but because of Nebraska's criminal justice systems, our legal systems, our medical systems, our financial institutions with mental health care and education, and as the speaker said before me, in representation in our government. Their parents deserved better, their grandparents deserved better, and every generation that came before that did, too. So I implore those in the Legislature and white Nebraskans who can live their daily lives ignoring these things to take these concerns seriously and to act, because your constituents and your neighbors are affected by disparities, violence and injustice daily. There are problems in Lincoln, even if we cannot point to headlines or a tragic death in our city. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thanks. Next testifier. Welcome.

JESSICA VAZQUEZ: Thank you. Hello to the members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jessica Vazquez. First name is J-e-s-s-i-c-a, last name is V-a-z-q-u-e-z. First, I want to reiterate that this very forum is exclusionary and inaccessible to people who don't have the option of taking time off of work to come speak. In the future, I encourage the committee to hold these sessions on the weekend. It will not solve the problem, but it is one small step ensuring that members of this community have a better chance of participating. I am here as a resident of Nebraska and as an educator to denounce the response of the state towards the protesters that have been risking their health and physical well-being to advocate for Black Lives Matter. The violent response of the police department towards largely peaceful protesters, a lot of them young adults and students, is unjustifiable and sickening. I am scared of what my classroom will look like in the future. I am grieving for the seats that will remain empty if something doesn't happen and happens fast. At its most basic, the police departments across the country are the result of a long history of oppression and control against the black community. That complacency and complicity that exists within its system enables the very thing which it, it says it's combating: crime. When police officers are committing crimes and fostering an environment that rewards those who keep quiet and look the other way, it has reached a

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point of no return. There is no fixing the police system because it was never broken. It is doing precisely what he was created to do: intimidate, repress and control the status quo of white supremacy. These issues are multifaceted and intersectional. They are complex and deeply rooted into every facet of our society. Police brutality is only one way that institutionalized racism is at play in this country. I am glad you are here and you are listening, but please understand that listening is only the first step towards addressing the myriad of changes that are necessary to combat systemic racism. The United States has created, perpetrated, continued, and sustained racist ideologies since its inception. As a state, it is our responsibility to not let a legacy of blood, violence and death continue. You need to create and force and maintain local legislation that dismantles white supremacy, police brutality, and systemic racism in the state of Nebraska. To do that, you need to start by reducing and eliminating police involvement in issues related to mental health, public education, domestic violence, affordable housing, and homelessness. These are not criminal issues. But through the involvement and presence of police, they have been criminalized. Reallocate funding to experts in each of these areas so that instead of addressing it with force, violence, and fear, we can address these public concerns with empathy, care, and expertise. In most every facet of our society, we ask individuals who are responsible for specialized and important roles to have advanced educational degrees, continued training, professional training, and systems of accountability. It is incomprehensible that these expectations do not apply to police officers. Denouncing racism also means understanding and taking a stance against colonialism, white supremacy, the prison system, white patriarchy, and toxic masculinity. Unless you are willing to do that, you need to step down from your position and make space for somebody that will. Otherwise, if you try-- otherwise, if you choose to do nothing, you are not only complicit, you will be responsible for the continuation of state-sponsored violence based on racial discrimination. I will say that again, if you choose to do nothing, you are not only complicit, you are responsible to the-- for the continuation of state-sponsored violence based on racial discrimination. Thank you.

LATHROP: Next testifier. It will be number 57. Good afternoon.

VIRGINIA HILL: Good afternoon. OK, so my name is Virginia Hill, that's V-i-r-g-i-n-i-a H-i-l-l, and I work in the Legislature with you all, but I am representing myself as a black woman living in Nebraska. I

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stand before you all to say that you all need to seriously consider and think critically about your role as a state senator and a public servant, especially as it pertains to you continuing this system of white supremacy. As I've worked in the Capitol for a couple of years now, I've been watching you, I've been listening to you, I've kept note of how you engage with one another and how you vote on issues affecting the black community, particularly. You do understand that these issues and policy proposals that have just now so recently come to the forefront of the public's agenda are not just new, right? But I've done my research and I understand that policies that are aimed to help black people achieve equity and equality in this country aren't really achieved unless, unless white people also have an interest or a stake in that policy, too. And I ask that you keep that in mind moving forward and actively seek to change that. I've been listening to the testimonies yesterday and today, so I won't spend my time here today advocating for certain policies like defunding the police or the 8 Can't Wait initiative, because I know that you've heard them. But I can think of one specific thing that each one of you can do right now that would help alleviate some of the tension between you and the community, and just help foster and build trust with your constituents. And that's just to listen, especially to voices that you know have historically been silenced or ignored. And don't just show us you're listening by giving us your attention when we're speaking up here, but show us your listening by proposing and voting on policies that aim to uplift and protect black communities. You all are in a unique position in the Nebraska Legislature because a large percentage of the floor debates, you have someone like Senator Chambers that continuously talks about this country's history with slavery, racism, sex trafficking, and overall relationship with black and brown people. Most white people in this country can hide behind the phrase, I didn't know, when pertaining to black issues that black people face in this country because they don't need to understand systemic racism and discrimination to be successful in life. Black people, we aren't afforded that. We aren't afforded that luxury. And you all, being in this Legislature for years with someone like Senator Chambers, you all don't get to say, we didn't know. I've seen him break it down for you all for literally hours, but do you all really listen? Do you all really listen to your black and brown constituents when we tell you that we're tired of dying, we're tired, tired of not receiving justice or tired of receiving unjust treatment? It is your responsibility to better understand your black constituents, even if you live in a district that only has one. It is your role to make sure that one

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voice is heard and that their needs are addressed. Perhaps you all could start by hiring or even provide internships to people of color in your office. After all, diversity and representation is important. And I hope all these testimonies before me and the ones after me serve as a testament to the severity of this situation. That is, of police use of force on black people and injustices we face in our communities due to systematic racism and oppression. And also, let us speak to the sense of urgency that we feel to change our circumstances and just know that you all are in a better position than most of us testifying to do something about it, at least on a state policy level. So please do something.

LATHROP: Next testifier. This would be 58. Welcome, good afternoon. Yeah, why don't you start him over. Oh, OK. You're good.

MARCUS LARIVAUX: Thank you. My name is Marcus Laravel, that's M-a-r-c-u-s L-a-r-i-v-a-u-x. I live in Lincoln, and Senator Pansing Brooks, you represent my district. Thank you so much to all of you for taking the time to hear our requests. I want to talk to you today about fear. As a black man born and raised on American soil, I know what it feels like to be afraid of the police. I know what it's like to be detained for hours and to be let off with a warning. This year alone, I've been asked to get out of my car during a routine traffic stop by an antagonizing officer. A traffic stop I was told was for three different offenses. A traffic stop that concluded without so much as a ticket. In another stop a few short weeks ago, I was detained by an officer, forced to get out of my car, and sit in the squad car, once again only to be released without explanation. I know what it's like to be afraid. But my fear today is not of the police. No, my fear today is for something far greater. I'm here because I fear we are failing to respond to the challenge of this time with the type of civil liberties and justice that we as a nation hold ourselves to. And as a product of that, I fear we are creating a new and more diverse generation of people fearful of the police. The way that this state, and I define that as the people who are paid by taxpayer, taxpayers' dollars to represent the interests of said taxpayer, including the police and those who make decisions as to how they are to use force, responded to taxpayers peacefully protesting was absolutely abhorrent and unacceptable. To respond to peaceful protesters, even if in violation of the curfew, with tear gas and rubber bullets aimed at the head, was not only unnecessary but violent and unlawful. Once again, to respond to citizens protesting police brutality with police brutality is not only counterintuitive but

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illogical. It is wrong, and it incites fear in the people. Here in the city of Lincoln, we have established initiatives to try and change this. I hope that these conversations are held in public forums where transparency can be guaranteed and leaders can be held accountable. I hope that what I say next is considered as well. The model for policing we have in this country right now is very much like insurance. It is something we pay for hoping we never have to use. Police are the ones we call in emergency situations we hope never to be in. They are the ones who show up to enforce the law, laws that we all agree on, laws that we hope are never broken. Since this is the case, all of our efforts should be towards limiting interaction with the police. It is incumbent upon all of us to create a society where interaction with the police is not necessary. In other words, it is imperative that we invest in creating a society where the police are not needed because people are safe. Many of the current solutions to the issues of police brutality only feed the system that we are hoping not to need at all. Solutions such as body cameras, increased training, more meetings costs more taxpayer dollars without actually working towards creating the society we want. It is important that we have solutions that don't continue to fund the problem. Instead, we should focus on solutions that can move us forward. A smaller police force, a demilitarized police force, cops that are held accountable for their misconduct. Understanding that the greater the risk of the job and the less room for error, the more rigorous the accreditation process should be. Most importantly, instead of putting more funding into the police department, we should invest that money into making a more safe community where policing is less necessary. Better teachers, more school counselors, every citizen having access to a living wage, health services, mental health care, drug rehabilitation centers, investing in more community centers, less police in our neighborhoods. I know that defending the police sounds like a daunting task at best and a radical idea at worst. Perhaps some of you are thinking it would be ludicrous to defund the police in light of the protests that have been taking place that you may have disagreed with. I won't try and convince you why the protesting is necessary, because in a very little literal sense, I don't have the time. But how-- you may want to defend the police because you are afraid of crime increasing in your cities. Even those cities that have adopted this approach have seen great reductions in crime, cities like Camden, New Jersey, in the state where I was born, once routinely named one of the most violent cities in the U.S., but they have dropped violent crimes 42 percent in 7 years. We may not want to do it because we are afraid of what may

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happen with less police. We are afraid, meaning we are scared. And as a black American, I told you, I know fear. And I know you know fear, too, because fear knows no race, no gender, no sexual orientation, or political party. But since when have we as Americans made decisions out of fear? That is not American. In our current situation, cops are like insurance. They show up when things go bad. At its core, that plan is reactive. Today, we propose a solution that addresses the needs before they go bad. That is a plan that is proactive. That may be harder and it may be daunting, but it's also courageous and rewarding. At its core, that is American. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: Thank you.

JEFFREY McCASKILL: My name is Jeffrey McCaskill, and I've also been a victim of--

LATHROP: Jeffrey, can you spell your last name for us?

JEFFREY McCASKILL: Yes. McCaskill, M-c-C-a-s-k-i-l-l.

LATHROP: Thank you.

JEFFREY McCASKILL: I also been a victim of police brutality. I have been arrested for ongoing investigation by the FBI. I also have my phone taken. It's like being raped. And I've come to all of the law enforcement ability I can get, EOC of Lincoln, Nebraska, for help. And he told me the same game. There is no help for you. What we do, we was impelled to do. And they got tired of me bothering them, they sent my case all the way to Missouri. And they even said something what's even worse. I want to know what type of black magic you all are using, and I'm talking to the ones that are writing the bill. Cause a police officer, hey, he got a job, whether he do it right by what he's been taught being racist. You know, I can live with that cause I'm from Mississippi, I know what racism is. But when you work on jobs and you've got to deal with a racist joke, I'm talking about these companies that will not hire blacks, they only hire a black so they can get the funding from the government. Well, when he's there, or she, he always have to deal with the oncoming jokes. Ain't nothing funny about racism. And I don't see it being a laughing matter. And far as the police doing their brutality, you all are the ones writing the bills. You all are the one doing it to us, it's not them. They just got a job. Because I have a brother in police. You know, police can stand up and says, I'm not going to do this. I'm not going to

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treat this man cause the color of his skin. But that ain't what I have experienced in Lincoln, Nebraska. Just on the sixth of May, my birthday is on the 28th, I received a birthday card from Nebraska Lottery filled with powder. And I call and I took these steps I needed to see what was going on. And that's been the sixth of May, I haven't heard from them since. But I want you all to know, I'm not afraid. I never have been. And I teach my kids, which they arrested me in front of them back in 96, they came and arrested me for robbing a company. And they had the right, they put it on my-- I'm already being charged for being black. I don't need no other, nothing else to discredit me. But I will say this to Lincoln, Nebraska. If I have done the-- if I have handled my job the way you all have, they would have fired me. But I was fired for doing my job too good. I was fired for not having a write-up. I'm talking about NILCO, Concrete Industries, Apollo Steel. They know who they are. And Captain [INAUDIBLE], I caught her talking to some of you all lawyers. Oh, how can they offend-- help me when they're working for the same people that got their knee on my neck. And they've been having their knee on my neck. But like I said, I'm not afraid. Your cops haven't pulled a gun on the right person yet. And I want you to know, I have a son who, coming back from Afghanistan, graduated top of his class, graduated from here, from Lincoln. And I was investigated that I wasn't treating him right. Not the, the kid that said it, that's the charge they-- they all bring charges up on you because they have the right to do it, cause there is nobody to stop them. And, and I did not know there is, there is no help for you, if you are being discriminated against. What kind of black magic you all running here? You've all got to be kidding me. And I will say this and leave, whatever goes on that happened to the United States, Nebraska plays a big part. Because you all control a lot of stuff, from medication, from architecting buildings, you all lead the way. But you all sure showing a poor excuse on how you all handling this is going on right now.

LATHROP: Next testifier. Be number 60.

SHANA PERRY: Hello.

LATHROP: Yeah.

SHANA PERRY: Hi, I'm Shana Perry, spelled S-h-a-n-a, last name is P-e-r-r-y, I'm a Lincoln resident. So on May 31st I started packing my backpack with protest essentials. I'd read the tips of what to bring should I encounter tear gas, it's milk, by the way. How to flush the

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ears, the eyes of tear gas, how to orient should a flash bang occur, and how to use my body to shield black protesters in the event of an altercation with the police. Where was I heading? To a peaceful protest on the lawn of the Capitol. You may ask, why was I preparing for the worst if I intended to protest peacefully? Well, it's because I had seen the reaction of the Omaha Police Department in previous days. Peaceful protests escalated to a literal roundup of citizens to tear gas them and terrorize. I'd like to talk about the ways in which we can begin to move forward to build a better world. First, let's talk about funding. Where is our money going? I viewed yesterday's Omaha Judiciary Committee meeting listening sessions, and a former police officer issued a challenge to the committee. He said, you can-- you control the purse strings of what happens in Nebraska. Find a way to spend this money that seeks justice. After review of the 2018-2020 operating budgets found on the city of Lincoln, Nebraska website, I was unsurprised to see that police received \$43 million for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. As a reminder of the fiscal year run September 1st, 2018, through September 1st, 2019. The Parks and Recreation Department received \$18 million. Transportation and utilities received \$5 million; the Health Department received \$4 million; and Urban Development, just \$1 million. We need to invest in housing, health care, food, quality education, and access to child care. If we truly cared about safety, we would redirect money spent on massive police forces to the ways in which we can reduce crime by investing in our community. Second, I'd like to talk about mental health resources. Children, especially children of color, the most vulnerable in our society, do not have access to even adequate mental health care. We need to invest in teachers and counselors who are trained to speak with children about life outside of school. Are they facing abuse? Do they have access to food? Do they have access to transportation to and from school? Are they taking care of siblings? Children need a guiding force with tangible solutions to the issues that are too large for any one child to conquer. Many teachers and counselors try their best, but they are not receiving the funding and training to assist the vulnerable. Along those lines, again, we need to invest in youth programs that promote learning, safety, and community care. My last point is demilitarization of the police force. Why do the police need armored vehicles? Why is tear gas, a chemical irritant, being used on citizens, rubber bullets and flash bang grenades on protesters there to protest police brutality? When did our citizens become the enemy? These tactics are being used on peaceful protesters right here in Nebraska. If the police feel like they are

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the military, they will act like the military. Thank you for holding these listening sessions. It is important that the community is not only heard, but that their words are valued and acted on. You have an important role. You can enact the change on the local level to ensure prosperity and peace for all Nebraskans. Black lives matter. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. Good afternoon. Welcome.

KAT WIESE: Thank you. My name is Kat Wiese, that's K-a-t, Wiese, that's W-i-e-s-e. I also am not going to be talking about a number of specific plans, I'm gonna be touching on some more broad ideas. I will say I support defunding the police. That also needs to happen, I think, just from what we've heard already. So I am multiracial black woman. I've lived in Lincoln my entire life. I went to Fredstrom Elementary, Park Middle School, Lincoln High, and North Star. I am an artist and the community arts organizer at South of Downtown Community Development Organization, which is in the Near South and Everett neighborhoods. I'm also a resident in the Everett neighborhood where many of the protests have been taking place. I've been a part of some of those protests watching people go right in front of my house, hearing helicopters above my house at night. Since I was in college, I've been going to these protests, and I'm really tired from witnessing the countless senseless deaths of black and brown people by the hands of those that are there to protect them. I'm tired of being scared. If my brother, if my nephew, if my mom is next. Colorism has in many ways protected me from the violence and discrimination of cops. To put it simply, colorism is the system by which darker-skinned people are treated worse than lighter-skinned people, even within their own racial groups. So I contrast my own experience with my family members who are darker than me, and I instantly see the way the tone of my skin has shielded me from violence, discrimination in the job market, housing market, and interpersonally. Despite even the lightness of my skin, I'm not fully protected. When I was in high school, I was harassed in a theater class by a white male student when they realized I was black. They called me "Blackie" every day for weeks. The teacher knew this, saw it, and did nothing. I received letters from peers telling me I was pretty for a black girl or that they didn't like black people, but I was the exception to their racist rule. This was no doubt due to the lightness of my skin and their very evident racism. Until I was 18, no one, including the school system, taught me about racism in a way that made me realize it was happening currently or that it was happening to me. So I wonder what would have

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happened if there was a person of color teaching my theater class. I wonder how our world might be better if the teachers and state leadership looks, looked like the folks they were serving. Black students who had just one black teacher by third grade were 13 percent more likely to enroll in college, and those who had two were 32 percent more likely to go to college. That's two black teachers, you're 32 percent more likely to go to college if you're a black person. That's crazy, right? So representation is not a value, it is a powerful indicator and tool for who is and who is not successful. The findings, led by researchers from Johns Hopkins University and American University, were published in a working paper titled The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers by the National Bureau of Economic Research. I encourage you to read that research. As an artist in an image maker, I am acutely aware of who is visible and what that means. We have less than a dozen, less than a dozen black officers on our police force. There's 350, 350 officers. We will not have a justice system until we have one that represents the individuals that are here. I do not care if we have to go out of state, if we have to build programs to get the leadership we need in our state government, in our police system, in our schools. The school that is right across the street from my office, 40 percent of those students are Hispanic. It's one of the-- it's the most diverse school in our city. Guess how many teachers have colors they have? Guess how many teachers of color they have? Zero. And remember, two black teachers, 32 percent more likely to go to college. What do we value? What do we value in our state? OK. So we have to demand that the individuals in power on every level look like the people they are serving. We need to do something beyond tokenism, which is saying, I'm going to pat myself on the back by including a brown person. It's not that. We need more than that. We need brown and black people to step forward and take leadership, and we need white individuals to step to the side and give up some of that power so that we can change our country. As a community organizer at South of Downtown Community Development Organization, I've had the privilege to work closely with city government on committees organized by South of Downtown, housing reform meetings, and much more. I can tell you firsthand, the city leadership serving our communities do not look like us. And while they're well-intentioned, we need that representation. We have to have it. It's vital to the success. Listening sessions are not enough. I'm glad that we're here, and I'm so thankful that you guys created this forum for listening. We need to create standards in all state committees among those advising committees to have diverse leadership representatives, representative

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of those who are most impacted. I can tell you firsthand, when a group of white men are making decisions for my neighborhood, that results in gentrification. Versus when it's my neighbors making those decisions on their own behalf. That looks different, that is meaningful impact. Thank you again for creating this forum. Please do not let the dozens of voices, voices that show up today go unheard. We are watching and we are working, and we hope you will work alongside us. Thank you.

LATHROP: Next testifier, 62.

GABRIELLA PARSONS: Good afternoon.

LATHROP: Good afternoon.

GABRIELLA PARSONS: My name is Gabriella Parsons, G-a-b-r-i-e-l-l-a P-a-r-s-o-n-s, I'm a documentary filmmaker, community organizer, youth mentor, and resident of the Near South neighborhood in Lincoln's 28th District. I'm here today speaking as a witness to the police violence and brutality that took place in Lincoln the weekend of May 30th. And I stand in solidarity with our black neighbors and community members whose voices need to be centered, amplified, and deeply listened to at this time. In fact, I find the larger problem in that some of us here are only beginning to listen to the calls that black people have been advocating for for hundreds of years. I hesitated to testify today as I don't want to take up space that does not belong to me as a white person. But I showed up because I recognize the privilege I have in getting to choose when and when not to speak out against racism. Yet, black people cannot choose when and when not to be subjugated to racism and police violence. Which is what has brought us here today, isn't it? In the early morning of Saturday, May 30th, I made a distinct decision to wake my partner around 2:30 a.m.. I could not sleep. I'd seen a photo posted by a friend of a large crowd of people in the intersection near 25th and O Streets in Lincoln. I messaged them asking for details. Is this happening right now? Are the police present, I asked. As I learned of the unfolding situation at the EZ GO gas station, I quickly grabbed a first aid kit, two jugs of water, my facemask, and my partner's hand. I want to be clear that the only reason my partner and I, two white, able-bodies serving as street medics arrived at the scene outside EZ GO on May 30th is because we were well-aware that a black person could die if police showed up. And when the Lincoln Police Department did show up in full-out riot gear, the only reason we stayed was because we were well-aware that a black person could die that night. We got home at 6:30 a.m. that morning

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after we had aided countless injured protesters with eye solution and finally escaped the sea of tear gas that enveloped the Hartley neighborhood north of O Street, where police had forced protesters with rubber bullets to retreat back into. I will never forget the sight of the few last standing young black men who knelt in the middle of a street around 5:00 a.m. that morning. Their hands in the air screaming: Hands up, don't shoot, and black lives matter, while police gassed them anyway. This scene, that very few witnessed, led my partner and I to coalesce and begin organizing with a grassroots team of street medics and first responders who quickly came together to aid protesters in the, in the days and nights that followed it. I'd like to fast forward to the night of Sunday, May 31st in front of the Hall of Justice, 30 minutes past curfew, around 8:30 p.m.. A young black woman who testified earlier was negotiating with the police to keep the peace on Lincoln Mall. She was doing an excellent job at deescalating conflict surfacing within the crowd while standing her ground and working diligently with police to ensure protesters could continue exercising their First Amendment rights past curfew. I want you to know that, despite this, 15 minutes later, that black woman was the one of the first people arrested with force. I want you to know that around 8:45, it was a white man who slashed a medic supplies and then threw one of the first items at police. I want you to know that when an officer grabbed another black woman's hair and pulled her to the ground, I was 10 feet away making decisions on the fly with another medic between which one of us needed to be recording this violence with our phone and which one of us needed to stand by for medical attention. Moments later, the first can of tear gas was fired in protests either scattered down Lincoln Mall or dipped into the neighborhoods to try to escape this violence. There is a real sense of camaraderie in these streets. As you can imagine. People become friends quite quickly when we are all being brutalized by the police. I want you to know what it felt like to administer first aid to countless peaceful protesters, to wash tear gas out of countless people's eyes while we continued to get shot at with rubber bullets. I want you to know the way that tear gas dehydrates the body. I want you to know that, despite this, protesters who were arrested were held for 15 to 20 hours in jail without a sip of water. This is undoubtedly the perfect environment for the spread of COVID-19, in a crowded street of innocent people gasping for air and coughing profusely because they were just tear gassed by our own government. I also want the committee to know that during the curfew on Saturday, May 31st, while protesters were standing up for the most basic human rights and were being

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brutalized and arrested with force by the Lincoln Police Department with the support of the National Guard, there were countless sightings and reports of armed white supremacists who were terrorizing our streets in the Near South and Everett neighborhoods. White men driving trucks and vehicles without license plates and tinted windows freely horrifying our neighbors and folks who were trying to get home safely from the protest. So I must ask, who is the Lincoln Police Department and Omaha Police Department really protecting? Because they sure aren't protecting us. And as far as we are concerned, from the countless eyewitness sightings and reports picked up from police scanners, that it sure looks like cops are protecting white supremacists. Why weren't those reports ever followed up on? Why weren't those white supremacists tear gassed and shot at with rubber bullets the way that peaceful protesters were? Why did we continue to hear these reports all throughout the curfew and well into the morning?

LATHROP: Gabriella--

GABRIELLA PARSONS: To the point to the point that myself and two others had to circle our neighborhoods in the near south because our black neighbors and friends did not feel safe in their own home, to the point that black residents of this city had to rip down their black lives matters flag to feel safe in their own home.

LATHROP: Gabrielle [SIC], we have the timer system and--

GABRIELLA PARSONS: I will wrap up with some final notes on the resilience of our community. And--

LATHROP: Briefly, very briefly.

GABRIELLA PARSONS: --our abilities to protect and care for each other and keep one another safe. Right now, there is a network of more than 100 Lincoln residents organizing teams of street medics who are, who are certified first aid nurses, EMTs, social workers, herbalists, and educators, plus community bail funds, caretakers, healers, massage therapists, counselors, and attorneys who are offering their service for free or reduced rate for those who have been traumatized by police violence.

LATHROP: OK.

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GABRIELLA PARSONS: Our community has proven that we can and will continue to care for each other without cops. So it is my plea to this community-- committee today that you join us, defund LPD, defund OPD, and start funding the people. There's truly no other viable path forward. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: OK. Next testifier, number 63. Good afternoon.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: Good afternoon. My name is Shad Hulvershorn, S-h-a-d H-u-l-v-e-r-s-h-o-r-n. I'd just like to start off by also thanking you all for your time and having the platform to be able to come up here and be heard. It's, like many other people have said, it's obviously very much appreciated. Hopefully we can start to put in some, some of these actions, some of these plans into place and moving forward. I'm here in particular today to address and propose a review of the stop and ID laws that exists in this state. It promotes and creates a culture of racial profiling and abuse of power that continues to drive a wedge between the community and police. It gives the police far too much power, gray area, and allows them to stop somebody walking down the street and harass them for no reason. Many will make up some probable cause, such a suspicious act-- activity, you match the description, etcetera. They say they want to ID you so they know who they are talking to and so that they feel safe. What about my needs to feel safe? Is that not important to them? Why is it so difficult for many of them to understand how wearing body armor and full-- and who is fully armed is unbelievably intimidating, no matter their demeanor? Yet alone the officer's demeanor that's already threatening from the jump. I should be able to remain anonymous and effuse-- and refuse to answer any questions protecting my Fifth Amendment rights. If I haven't committed a crime or I'm not suspected of a crime that they can clearly and concisely articulate or in the process of committing a crime, what I'm doing and who I am is, quite frankly, none of their business. How does, how does knowing who I am make them feel any safer? If I'm unarmed, I propose no threat to somebody with OC, a baton, handcuffs, a taser, a bulletproof vest, a gun, and not to mention a radio and backup that's about 30 seconds away. Which and normally, in most cases, there's already two to three cars on site, on scene, because I'm quote unquote, uncooperative, agitated and combative. These are quite simply warrant checks, just the same as most traffic stops after midnight in the city or DUI checks. They are fishing without permits and a game warden should come and write them a citation. For too often, we as citizens are to blame, as they are the ones initiating the contact and create increasing their chances of one

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of those contacts turning bad. People get tired of being harassed by the police, and the more it happens, the more agitated and the more combative we become. Especially when they're doing nothing wrong. I speak from experience. I once was stopped by the police five times in my-- in a matter of a month in my neighborhood. I live near the Capitol. Never once was I ticketed, warned, or given what I would consider a valid reason for being stopped. All five times my information was ran, and each encounter grew more and more edgy. The fifth time I was actually issued a citation for failure to comply when I did exactly what the officer asked me to do. Yes, I gave that officer hell. I was agitated, I was pissed off. Rightfully so. And for the reason for the being stopped for the fifth time in a month and being harassed for being nothing other than being black and being out after dark. I gave him attitude to the point where he was literally shaking and his voice was cracking, similar to how mine is now. He wrote me a ticket for failure to comply because there was no laws in Nebraska for giving cops a bad attitude. Thankfully, the judge rendered a not guilty verdict, but somehow it still shows up on my record. That's inherently wrong. Charges are filed and dropped and somehow still end up on my permanent record. The system is broken. It's designed to hold people back, rather than lifting them up and realizing that people make mistakes. But so often the police aren't held accountable for theirs. As if to say that somehow they wear a badge, and because they were a badge, a uniform, and are on duty, they are somehow above the law. I'm also in the line of duty, the duty of being a law-abiding citizen. Yet somehow my mistakes are vilified while theirs are celebrated or excused. The mistakes I made 25 years ago don't define me as a person now. However, they are still hurting me and holding me back today. How is that right and just? They aren't felonies, should I really have to go through the process of record expungement or pardons for something that happened 25 years ago? Similar to juv-- to juvenile records, those records should be-- at some point with adult records with specified periods of time and no new offenses, those records should be sealed and I should be given a clean slate. People often ask to say, if you're not doing anything wrong, what's the big deal? They're missing the point and they're not the ones having to be worried about being harassed. Mostly white people. Why can't I walk down the street at night minding my own business without the anxiety or fear of having interaction with the LPD? Why can't I drive around a rich neighborhood day or night in my crappy car without worrying about somebody calling the police on me or cops pulling me over because I look out of place. They say, people or

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I just want to know what you're doing around here. Who the hell cares? It's none of their business. I don't call the police on them when they come into my, my neighborhood floating around in the hood in, in their BMWs and their Mercedes. And the only reason the cops are pulling them over during those times is to warn them of the perceived and potential danger that they may be facing. You see the problem there? People-- excuse me. Oh, matter of fact, the chance of them even showing up in a reasonable amount of time when I call them, is slim to none, yet alone when the situation is reversed, they're there within minutes. I wonder why. It's because of the money and the influence it has on the community and our elected officials. Do you see the problem? The narrative so messed up, and I'm, and I'm tired of it. I see the red light and I will wrap up. I apologize.

LATHROP: OK.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: Their job is to serve and protect, not punish and enslave. Instead of looking for ways to help people to catch a new case, look for ways to help people stay out of trouble. That is community policing, that is serving and protecting. Too many times it's their attitude to try and find something that they have legal justification to pursue a bigger charge. How about doing some real police work? I will wrap up by saying this, that I feel that I should be told when I am contacted by the police immediately who that officer is, their badge number, and the reason for them pulling me over. Before I have to ask, and them getting agitated because I'm questioning their authority. Their job is to prove my guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. It's not my job to prove to them that I am innocent. Police shouldn't be able to lie during their investigations and interrogations to coerce information from suspects. This only promotes the culture within, within law enforcement of dishonesty, and it perpetuates the mistrust that already exists within this community. So once again, thank you very much for your time.

LATHROP: Mr. Overhorn [SIC]. We're glad you came down.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: Thank you very much for your time.

LATHROP: Yeah.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: Appreciate it.

LATHROP: Yeah, you're very welcome.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: And it's Hulvershorn.

LATHROP: Hulvershorn.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: Yes.

LATHROP: Pardon me. I don't write fast enough.

SHAD HULVERSHORN: That's OK.

LATHROP: But anyway, thank you. I will just mention this because my legislative assistant dropped a note on my desk. And this isn't to clear the room, but just to share with you that apparently we're in some kind of a tornado watch. Not a warning, but a watch. So you might look at your phone, keep track of the weather so you can make a decision about how long you want to stick with us. We'll be here until it becomes a problem and somebody else is going to have to monitor that.

SLAMA: Storms are like--

PANSING BROOKS: [INAUDIBLE] empty, too.

SLAMA: The storms are like an hour, 90 minutes out. So we've got a little bit of time.

LATHROP: Oh, oh, OK.

PANSING BROOKS: I think the waiting room is empty.

LATHROP: Oh, OK. We're down to two, four, six, eight, 10 people. Mindful that we probably have maybe an hour before this becomes something we need to take-- I don't want to say take seriously, but do something about. We'll, we'll take testifiers. And I will ask, however, that you limit. We're getting away from my, my time here. When that light turns red, we'll just ask you to stop, OK? Try to-- and don't feel like you need to use the whole five minutes. So next testifier, number 64. Welcome.

UNYOH MBILAIN: Hello. Can you guys hear me?

LATHROP: Yes, we can.

UNYOH MBILAIN: OK. Hi, my name is Unyoh Mbilain, it's spelled U-n-y-o-h, last name is M as in mom-b-i-l-a-i-n. I want to recognize

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the LGBT community and Gay Pride Month. I see all of you guys, we support you guys. Sexual Assault Awareness Month was in April, I grant all peace and justice for those victims. I want to thank all the people at the protest who were at the front line for all the mask and hygiene you provided, and the safety you gave us and granted us in those times as we fought for our rights. I just want to say Jean Stothert, you're embarrassing. You're a bit of a joke. I can't believe I'm hear right now, honestly. That curfew was one thing in a long time that's really pissed me off, that was said recently when they thought there was going to be that memorial service for James. I, in high school worked with her. I did mayors council. So it's just disappointing after that experience to just know, you know, that limelight was shed. Today, I want to talk about and ask you guys about the Earn It bill, and that you vote against it. If the Earn It bill is about-- it was introduced in March, early March once all of this was starting, the disruption was COVID. And I want you guys to recognize that this will be a violation of our First and Third Amendment rights. It violates the Constitution. I want you as senators to vote against it because it is going to take away our private-- public platform speaking.

LATHROP: Could you say that bill, again?

UNYOH MBILAIN: The Earn It bill, the Earn It Act.

LATHROP: Earn It Act?

UNYOH MBILAIN: Earn It.

LATHROP: And was that introduced in the Legislature?

UNYOH MBILAIN: It was, it's-- I believe so. It's just been early, it's only in its introduced stage--

LATHROP: OK. OK.

UNYOH MBILAIN: --early this March.

LATHROP: I'm not familiar with it. All right.

UNYOH MBILAIN: Trump plans to, like, do an executive order of it. So I just need you guys to be very aware of it--

LATHROP: OK.

UNYOH MBILAIN: --and watch out for it and vote against it. It does not mention encryption, but encryption is important because corporations will be told that if they do not follow this bill, it's another obstruction of justice and of our privacy through the government, that you guys need to vote against this and tell them no. The legal liability of this issue is serious. I shouldn't have to earn back my freedom of speech. And that is very important to me, and I'm sure many others, as the First Amendment is always something people are shouting about. It is an abuse of power and it does violate legal liability. I also want to talk about how the U.S. prison system today is legalized slavery. It is endorsed, it is promoted. People have already spoke so much about the police. I don't think I need to go too much into that, but I do also ask you to move and allocate funds for these issues. I want to talk about also the addressing of James Scurlock's death. That meeting with the state attorney was also just so heartbreaking to see. For him to say that it was something sad, I can't even process that. It was insensitive, it was wrong. You know who this man is. Jake, you know who you are. If the grand jury does not give justice, well, karma will. And I believe in that wholeheartedly. I want to also recognize that "Nebraska Nice" is a joke. Living here and growing up, I was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska, I'm a first generation from an immigrant family. And growing up here, this whole "Nebraska Nice" thing, I hate it. I really do. I'd rather have an open racist tell me about myself and me later maybe allegedly slapped them in their face. Allegedly, allegedly. Sorry, Mom. That's just something that's always been in my heart, where I'd rather you be upfront. Because there's been a lot of systems, teachers, in my experience, people just do things that are behind the belt. I also want to talk about Ben Sasse, that was also embarrassing. I don't know what that address was towards with those high schoolers in the graduating class of 2020 this spring. I don't know if he was allegedly drunk, but maybe try something better and have a better representative speak to our youth that are coming in during times like this, especially with COVID. Your guys' president, Trump, talked about when the looting happens, the shooting happens. Basically endorsing violence against the people. I'm heartbroken, honestly, but I'm not surprised. Thug is just another excuse to use the N-word against us because they can't say it openly, I guess. But I mean, I know you do say it. So might as well just speak it with your chest. White silence is violence. This is not anything new. When people in my life don't speak up, I know people around you also don't speak up. So I want you guys as senators to speak up. Hear us, hear me, and do something for other people. And James Scurlock's family, I

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don't remember who was speaking, but he said: Are you guys willing to give up your seats for people of color or black people in order to make change happen? Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. Good afternoon.

MARY CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. My name is Mary Campbell, M-a-r-y C-a-m-p-b-e-l-l. I moved to Lincoln nine years ago, and before that I lived my entire life in the Jim Crow South. I was born in Atlanta. And I can remember my father's idea of a Sunday outing was to take us to a restaurant where the local owner stood outside the entrance with an ax handle to prevent any African Americans from trying to eat there. As I got a little older, I learned that I couldn't have Jewish friends; I couldn't have black friends. And when I asked why, I was told that's just the way things are. Now I got a little older and moved around a little bit and I learned that that may be the way things are, but that's certainly not the way they have to be. Now that I'm in Lincoln, I'm retired and I have gotten involved with Lincoln Literacy. I am a poll worker. I've served on a county board, and I am an active voter registration worker. Now here we are with all the events of recent weeks and I'm thinking, again, things don't have to be the-- the way they've always been. And I've reached out to a couple of community organizers asking how I could help. And I was told, well, we're going to have some meetings and we're going to put together some committees. And I thought, here we go again, because a few years ago, I attended all three days of the conference they had at the Malone Center on race relations. Some of you may remember that and some of you may have been involved with that. I gave my name and number to everybody I could think of at the time, offering to help: What can I do? But no one ever called me. Now I'm asking you again because we need change. But it's hard to be a change agent. All my career, which involved healthcare, higher educational administration, and most recently software implementation consulting, involved some kind of training component, and training is trying to make change. You're either trying to change what people know or you're trying to change what people can do or you're trying to change how people feel, how people think about things. And being a change agent is hard. You all know that because you are all change agents in one way or another. Now the first thing that you probably think of when you're faced with a request for change is, how much is it going to cost, because tax dollars are not easily come by and there never are enough tax dollars to go around. So you're always making these decisions about who's going to get what part of the pie. But there's another resource out there that I would have you

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think about, and that's people like me who are willing to put their time where their hearts are. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, number 66. Hello.

JESSENIA TERUEL: Hi. Can you hear me OK?

LATHROP: Just fine.

JESSENIA TERUEL: My name is Jessenia Teruel; it's J-e-s-s-e-n-i-a, last name is Teruel, T-e-r-u-e-l. I am a resident of Lincoln, specifically the Near South neighborhood. When I was a child, I would get angry sometimes. I would stop my feet and I would throw my things around and I would yell. My dad would sometimes yell back at me, punish me for acting too irrationally, for not expressing my anger in the right way. We would talk about why I was upset. We would talk about what my punishment would be and why. He did not throw things at me, he did not hit me, he did not make me bleed, because that is called abuse. What your response was, what our government and police response was to both our peaceful protests and justified anger from our communities, from our medics, was a very clear and intentional, a coordinated abuse of power. And you should feel shame. We see it on the news. We see it on social media. We see it in our home, in our backyards from Lincoln, and I am absolutely disgusted by these actions, by actions of the police, by actions of our National Guard. And to those of you in office that are condoning these actions, to those of you at home that are condoning them, as well, I'm heartbroken to see bloodshed of our citizens, of your constituents, to see firsthand people in my community-- community blinded by tear gas, to see them being helped by designated individuals that are there to make sure that our people say-- are safe, that those people were harmed, too, that those people were running in fear, to see those people that are-- are very clearly identified first-aid responders that are supposed to be, like you, to protect us, to help make change, to be seeing all of these people still injured, to be seeing them, as portrayed by our media, as coming to help each other and to share a voices, as coming to be prepared for battle-- we were equipped with water and milk and, God forbid, granola bars in our backpacks and in our pockets-- to hear that our mayor's response that the role of these first-aid responders is not appropriate and just to leave it in the hands of EMTs, as if right now calling 911 to speak to dispatch and to speak to our police is something that our community can trust-- and you all know that-- you know better and you could have done better and

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you did not and that failed Lincoln. That failed my community. I can't speak for every single person in Lincoln, but the community that I know and that I love and that I'm so proud of does not trust our police, rightfully. I can see the steps being taken to improve accountability and improve trust of our police being taken. I appreciate it. I am hoping-- and I'm not the religious type, but I am damn near praying that all of you are taking it with utmost seriousness to do your job, to taking important steps into addressing discrimination and racism in our state at all levels. Taking a kneel with us the other day was not enough of a response to hand our trust to you. Body cameras are not enough of a response. Banning police chokeholds, which you'd think would be a given, but it is still not enough. And again, as much as it's appreciated to take your time to listen to us today, that's still not enough. Do not let us be unheard. Amplify all of these voices and act on them. Our black community and our communities of color, they need you to take it just as seriously as if it were your own family, your own friends, your mothers, your children, your neighbors, to see-- to go and see these videos of them being killed and being beaten, broadcasted every time you turn on TV, every time you go on social media. We are all here for radical change, immediate change and reform. We are here to take action. Lincoln and Nebraska needs all of you to be on board as well. We are ready for these conversations and we need you to be ready to listen and to do your part to create change. It's your job. It is your job to live through the lives of your constituents, so we need you to do your job and do it right. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. We just had some people join us. I'll just share with you that we're in some kind of weather watch, so this may get cut short depending upon the circumstances of the weather. And for that reason, I'll ask people to, I guess, be ready to testify if you're the next one up. Welcome.

CINDY HAYES: Thank you. My name is Cynthia, Cindy, Hayes, H-a-y-e-s, Cindy, C-i-n-d-y. I don't want to take up a lot of time. I don't really deserve to stand up here because I've been one of those that have been part of white silence. I have in the past been concerned about this topic of racism and racial reconciliation and community development, all of those things, and in small ways I have been a part of helping those things. I've been frustrated in the past of not really knowing where to go just like the lady before that talked of having an interest in things but not knowing where to go to be a change maker or to help. That's a poor excuse. I haven't done anything

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like what that-- that woman talked about before. So as a white person, I'm saying to those of you that are white, we've just heard that 4 percent of the population are people of color. Do you know why we are here today? Because we have not stood with our brothers and sisters and told our legislators, who we are supposed to hold accountable, to do the right thing. Do you know why they're not doing the right thing? Because the majority is not asking for the right things. And who are the majority? White people. I am ashamed to hear that there is an overt and large presence of white supremacists in the state of Nebraska. That is ridiculous. It is shameful. We need to repent. And then we need to seek justice and we need to listen, and I need help. I need help listening. I need help understanding. I need God to help me to have courage and have compassion. And to those of you that are also Christian, I'm a Christian, so I'm saying to you, stand up, help, listen. The Bible tells us to help those that need justice and those who are oppressed. And if you have even remotely listened to the news and you haven't figured out that we have a group of people that are being oppressed, then you have your ears plugged. Open up your ears. Open up your eyes. Ask God to open up your eyes. And for those of you that are in the black church community, please help us in the white church community. Help us to do what God has called us to do. I'm asking you, please, please help us to know what to do. I'm sorry that we are so stupid that we don't know. I'm sorry, but I am. OK, maybe I should just say I am. OK? I'll-- I'll just put it to myself. I'm sorry. I want to be different. I don't want to be part of a system that is continuing to oppress. It breaks my heart to know that I get-- I know that my kids, they can go up and they can be on campus and they can play football. And I tell them this, you know, you can go up there and you can play football and you don't have to worry. I don't have to worry. The cops sometimes come up and they talk to him or whatever. I'm not worried about it. And I tell them, you know that if you were a person of color, that would not be your experience. That-- that's-- I can tell them that. But I don't know. How do we change this system? So listen to those people that have been talking this past couple of days and continue to listen. I don't know the answer, but you do have the power to change things. And, yes, it may look radically different and it may make some of us afraid. But this is not working. It's not working. It needs to change. It just does. It's- it's just unacceptable. It needs to change. I'm going to stop talking because I'm not the most important person here in the room. But please,

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please, don't stop working together. And the black community, please forgive me and please help me, please.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier would be number 68. Welcome.

HELEN FAGAN: Thank you. I'm number 69, but I don't think number 68 was here, so--

LATHROP: OK.

HELEN FAGAN: OK. My name is Helen Fagan and I am an educator.

LATHROP: Can you spell your name for us, Helen?

HELEN FAGAN: Absolutely. Helen, H-e-l-e-n, last name Fagan, F, as in "Frank," a-g-a-n.

LATHROP: Thank you.

HELEN FAGAN: I am not here representing my employer. I am a faculty member. But I have been in the city of Lincoln since 1992 when my husband was transferred here to train naval reservists. We were a Navy family that moved to the middle of the U.S. because he wanted as far away from the ocean as he could get after being on board ship for eight years. So my husband is retired military. I am the mother of two sons. I am the grandmother of one and hope-- and one on the way. I'm originally from Iran. I arrived in the United States as an unaccompanied minor to a boarding school in central Florida at the age of 15, two months before the U.S. hostages were taken in Tehran. The school I was at was in the heart of KKK. We were all loaded up on a bus, all the Iranians there. We were taken to the airport and we were going to be deported if our paperwork wasn't in order. My brothers and I got to stay in the United States. It wasn't a pretty time to be an Iranian in the United States. I would argue that it's still not a pretty time. It's 40-some years later that I've been here. For the last 30 years of my life, I have dedicated to teaching and working in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. Chief Bliemeister is a former graduate student of mine. I have worked with organizations. I've worked with community leaders. I've worked internationally, nationally. I've done research in this area. I stand here as a person who believes, because of my research and my work, that systems don't change, organizations don't change, communities don't change until leaders change. Leaders set the tone that others follow. Ninety percent of our Legislature is white. We are sending a message just by

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that mere existence. The very first question I ask my college students when they enter my classroom is, who would you be most afraid to bring home as your future spouse? That question frames their assignments and their activities for the rest of the semester. I use an assessment as a pre-post, and I have seen students change their perspective about populations, about individuals that they perceive to be lazy, shouldn't be here, are criminals, about groups of people. I've seen this in over-- time and time again since 2009 when I began teaching at a college level. I created and led the programs, the diversity and cultural competence programs at Bryan Health. I left that full-time position because I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and severe clinical depression. I went on to get a Ph.D. anyway because I believe full-heartedly that we have to begin with educating people if we're going to see systems change. So I'm not here to give you ideas of how to defund the police or ideas of things to do. I'm here to challenge you as an individual, as a leader, as a person to say, who would you not want your child to marry? When you have the answer to that question, you have the answer to the question of where your bias lies, because what happens is if we-- we're OK-- every one of us is OK with diversity and inclusion until it comes home, every single one of us, and when it comes home, that's where we're most challenged. What happens is unconsciously I don't want this person to-- my child to marry, my grandchild to marry, to date, becomes to conscious acts of limiting the hiring, the promotion, the laws that are passed. Does that make sense? That's how I've seen it work. So what I'm challenging you is I-- I'd be more than happy to use this assessment tool that I have and to provide education for you all, and I'd be more than happy to donate all of those dollars to the support of the African American community here in the state of Nebraska. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. We're going to try to-- I'm-- I'm going to get to-- I'm going to say next testifier a little bit quicker so we can keep it moving only because I'm concerned about the weather.

CALEB PETERSEN: 70?

LATHROP: Yeah, we're up to number 70.

CALEB PETERSEN: Cool.

LATHROP: Yes. Thanks for your patience, everyone.

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CALEB PETERSEN: Hi. My name is Caleb Peterson, C-a-l-e-b P-e-t-e-r-s-e-n. This is my first time seeing you all ever, I think. Senator Chambers, we met a couple weeks ago. I met him and didn't even know he was a senator, so now I'm saying hi again and--

LATHROP: I think he took off on account of the weather but--

CALEB PETERSEN: I'm--

LATHROP: Yeah.

CALEB PETERSEN: You're recording this, though, so--

LATHROP: We are.

CALEB PETERSEN: --hi. Hi, Senator Chambers. I met you on the street. Yeah, I-- this morning I listened to a couple people talk while I was working from home, and I was just inspired by people sharing stories of their experiences here in Lincoln. I've been kind of amazed by shared experiences just in general and how we were witnesses to a horrific death with George Floyd and how many people are sharing that experience and coming out and saying, even in-- even here in Lincoln, I've experienced something like that, and they're taking the time to get in their car or get-- hop on their bike right here and come and share that. And I have experiences that I also would like to share. And, yeah, I-- when I was in fifth grade, I-- I'm from Lincoln originally and I went to Cavett Elementary School, so Lincoln Public Schools. When I was in fifth grade, we had a research project to do on one particular person in history, and then we had a wax museum afterward where we all would dress up like that person and share our paper. I researched Frederick Douglass. I painted my face brown and I painted my hands brown, blackface, fifth grade, Cavett Elementary, and I stood up in front of my classmates and I talked to them about someone who stood for the end of oppression of black people, and the horrible irony of that is that I did something that was horribly offensive and racist to black people as I did that. And I was applauded for my great costume. I thought it was awesome. I thought it was so great. I thought I'd nailed the project, just crushed it, and I remember that feeling of just being like, what a great research project. How I lived in that irony and that disconnect and that misunderstanding of people, I am still reckoning with. And I had one black friend in the class and did I ask him how that made him feel? Did-- did I think about that at all besides just the fact that-- I

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just thought about my-- my presentation. I thought about what I had to share, and I think that it was racist and I think that it shows that we aren't listening. I think it shows that I was educated to think that we had solved racism and that I was on the winning team and that I had-- was able to almost explain to my classmates how we had done that, and at the same time I was perpetuating racism through the system of white privilege and white-- white supremacy and the narrative of whiteness and the illusion of progress. And so I'm coming for-- before you today to share my experience. I wonder what other experiences that conjures up for people like me in this city of Lincoln. I also don't know what the laws are on hate crimes and things like that and I think that racist acts are acts of hate, and I think that I should be punished for that. I think that people should be punished for that kind of thing. I-- I have not ever been to jail, and yet I have perpetuated racism, yet black people are in jail at way higher rates than people that look like me. So that's a disconnect and I think that there should be punishment. I think that there should be-- I think that the oppressor never gives up their power to the oppressed, and we should give up our power. And if we're doing things that are reinforcing racism and perpetuating racism, then we should be willing to face the costs of that. And, yeah, there should be-- there should be fairness and-- and justice, too, to us. I held up a sign at the protest that said, "I must change." I think that's-- I think that's very real. Thanks.

LATHROP: Thank you, Mr. Petersen. Next testifier. Good afternoon.

KARLA AVILA: Good afternoon. Karla Avila, that's K-a-r-l-a A-v-i-l-a. I live in Legislative District 18 in Omaha. I am here to talk about the obvious segregation, economic disparity in this state. And also I'm here to talk about recent protests and the misconduct of the meatpacking plants in the state. When you Google Omaha, one of the first article headlines that come up is that Omaha is one of the most segregated cities in our country. That is embarrassing. When one drives through north Omaha and west Omaha, there is an obvious difference with the infrastructure and can tell which neighborhoods are valued by the city. There needs to be better funding of all Omaha in lower-income neighborhoods across Nebraska, not just the dominantly white districts. Defunding the police and relocating that funding towards black and immigrant and minority communities is a great investment that will not only decrease crime, but also decrease the systematic segregation established in the state. I attended the first big protest taking place on 72nd and Dodge on May 29. I witnessed

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people who were peacefully protesting, were being targeted by tear gas. They described it as a horrible experience where they couldn't breathe. My friends were even targeted and they were just walking on the sidewalk. They were not imposing any violence. It is important to ban the use of tear gas on the American people. Lastly, I would like to talk about-- well, secondly, I would like to talk about the unethical practices in the meatpacking companies in the state. My mom and I are Mexican immigrants and as immigrants we know the inhumane acts that meatpacking companies do to our-- to our community. She has worked in a meatpacking company for 13 years. For those 13 years, my mom made me aware of the unethical and inhumane actions the managers and supervisors within that company would do. They would take advantage of the workers' rights because they didn't know their rights. There's a bar-- there's a language barrier where they really don't know what to do during certain times and they would blatantly take advantage of them. This is still going on. Even if they ask HR for help, they really don't help them. The highest COVID cases are taking place in these meatpacking companies right now. Even Tyson has made a statement that these COVID cases were not coming from them, that it was coming from outside. But we all know it's coming from the inside. They don't protect their co-- they don't protect their workers with the necessary equipment to reduce cross-contamination. They didn't care before and they're going to care less now. Workers are being told that if they will be fired-- workers are being told that they will be fired if they miss one day of work, even if they have COVID symptoms. Many of these workers are parents who have kids and can't miss a paycheck because they're living paycheck to paycheck, so they're often faced with the difficult decision to lose their job or get their coworkers sick or get their own family sick. The inhumane treatment of immigrant workers in these meatpacking companies needs to stop. And lastly, the inhumane treatment of minorities-- sorry-- the inhumane treatment of minorities in the state needs to stop. Thank you.

LATHROP: Next testifier. Good afternoon.

CHRISTOPHER SCHMIDT: Good afternoon. My name is Christopher Schmidt; that is C-h-r-i-s-t-o-p-h-e-r S-c-h-m-i-d-t. I'm from Omaha. I do not represent my employer in any way when I'm speaking today. First and foremost, I want to speak to you as a witness of what I saw during the protest. I was out on the street during the first large pro-- large-scale protest in Omaha. People were majority peaceful during the protest. There were parents, there were children there, and there were

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pets there. Without or with little provocation, the police advanced and tried to-- and attempted to disperse the protest, launching pepper balls and tear gas into the crowds which contained children, families, and animals. It's been an interesting road learning about this. I have not educated myself as much as I should have, and more recently this has been bringing these issues to my attention, the systematic oppression of minorities in our communities and in our justice system. I saw firsthand the difference in fear between those at the protests. Those who were white had less fear and were able to confront the police and form barriers, human barriers between militarized police and those protesting for their basic rights. I'd never seen that firsthand before. I'd only witnessed it through the television, through tweets and social media, and it really opened my eyes to what was happening. So going through, I wanted to do some research and ask myself and ask and learn why some of these things are happening. And a broad term that I came across was "systematic racism." Throughout our entire communities, nationwide, our-- we-- these-- our systems are built and were built by individually white people and designed sometimes expressly to oppress minority populations. From convict leasing to Jim Crow to mass incarceration, we are oppressing our minority populations, we are oppressing American citizens that deserve to have their legal rights experienced. Police brutality is just the most visible tip of this. It is the most-- it is an incredible display of ignorance and hate, and it is something that we are confronted with today only because we have nothing else to look at. COVID has pre-- presented an interesting and unique time of which there is nothing else going on and thus these issues were even more visible, and it took a worldwide pandemic for us to pay attention to the enormous problems that plague our communities. We can talk about social factors. We can talk about how minorities have been oppressed ever since-- or since-- throughout history, though I think it's pretty obvious that it-- that oppression still exists today, be it in different forms, be it in different methods. One of the most important things that I've found is that. you can be not racist in this community, but it's not enough. You must be anti-racist when standing up and you must project your thoughts and viewpoints and you must learn. You must take active measures and tangible steps to ending this oppression, and that's what I ask the Nebraska Legislature to do. We must take tangible steps. We must take easily identifiable steps to prove to our communities that we are doing something, that we're not standing idly by as one more person is murdered in the street, one more American citizen, one more black person that's murdered in the

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streets. Some of these can be affirmative action, protecting social programs, increasing the minimum wage, and not treating health issues like criminal justice issues. We need to avoid toxic police training, such as the toxic police train-- training that is provided by an individual named David Grossman nationwide. We need to avoid-- we need to stop teaching our police to react with violence. And I'd like to wrap up by saying once more that we cannot-- it is not enough not to be racist in our communities. We must be anti-racist. We must seek out the injustice rather than standing idly by while doing nothing. Thank you for allowing me to speak and thank you for holding this panel.

LATHROP: Yeah. Thank you. Next testifier.

ABBEY COLEMAN: Is that 73?

LATHROP: We are on 73, yes.

ABBEY COLEMAN: Hi. Can you hear me?

LATHROP: Yes, we can.

ABBEY COLEMAN: I'm Abbey, A-b-b-e-y, Coleman, C-o-l-e-m-a-n. And first I just want to implore y'all to start really listening to black folks and humbly deferring to-- you know, listening to them about their experiences and humbly deferring to them about how our society should be addressing issues of oppression because black people and their families have hundreds of years of experience. So please keep that in mind. Secondly, I'm here to read the testimony of a black person who is not comfortable coming before you for fear of retribution. I reside in Lincoln, Nebraska, 68502. I thank Senator Lathrop and the senate committee for braving pandemic, heat, and possible police contact to hear from their constituents. I am an immigrant whose home has been overrun by tyrants, and it is hard to point at anything good, save the people; impossible yet to point at any credible institutions. Their ranks are mired in scandal and yet more scandal to deeper bury the prior implication. I do not see that here, yet heed this. It is not too late for you. Rome was really beautiful once too. Radicalization: I came here hoping to be exceptional. If I worked hard enough, nothing could stand in my way. That was over a decade ago. I understand the nuance of the exceptional Negro now. I have been criminalized and the effects on my life were devastating. What I mean is that when I was arrested, I understood that I was a criminal. A disturbing-the-peace charge from a party where no other attendees were arrested taught me

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this. It was a great soiree. We were all there. This dispensed with any notions of exceptionalism I thought I could achieve. I could see now what rap and blues were going on about, a pervasive hopelessness that might drive one to drink or smoke or, with callous heart, break laws. On Sunday, the 31st of May, I watched National Guardsmen take position at our State's Capitol. I watched State Troopers ready themselves at the stairs of our courts. I was horrified because the image was a familiar one, one that I thought I would never see again, let alone in America. I pleaded with the youth who were intent on bearing their First Amendment right to articulate their equality before the law to go home. The curfew was upon us. The youth were resolved, in part because the police had negotiated a truce. As long as the protesters were peaceful, the police were inclined to stand at ease, vigilant but in no uncertain terms peaceable. A few hours later, I watched the deja-vu unfold. Law enforcement and our nation's military descended on and radicalized the very youth whose trust they had earlier won. They, too, are criminals now. They get rap and blues now, and I weep for your country and our promise as that exceptional city on the hill. The State Legislature does not have any direct oversight over local municipalities. For this reason, I would urge our senators to move quickly and decisively in a manner that would reach deep into law enforcement agencies to restore credibility to these institutions, to save this country. I apologize for belaboring suggestions and observations already made, and I welcome discourse on all of the following: a higher bar-- a higher bar of entry for those we allow to serve and protect us so that strengthening them is not tantamount to weakening your citizenry; a requisite that police departments report all cases and indeed allegations of abuse and resolutions as matters of public record; a moratorium on trickle-down military armaments and training tactics; a citizen board attached to the Office of the Ombudsman; greater transparency from the Ombudsman about logged complaints; all complaints against law enforcement should go through this board and be adjudicated-- adjudicated by this board, again, as all men-- again, all as matters of public record; mandated race history and race relations education for all law enforcement; mandated disability sensitivity training; fees from citations that are scaled by income; a critique of our courts; practices like overcharging to force plea agreements, guaranteeing criminality, should be analyzed. Our judicial system should shift from punitive-- punitive gestures to rehabilitative overtones, as evidenced by programs like diversion court--

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LATHROP: Ms. Coleman--

ABBEY COLEMAN: --and-- yes-- and tie these changes to agency budgets. Just wrapping up.

LATHROP: OK.

ABBEY COLEMAN: Our LGBTQ people, our disabled people, our indigenous people, and our criminal people should all be considered in any proposals that protect black people. I stand for the equality of all people. Legislators, please direct any responses to the emails-- to the email provided on your copy of this testimony. I am again encouraged to see you here today. I would like to thank you for your time and service. Power to the people. I yield my time.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier.

ROSS MOSIER: Hello. Can you hear me?

LATHROP: I sure can. Welcome.

ROSS MOSIER: Thank you. My name is Ross Mosier, R-o-s-s M-o-s-i-e-r. I'm originally from Aurora, Nebraska, which is just an hour west of here. And as you can imagine, in that town, we don't see the issues that most of the country has been seeing for the past many years and more so recently. But since coming to Lincoln, Nebraska, for college, I've seen many things that I never thought could have been happening in this state and in this town. My best friend and my roommate is African American, and I was so shocked to find out that every time he goes to Walmart and goes-- after the checkout, he is stopped every single time at the door to make sure he isn't stealing anything, but not when I'm with him. And one time I accidentally stole ramen noodles; not that that's a big theft, but I didn't get stopped. And I didn't think that we had the issue of police brutality here in Lincoln, but on Saturday night and Sunday night I was-- that my eyes were opened to what is really happening in the state. Saturday night, I was with a crowd of protesters that were just protesting in front of the courthouse. And, yes, things were getting broken. And I can tell you this from myself being there on the ground, it was mostly white high schoolers running around saying that they just wanted to destroy stuff and start fires, running around with high-powered Airsoft guns. But the police officers, of course, were shooting rubber bullets and shooting tear gas at the crowd of us and black people that were there just protesting. And I asked one Sunday night when I was there again,

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a young police officer not much older than me, why nothing was being done about the people in the alleys and on the sides that were actually causing the destruction and were there just for the destruction and to do nothing else that were there not to protest. And he said, I can't tell you the answer because I'm just following orders. And that is the problem. That is a huge problem that we have with this police structure that we have right now, because if they're just following orders and being robots, are they thinking as humans with their own brains, with their own hearts? Are they looking down at their rifles, shooting rubber bullets and looking at the people that they're shooting? I think not. And this-- I am one supporting defunding the current program that we have, the current institution that we have, but only enable to replace it with more up-to-date law enforcement policies. People should not-- police should not have firearms when pulling over a person for a broken tail light. There should be a specialized group of people, specialized group of law enforcement officers that are-- the only thing that they do is like law-- like traffic enforcement and safety. And they should not have-- that should be their sole responsibility, because if you can divvy up tasks like that, you're going to have a lot more of a working system and a lot less incidents that we have around the country. And also, I believe that education in all fronts is one thing that we can do to change this. I am appalled to find out that the education system that I grew up in has been whitewashing everything about history and has been giving us this notion that the great fight has been fought back in the '60s with Martin Luther King Jr. and that everything's okay now. I am appalled that when I was younger in elementary school and we said the Pledge of Allegiance and ended it "with liberty and justice for all," that that was the biggest and is probably the biggest misinformation campaign of our lifetime, because there has not and currently is not liberty and justice for all, so I do not know how we can uphold that and think that truthfully when that is not happening. And lastly, I work at a church as a music director, and so I'm not representing the church that I work for when I say this. But the pastor last week posed a question to the church members. He said, what are we going to do? Are we going to stand with the oppressors or are we going to stand with the oppressed? And since you are all in power, what are you going to do? Are you going to stand with the oppressors? Are you going to continue to be a part of the oppressors? Because not saying anything and not doing anything, kneeling does nothing, but

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action does something. So I implore you tonight, when you go home, to think deeply about what you're going to do. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, please. Zach, when you get done with that, I'd like to talk to you. Welcome.

AURANG ZEB: Hi. My name is Aurang Zeb, A-u-r-a-n-g, last name Zeb, Z-e-b. As-salaam-alaikum, peace be upon you. I'm going to start some story I noticed when I moved in Nebraska. So we have a total population, what I understand, in Nebraska, 1.934 million. So what I search, 4 person black people live in Nebraska. But one day I was driving by prison, 14th and Highway 2. So I think they have a break, something, so what I saw, it was mostly 99 percent is black people in prison. So this make me worried because they are 4 percent. And other white people live in 96 percent in the state of Nebraska, but 4 percent more majority inside, living in prison. So I'm just asking you guys, why is that? And second, I want share some story. I used to live by 48th and Old Cheney. So what happened, one guy, always, he put mustard on our door. So we complain about this one to apartment people. But later they did something. And then we move close to-- I live in-- by north ALDI, 28th, by Capitol Building. So there is-- just a few years ago, I think it was, maybe 2016 or something, somebody destroy our car with gun. I think it's, what, 11 bullet-- with big gun, he just destroyed our car. We called the police. Police came there. We give the report, everything, and after this one is nothing done. And one more story I want to share is I was at Russ's Market, 17th and Washington Street, one day. I went there to buy grocery. So when I came outside, I saw one policeman. He was knocking in one window and one mixed guy, black and white, he was sitting inside a car. So sound to me he know him something and he keep say, open your door. First he was not responsive. And then he open the door. So this police guy, you know, he just choke him and I make even video. And he start bleeding. So he says same word what this George Floyd said. He say, I can't breathe, I can't breathe. Then I make a video. And other policeman, I think he was the head of the police. He showed up. He said, can I see your ID? So I got nervous. I said, what's going on? I did not do anything. He's say, no, you saw this, everything, so I need your ID. I said, for what? He said, just need some information. So I give him my ID and he take my information. So I got a letter from court, I think a subpoena, something. So I went to court. And this county attorney, she asked me, she say-- before even trial, she asked me, she said, what you saw? I-- I told her truth, everything, whatever I saw there. And then it was other white lady, she was witness. And

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then the trial start. So I have a shock when policeman said to judge, he say, you know, this guy, he tried to take my gun, and that's why I was holding him, and he tried to take my gun. So I don't know even how court system works. So I said, Judge, I need to give witness. He said, sir, I don't know who you are. I said, you guys send me a letter to come here. And they did not take my-- any witness. But I think this guy got something, ticket, \$500 or something. So other story I want to share just only 2018. We was four people eating at KFC, 11th and Cornhusker. So two was my Egyptian friend studying here in-- mornings here in UNL, one was visiting from Ohio--he was going medical school there-- and my brother. And we were sitting there at KFC. We was eating chicken. And white-- one white guy, he show up there. So he sit down next to us. So he starts using some racial words and he talk about against my religion, my race, and I feel threat when he start doing this one. So I call police from other phone, so I have a recording with one phone and call police. And then police show up there after, you know, he left. And we talked to store manager. And one other black guy show up there. I still want thanks to him because he saved our life, because if he did not show up, he fight for us with this white guy who attacking on us-- so anyway, when he left, actually, store manager told him to get out from here because you doing wrong. And then police show up and I explained to police. I show him video. And sad thing was this one police told me, they say, we can't do anything because this is freedom of speech. I said, well, we-- you know, we was shaking because we were thinking going-- he going to kill us and you said this is freedom of speech. But anyway, this-- this put movie on my Facebook. So I have a lot of friend. And they-- they call, I think, to Senator, everybody, and then they get in one. And then head of the police, he called me. He say, hey, do you want charge against this policeman who did not take your report? So this time I told him, I said, no, just forget it, I don't want any charges, but--

LATHROP: OK.

AURANG ZEB: --you're going to have to, you know-- what they call it-- treat people equal.

LATHROP: Right.

AURANG ZEB: So this was the other story. And then-- I don't-- I'm out of time or--

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LATHROP: Yeah. It's in case people-- I'm sure where the light's at. It's right there and we're-- when it turns red, it's-- it--

AURANG ZEB: Oh, OK. So I just want to say a few things if that's OK.

LATHROP: Well, we have-- my-- my only difficulty is we have to be out of here by 5:00 and everybody behind you still wants to talk.

AURANG ZEB: OK, just a few words again, you know, is-- I'm asking justice for George Floyd. I'm asking justice for Ahmaud Arbery. I'm asking justice for Jim [INAUDIBLE] I'm asking justice for Zachary BearHeels. Thank you. Have a great day. God bless you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Thanks for coming in, Mr. Zeb. Next testifier. Welcome.

ANN HUNTER-PIRTLE: Good afternoon. My name's Ann-Hunter Pirtle, A-n-n H-u-n-t-e-r, hyphen, P-i-r-t-l-e. I'm a Lincoln resident. I live in Legislative District 28 and I run the nonprofit Stand For Schools. Thank you very much for holding these sessions. Black lives matter. And I appreciate your attention to this, the issues that have been discussed today, I'd really encourage you to keep educational equity in mind as you consider the testimony you've heard this afternoon and yesterday. Even before the pandemic, poverty had been growing in Nebraska and nationally for years. The percentage of students in Lincoln Public Schools who qualify for free and reduced lunch has doubled from 24 percent in the year 2000 to 49 percent earlier this year before the pandemic began. That is a statewide trend in urban and rural school districts. Children of color are disproportionately affected, and it means that kids are coming to school facing new challenges. The Legislature has only fully funded our existing public school funding formula in 3 of the last 17 years, and additional bills to improve access to services like early childhood education, school breakfast and lunch, mental and behavioral health services, and special education that would benefit our most vulnerable students have sat in committee for years, as Senator Pansing Brooks knows very well as a member of the Education Committee. If we are to confront inequality in our society, public schools have to be part of the solution and they need appropriate funding and curriculum to do so. There's also a real risk that despite all the calls for important reforms you've heard today, there's a risk of moving backwards on equity, including when it comes to education funding. School funding bills, like any budget, are moral documents and LB1106, which is the

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main property tax reform bill being contemplated this session, would move the state in the wrong direction on equity. Property tax reform is an important issue, but this bill punishes schools, would take funding away from where it's most needed, and would hurt the most vulnerable children in our state by cutting funding to their schools in the long run. Thank you again for holding these sessions. I would urge you to consider the equity implications of every issue before the Legislature, including education, now and going forward. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, that'd be 77.

FAITH WALKER: Hi, my name is Faith Walker. I'm-- can I just--

LATHROP: It's been disinfected, I think.

FAITH WALKER: I'll just leave it. I think you can hear me. Yeah.

LATHROP: OK. That's fine.

FAITH WALKER: F-a-i-t-h, space, W-a-l-k-e-r. Our police, nationwide and in Nebraska, have a serious problem in their culture and the way they perceive justice, and it disproportionately harms our black and brown neighbors. I'm white, but I've lived a life where I've dealt with police multiple times a month and sometimes multiple times a week. I have never seen them seek justice. They view everyone that they come into contact with as a threat and it's reflected in their training and the way they treat people who need help instead of violence. Dave Grossman, the man who popularized, "warrior training" in cops, says in his training, and I quote: You're a predator. What does a predator do? They kill. Only a killer can hunt a killer. Are you emotionally, psychologically, spiritually prepared to snuff out a human life in defense of innocent lives? If you can't make that decision, you need to find another job. These are the messages that our officers of the law are receiving. They are told that they are predators and they act like it. Police officers are not and cannot be judge, jury, and executioner. This man gave a presentation to Nebraska police two years ago. In continual education offered by the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center, 13 out of 19 trainings reflect this warrior model; 7 of 19 trainings are direct weapons training; and 6 instruct in hostile interrogation or how to engage in hostile suspects. Thirteen of 19 trainings directly instruct police to interact with every single citizen and member of our community as a threat rather than a member of our community. That's 68 percent.

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That's 68 percent of what our cops are getting. United States police officers spend on average eight hours training in conflict resolution and deescalation and 129 hours in weapons training and violence. Our police officers spend 16 times the amount of time preparing for threats than they do for general community needs, and general community needs are the norm. Very rarely does a traffic stop need a gun. This violent, hostile mindset is worsened by racial biases that we cannot ignore. They see every community member as a threat to this very community, and black and brown families and neighbors and friends and loved ones are assumed to be more of a threat based on their skin color. And I'd like to ask how this strategy makes any sense. They believe that not only do they have the right to take a life, but the responsibility to do so. They then react with violence first and attack, as we've seen in the protests over the last week where peaceful protesters were tear gassed and shot with pepper bullets. I have never seen a conflict end peacefully when one person attacks the other. The fact that our force that is supposed to protect and serve attacks first is absurd. The fact that they view themselves as warriors against threats is completely contradictory to their mandate of serving the community. The fact that they are attacking our own citizens and our own community with weapons that are war crimes is utterly unacceptable. And when they continue to betray our community with their violence, officers of the law protect each other from any consequences. They're supposed to uphold our laws, but when they themselves violate them, they face no consequences. Their unions and their qualified immunity allows them to break the very laws that they are supposed to uphold. This is a flawed and racist system from the ground up. I'll say that again. It's a flawed and racist system. Police forces should not have military-grade weapons to use against citizens and a community in peace. They should not respond to every call to community services and they should never react with violence first. This is injustice. I say abolish the police because we must abolish this force as we know it. Routine traffic stops do not need a gun present. They need someone who knows traffic laws. Mental health calls do not need a gun present. They need a crisis counselor. Guns and any weapons should never be on your-- your arm. They should be checked out only when absolutely necessary. We need to disinvest in these pre-- presumptions of violence that only lead to death and brutality and reappro-- invest in appropriate responses for the community. This is a service and it's a service that's needed, and right now it is only violence. Thank you.

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LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, number 78. Thanks for waiting.

TIMOTHY KERKHOVE: Yeah, thank you. My name is Timothy Kerkhove, T-i-m-o-t-h-y, Kerkhove, K-e-r-k-h-o-v, as in "victor," -e. The police response to peaceful protests locally and across the country has been extremely disheartening. The speed at which the police and military have been called out in force, decked out in sophisticated military-grade equipment when our government has supposedly not been able to muster an adequate medical response to a serious pandemic is disgusting. This is the result of decades of austerity, and it's extremely telling about how authorities come to view the public that they're supposed to serve. Across the country, the police have targeted protest medics and destroyed water and provisions meant to keep people healthy and safe at a time when our hospitals are stretched thin and don't need to be handling preventable dehydration and heat exhaustion cases. The root source of this response is a contempt for people who dare to speak out against their own oppression and the people who stand with them in support, and fundamental change is needed. Black leaders have been speaking out for years, leading peaceful demonstrations and calling for legislative change. This is not new. Growing up in extremely white west Omaha, I heard my fellow white classmates-- classmates make racist comments about north Omaha and black Americans that they had no context making beyond what they learned from the white adults they knew. I'm ashamed that I often said nothing, but I'm also thankful for the people who have given me the opportunity to grow and hopefully become a better ally. I bring this up because the mentality of white supremacy starts young and is deeply ingrained in the minds of many of the officers who come from segregated communities like mine. If we're going to defund the police, which I think we should, the way we invest those freed-up funds needs to be restorative and recognize how deep racism runs in white communities such that white children in west Omaha joke about bringing shell casings back from north Omaha as souvenirs. Some of those kids grow up to be police officers, still having that view of a community that they're supposed to serve. I don't have the perfect solutions, but I know there are leaders of color who do. The price of not paying attention and being active in combating police racism and its sources is the loss of our neighbors, friends, and loved ones of color. Black lives matter. Black lives matter. Please take action. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier is number 79. No 79? All right, 80.

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LATHROP: You want to lower that, Zach?

ZACH PLUHACEK: Yep.

VINCENT LITWINOWICZ: Good afternoon, members of the committee, my name is Vincent Litwinowicz, V-i-n-c-e-n-t L-i-t-w-i-n-o-w-i-c-z. I'm from Lincoln. I took the bus here. I know this had to be done urgently, but I wonder how many people in wheelchairs got to show up if they had-- you know, if they could express their opinion-- something to think about. And I'm-- I'm-- I'm addressing-- you know, I've been watching a little bit on and off. I don't have a prepared speech, but I'm wondering how you guys are going to take all this, because I don't want to detract the-- the systemic racism is a serious problem, but just realize that if the colors were reversed, the same exact thing would happen. I'm not trying to detract. It's just that-- and then, you know, sometimes, in accordance with that thought, you know-- you know, things are mentioned and people voice their opinion and then nothing really happens. So I'm-- I'm interested to see what's going to happen legislatively next term. I kind of-- I guess it's my point of view right now as this winds down, and realize there's things that we could do in a legislative session right now that would also be in the-- in-- in the same vein of-- of-- of dealing with problems of discrimination. I believe there's a-- anyway, I don't want to-- I just want to say that, you know, I-- I've had a-- I had a-- I guess that's part of the point is to give our own experiences too. And one time I got a DUI once and I was in the courtroom and the judge looked at me and he said, look around, you know, you don't-- you're not going to leave if I don't want you to. And I don't believe-- and I don't mean to disparage and I don't-- I don't believe I look like Gary Busey at a precinct picture time, but he said that to me. And then I was thinking, you know, I'm not going to-- I'm not going to-- I'm not a dog, I don't do tricks. So he said he was going to have fun with me and then, at the last minute, my lawyer pulled him into a-- to the chamber-- side chamber, and he came out and then they-- and then he said, OK, are you leaving now? So I was in a group therapy and a woman in there knew of an attorney for \$500, and if it wasn't for him, I-- I would have gone to jail. I'm certain of it. So, I mean, people are people and-- and we do need legislation that is focused towards the system-- systemic racism that we-- it is present, because I also grew up with-- in New Orleans. I knew a police officer that said he let-- that he let his dog chew longer on the black people. Course, he used

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the N-word. And there's anecdotes I could say, I guess. It's just that, you know, it's the brown-eyed/blue-eyed thing, you know, the Frontline episode in the early '80s. So it's just-- I guess I would say I just hope that there are other senators listening and that I know some people are going to bring forward legislation, and I just hope that there's a will to do it and a real will to listen and pay attention while people are talking and not do other things, Senator Slama. But anyway, I just hope that we can act. I guess-- I do have cognitive issues, so I'm-- I'm going to-- I'm going to stop, but I think I've made the point that I wanted to. And so I took the bus. And I just hope-- going to see what-- I know there's a time delay, so let's just see what happens, what-- what-- what's passed next year and what's dealt with this year, anyway, because it'd be interesting to see if-- if this new kind of awareness, you know, addresses, you know, something like homosexuality, which, you know, dogs and dolphins, it's been documented, right? So these are facts. You know, religion gets in the way, but, I mean, these are-- this is empirical stuff. And so it's just phenomenal of the things that we could probably do now too. Anyway, and-- and not to-- I don't want to distract because, you know, the racism is-- is really a problem and in general and in systemically too. So, anyway, thank you for letting me speak. And I-- I-- I didn't even know that it's going to rain, because if it is, that's going to be a problem.

LATHROP: It's going to rain.

VINCENT LITWINOWICZ: Yeah. Take care.

LATHROP: All right. Thanks, Vincent. Next testifier.

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: Good afternoon. Can you hear me? I'll take this off.

LATHROP: Yes.

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: I don't want to but-- I'm bearing underlying conditions by being here today, but I've been in my house for over three months, quarantine, trying to protect myself.

LATHROP: Welcome out.

PANSING BROOKS: His name.

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LATHROP: Can you give us your name?

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: Oh, I'm sorry. Dennis, D-e-n-n-i-s, Stubblefield, S-t-u-b-b-l-e-f-i-e-l-d.

LATHROP: OK, go ahead.

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: Sorry about that.

LATHROP: No, that's all right.

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: And I've sat through watching the demonstrations and all and-- and it was quite depressing to see what was going on in my own city with the law enforcement. But I don't want to get into that. You guys have heard enough of that. I want to tell a story when I was a young kid, about nine years old, playing baseball. I was born in an all-white town, McCook, Nebraska.

LATHROP: Where? I didn't--

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: McCook. McCook, Nebraska.

LATHROP: Oh, McCook, OK.

DENNIS STUBBLEFIELD: We had a game in Cambridge, Nebraska, went to Cambridge, Nebraska. In McCook, I didn't know I was black. I didn't know that. I just-- I mean, I knew my family was black, but when I played with everyone, I wasn't pointed out as being black. It did hurt when they did read the Little-- Little Black Sambo book in school. That hurt a lot, but, you know, I got over it. So back to my story. I come up to bat in baseball and these adults were calling me a n****r. These adults, every time I came up to bat, had a different epithet for me-- "jigaboo," "coon"-- words I never heard before. And if one white person there would have just stood up for me, it would have been really great, but they were afraid of each other, apparently. The people on my side never said anything in my behalf, neither did anyone else on the other side, of course. But that's what I had to go through as a child. That was the first time I really faced racism, I-- in my opinion. Then I moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, and I found out it was even worse. There was more racism. Riding around in high school with a car load of black guys, you get pulled over by the police. They want you all out of the car. Been drinking, doing drugs? No, no, weren't doing any of that. Well, there was a robbery and the car fits your description. I'm sure you guys have heard these stories. It's the same

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old thing. I buy my son a car when he turns 15. He gets pulled over three times because the car fits the description of a robbery or burglary suspect. My point is, the white race has to stand up for us all because you guys have the power. We don't. We're not looking for trouble. We're just trying to live. But we need your help and we need your legislation. We need to pass laws that can protect people against things like that, not just black people, all people of color. People with disabilities, they're still prejudiced against. And I want to end with this story. I was-- last Thursday, I was watching the George Floyd memorial. It was so depressing, I couldn't watch it any longer. I said, I've got to get out of the house. And this is what I do when I can't see people. I get in the car and drive around because of the virus. Well, I took a long drive. I drove out Highway 2 to Nebraska City, went north to Omaha, went through Omaha, felt pretty good, said, I'm going to come back home, got on the interstate, decided I was going to go on the highway to go to Baker's candy. I said, yeah, candy always makes you feel better. I get my candy and I leave. I get to about the entry point of Greenwood, Nebraska, and across from me there's a pickup truck. It's sitting about this high off the ground. He has something on his windshield. I couldn't make it out. But in the back he has not one, but two Confederate flags, waving them proudly, huge flags. In my opinion, we don't need that in America or in Nebraska. There's been criticism about taking a knee during the anthem, which is not disrespectful to the flag. The Confederate flag is disrespectful to the American flag and to all Americans, in my opinion, and I would like to see the legislation, pass some law against Nazi flags, Confederate flags. There's no place in our society for that. You know, and some people think it's funny and cute, but it really strikes to the heart. And I also wanted to thank all the white people that came up here and testified on the behalf of black folks. I really appreciate that, and I appreciate your time. Thank you much.

LATHROP: Thanks for coming down. Next testifier, 82.

KIETRYN ZYCHAL: My name is Kietryn Zychal, and that is spelled K-i-e-t-r-y-n; the last name is Z-y-c-h-a-l. I want to thank you so much for having these listening sessions. This is a great credit to the Judiciary Committee that you took the initiative to do this, so good. Thank-- thank you so much for being here today and yesterday. I actually moved to Nebraska to study the Rice Poindexter case which, some of you may know, was about two Black Panthers who were convicted in 1971 for a suitcase bombing murder of an Omaha police officer. It was always controversial. They tried to get back into court, they are

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the-- forever, and the courts would never allow them to get back in to prove their innocence. I hope this summer, on the 50th anniversary of the bombing, August 17, 1970, I hope that each of you will take the opportunity to study the Rice-Poindexter case, the facts of it, because it is an excellent example-- it's a poor example, but it is a perfect example of systemic racism from the behavior of the police, the prosecutors, planted evidence, coerced false confession, suppressed evidence, Brady violations, and all the way up to the United States Supreme Court, where they changed the procedure for filing a Fourth Amendment claim instead of allowing David Rice to get a new trial. And the reason that I came today is that I wanted to ask you to take a look at a legislative resolution that Matt Hansen proposed in 2017, at my request, to study conviction integrity units. There are about four dozen conviction integrity units in the United States, and it is an excellent start to have a check and balance on police and prosecutors. And I'll be sending you an email with links to the old conviction integrity unit proposal. Matt Han-- or Senator Wayne told me on Sunday at the memorial in Memorial Park that he would definitely support studying conviction integrity units because we really do need a check and balance on police and prosecutors, and not only that, also the relationship between prosecutors and trial judges. And you can also look at a Law Review article by R.K. Flowers written in 2000 in the Nebraska Law Review, and the title of it is "Unholy Alliance." It's about the relationship, the close relationship between prosecutors and trial judges. So a conviction integrity unit study would be a great way to start to figure out how we can ensure that, you know, Nebraska lives up to the motto on our flag, which is, "Equality before the law," so I hope you'll all support that resolution to study conviction integrity units. Thanks so much.

LATHROP: Thank you.

PANSING BROOKS: Ms. Zychal, just could you send us also information on the-- on the Rice and Poindexter case if you have something that's wonderful to read.

KIETRYN ZYCHAL: You know, I want to write something more concise, because there's a lot of stuff out there. It's quite long. A lot of it is not-- a lot of it, I don't think, gets to the heart of it. But I will definitely write something for you and you'll have that by the end of the month.

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PANSING BROOKS: Thank you.

KIETRYN ZYCHAL: But in the meantime, I'll send you some other links, but thank you so much for asking.

PANSING BROOKS: They-- they have been-- it is voluminous, so I was--

KIETRYN ZYCHAL: It's voluminous. And I don't want to overwhelm you because there's a lot of stuff and a lot of stuff that's out there isn't accurate, and that bothers me as a journalist. OK. Thank you.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier, 83. Good afternoon.

JON HAMILTON: Good afternoon. My name is Jon Hamilton, a resident of Lincoln. I appreciate you for having the hearings. I got a chance to catch the ones yesterday got televised, and was watching earlier today. To be honest, a little frustrated, so I went out and mowed the lawn to accomplish something, but I can appreciate what it's like to be on the other side hearing comments and concerns. As I said, I'm a resident of Lincoln. I was originally from Lawrence, Kansas, moved here when I was 14 and lived until I graduated from the University of Nebraska, taught in the Holdrege and Kearney area and-- and El Paso, Texas, for 14 years before moving back here. So if you can indulge a former history teacher who I guess maybe wants to drop a little history lesson on you, or at least a couple quotes, I'll do that. I used to be a teacher where my students used to say, Mr. H, you got eyes in the back of your head, you're always catch me passing notes or whatnot. I've had too many eye surgeries, my left eye, detached retina twice the year we moved back here, in 2000, so this is the good eye. I'm not trying to give the evil eye out of the other, but it is what it is. Eighth grade U.S. history, everybody's favorite subjects, I used to always have a-- a thought for the day in the corner of my classroom for a couple reasons. One, I came across a comment that said, no man, however conservative, can stand before a class day after day and refrain from saying more than he knows. And so I wanted to do that to check myself. And the other one is, you know, everybody's a damn fool for five minutes a day, the trick is not exceeding the limit. And so I can appreciate that you have a time limit on everything. Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects, Will Rogers once said, but that's not always as funny as it-- it-- it meant to interject. I guess some history is-- is worth repeating and some

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history is not. I'm 62 years old, so I've lived in a community where there was a curfew once. I lived in Lawrence, Kansas. We were on the network news. I thought it would-- was going to be for KU getting to the Final Four, but it happened to be the summer when there was some riots because a African American youth, "Tiger Dowdell," was shot by a police officer. And so I didn't think I'd have to live through living in a community again. As I said, I lived in El Paso, Texas, for 14 years and nev-- that never happened. But I'm old enough to remember when there were situations. And so when you see some things repeating, it-- it-- it causes you to think back and reflect even what you think you're doing, what you think you know, and what you realize that you don't know. A lot of people always like to know that-- tell you that they know what they know, but they don't always know what they don't know. And Harry Truman said the only thing new in the world is the history we don't know. My dad grew up in Carter Lake, north Omaha, my mom in Fremont, so I know some things about Nebraska, even before we moved here when I was 14. But I didn't know Bob Gibson's older brother Josh and his situation coming back from-- as a World War II vet until I read 24th and Glory that came out a couple years ago. So we're all capable of learning more than what we think we know. John Wooden once said, it's what you learn after you think you know it all that counts. So we all need to do that, even in hostile and tense times. It-- it's not a show of-- of ignorance to recognize that you don't always know everything, and it behooves us to listen to those that are-- do. So I'm not going to stand up here and recount more than the suggestions that I've heard from youth. I guess the one thing that-- that empowers me or-- or inspires me is that, for all of the criticisms that sometimes are said about youth, that they don't listen to their parents, they don't listen to adults, I've seen enough generations of kids, my former students who are now in their 30s, 40s, almost 50s, to realize that our democracy is in good hands if we listen to those who are the next generation up. And so I'm-- I-- I've witnessed the youth of this city and others step up and mentioned their things. I guess maybe the one thing that we as adults need to remember is that kids listen more than we realize. They listen differently sometimes. They listen with their eyes. And so it's the actions and inactions, the decisions and indecisions that we do that reflect on us and sometimes limit them. We sometimes, for all the times that we think others limit us, we sometimes limit ourselves no more than-- than anyone else. And so a couple-- I guess a couple of comments I'll close with, because there's no sense in reinventing the wheel or the better suggestions have already been made to you. As a citizen I do-- I can appreciate. I

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watched the beginning proceedings this morning, and there was a little bit of some-- some blurbs in-- at least in the Lincoln station of it, and I appreciate that you're here, and your colleagues, hopefully, will get the opportunity and chance-- I don't know if these are televised, are going to get repeated, if they're going to get shared with colleagues or if you're up in-- in the process of having to disseminate that and share with them, but it would behoove a second watch and a glance, I think. There may be a time when we're powerless to an injustice, but there never must-- there-- there must never be a time when we fail to protest. That's-- that's Elie Weisel. It's difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it. That's from a book called *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. I'll have to admit, I've never read that. I taught American history. I've used that quote before. My brother used to work in a meat-packing plant here, and my mother-in-law did and others, and that has to do with the meat-packing industry 100 years ago. That's the lesson I think we should learn. James Baldwin, in-- in a book called *Nobody Knows My Name*, 1961, I came across this quote when I was a teenager. I had no knowledge of who James Baldwin was. Said: The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as when you came in. As I said, I-- I wrote that quote down because I had to. I was come-- looking through quotes. I had a high school history teacher by the name of June Williams at Lincoln East that said you had to make a 100-page notebook on the influence of modern day on ancient Greece. And even when you're a senior in high school, you think, how do you fill 100 pages? Part of it could be quotes. So I looked through a lot of quote books once upon a time, and it caused me to find stuff that I would not have found otherwise--

LATHROP: All right.

JON HAMILTON: --which was helpful, but--

LATHROP: One last quote, if you've got one.

JON HAMILTON: That's-- that-- that's the best one I think I can-- an answer on.

LATHROP: OK.

JON HAMILTON: The realization was I didn't realize fully who James Baldwin was until I was looking through a biography of Wilt Chamberlain, who went to the University of Kansas, played basketball.

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My older brother saw him when he was walking across the street in South Park because we lived across from South Park in Lawrence, Kansas, not the cable TV show but the large park in Lawrence, Kansas.

LATHROP: OK.

JON HAMILTON: And so it's what we learn after we think we've heard it all. Thank you for your time.

LATHROP: All right. Yeah. Thanks for coming down. Our next testifier would be 84. Welcome.

ELLEN JORGENSON: Hi. Can you hear me OK? I'm kind of tall.

LATHROP: Yes, we can.

ELLEN JORGENSON: All right. My name is Ellen Jorgenson, E-l-l-e-n J-o-r-g-e-n-s-o-n. I serve my community as a public schoolteacher and coach. I reside in the 87th Legislative District, and I'm here representing myself. I thank you for being here, humbling yourself to listen, and taking what has been shared and proposed yesterday and today and putting the powerful statements into action, per your elected duty. In my work with Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools, we often shared what is said to be a popular Masai greeting: How are the children? The common response is, the children are well, meaning, if the children are well, then the community-- then the community is well. Unfortunately, in our community, the children are not well. To pretend that their murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and James Scurlock and the hundreds of thousands of lynchings not caught on film doesn't affect our children, our community, would be categorically wrong. To think that this is solely about police brutality is also wrong. Children internalize racism at a young age, including stereotype threats. This extends to interpersonal structures through implicit and explicit bias and bigotry. It is reflected in our schools and institutions and is strong and cumulative among institutions in a systemic manner. This should not be a surprise, especially after listening to the passionate testimonies and stories shared yesterday and today. As such. I am primarily here to implore this committee and all elected officials that this moment isn't simply a trend. These listening sessions cannot be another practice and the go-through-the-motions Olympics repeated every two to four years. I have listed several legislative bills I support and further ideas which I will include in my full remarks to be shared electronically to

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all members of this committee. Current legislative items I support include LB918-- excuse me-- LB589, the elimination of a permanent police force in our schools; LB646 to end cash bail; LB1060, which bans natural hair discrimination; LB44 to abolish the death penalty and replace with life in prison; LB986 to ban the box in higher education; LB1170 to require implicit bias training for healthcare workers; and many more which will be presented in my full remarks. My full remarks list is honestly too brief when considering the many institutions and systems we need to examine, defund, and restructure in order to ensure that the children are well. I strongly believe transparency and vulnerability leads to trust. I implore you to be vulnerable. In doing so, you have to trust that if action is not taken, we will show up to the polls and elect people who will. I thank you for listening today and acting now, and I leave you with this proverb: The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth. How are the children? Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you. Next testifier. Welcome.

JANET GOODMAN BANKS: Hello to everyone. Thank you for having this forum. My name is Pastor Janet, J-a-n-e-t, Goodman, G-o-o-d-m-a-n, Banks, B-a-n-k-s. In the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I came to the conclusion that there is an essential moment in your life when you must decide to speak for yourself. Nobody else can speak for you. Well, I'm here. Those of us who are black and/or African American are here. My Native, Latino, Asian American brothers and sisters are here. My friends from other marginalized communities are here. White allies are here. In the words of the late Fannie Lou Hamer, we are sick and tired of being sick and tired. We have endured 400 years of slavery and murders, which includes, but is not limited to, lynchings, beatings, and murders, most coming at the hands of those in law enforcement. We say no more. We say no justice, no peace. We say black lives matters. Presently, there are approximately 8,000 police departments in the United States. The majority of us can agree that not all police are bad. I'm not anti-police. What I'm against is any police officer or those in law enforcement that abuse their authority. I'm against that. It's time to end police brutality. It's time to act with policies and laws that protect us all. "Protect and serve" has not been for everyone. Why would anyone take an oath that they know in their heart they will not uphold? The oath that some swear or affirm to, that's really for whites only. Does that sound familiar? Old Jim Crow continues to rear his ugly head through oppression, racist laws, and through some in law enforcement. Were we

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as black and brown people hear "law and order" from what used to be 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, now Black Lives Matter Plaza, we know that's just code language regarding us. That's as close as he can get to saying the N-word without saying it. You see, we are nonviolent. We had great examples during the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s, so we the people will respond by exercising our constitutional rights on November 3, 2020. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also stated: It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can help him from lynching me. It may be true that the law cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless. The Bible says: Keep thy diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. That's the King James version. The New Living version regarding the latter part of that verse states: for it determines the course of your life. In parallel to the commercial, the Capital One commercial, "What's in your wallet," we black and brown people are asking, what's in your heart? You, as elected officials, have been given tasks, some of which are to produce laws that protect us. We need you to act, not tomorrow, not next week or next year. We need you to act now. We need you to get the wheels of justice rolling. We need laws, policies, and procedures that help us to reclaim our neighborhoods. We need the Lincoln Police Department and those across the country to invest more into deescalation training. We want them to exercise that technique first instead of shoot-to-kill. If you haven't noticed, white perpetrators across the country are apprehended alive while police officers fear for their lives when black and brown are involved. Black and brown people are 13 times more likely to be killed by police than whites. That's not just hearsay. That's a sad, known fact. Can we try to empower people and communities instead of sending-- sending in militarized police? It's insanity for any person, group, or organization to think that you can do the same thing and get a different result. It's not going to happen. It hasn't happened. Police need to invest-- investigate the top five ticket writers. Are they towards people of color? Can they get warnings, be issued the same level of grace as those that are white? Police have to continue to build level of trust. Pop with a Cop is good, but what else? Police cannot continue to police themselves. Marginalized communities want police to be better informed. Again, that comes with the level of mutual trust. Lack of accountability violates the law. We want accountability and responsibility. That is what democracy looks like. No one should be immune from the law. When police officers use excesses-- excessive force or murder unarmed black and brown people, they should be charged. Systemic racism-- systemic racism affects black and brown people the most. It affects us in areas

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of economics, housing, and healthcare, just to name a few. What you're witnessing through the post-- protest nationwide is 400 years of oppression, again, at a crossroad. Police officers are not equipped to respond to mental health issues. The death of Zachary BearHeels is a perfect example that occurred up the road in Omaha, Nebraska. 911 needs to be trained and aware of who needs to be called. It is my desire to start a fundraiser called Jan's Cam, a campaign to raise money for body cameras for the Lincoln Police Department. It needs to be a requirement for anyone in law enforcement to wear one. If cameras-- if cameras are not on, then. oh, well, no camera, no job. Unfortunately, it has come to this. We can't continue to lose our people to law enforcement without video evidence. Actually, the body cameras will serve large enforcement officers-- law enforcement officers regarding their safety as well. Please take a look at the national proposal 8 Can't Wait. I hope you can draw from that bills proposed to assist you here in advancing laws. My desire is to be an ambassador of peace, love, hope, and caring. I'm available to you, agencies, organizations, churches, the youth, and to anyone who seeks change. I will close by quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once again: History will have to record that this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people but the appalling silence of the good people. Thank you all so very much.

LATHROP: Thank you, Reverend. And our last testifier, welcome to the Judiciary Committee. Thanks for being here.

SARAH O'NEILL: Thank you. Can you hear all right?

LATHROP: I can.

SARAH O'NEILL: Thank you. My name is Sarah O'Neill and I'm a resident of Lincoln, Nebraska. I'm here today because black lives matter and because it is your job as our state elected representatives to act like black lives matter. You must reflect on the bills you are introducing and voting on and ask yourself, are they anti-racist? Are they pro-- pro-black? Do they lead to unintended and discriminatory consequences? Can they be wielded to hurt the very people you are elected to serve? Today I ask you to do more than listen but act. I'm here to call for the abolition of police and-- and the prison industrial complex in our state. Overpolicing does not keep communities safe. Please support LB589 and also remove school resource officers from our public schools. Having them creates those unintended consequences, such as suspensions, expulsions, and leads to the pri--

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school-to-prison pipeline. They take away from necessary and actual helpful resources as well. We need to disarm all law enforcement. We need to repeal laws that enable police conduct and actually hold officers responsible. We must invest that money and care in our community, noncarceral violence prevention and intervention programs, skills-based education programs based on bystander intervention, consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships. We must increase funding in the following areas, for example, affordable and accessible housing. We must expand access to healthcare, make it easier, not harder, to get SNAP and other benefits, social workers, and we must also support a living wage in our state. I further ask you to support LB646 because we need to abolish the cash bail system in our state. All it does is criminalize poverty and favors the wealthy. It locks people up and makes them serve time for crimes they have not been convicted of. It disproportionately locks up black people and people of color. We can no longer allow this injustice and racism in our state. I also ask you to support LB176 for mandatory minimum reform; support LB89, LB110, and LB652 for sensible drug policy because the war on drugs is racist; support LB286CA to restore the right to vote and no longer support the disenfranch-- disenfranchisement of people who have been involved in our unjust criminal justice system; support LB1060 to ban natural hair discrimination; and also abolish the death penalty again. Of course, this is a nonexhaustive list, but it's a strong start for Nebraska to head in the right direction. We can no longer accept mere reforms and moderate politics from our representatives. You need to think deeply about how you enact policies and what policies respect, care, and value all Nebraskans. We need our law-- lawmakers to understand intersectionality, to understand systemic injustice and what systems need to topple so that we can create a society for everyone. Nebraska is already a model state, with our Unicameral as an excellent example in itself, so please follow that model. Thank you.

LATHROP: Thank you, Ms. O'Neill. That was our last testifier. And after two days of hearings, I would like to take a moment to especially thank the senators who participated in this panel for two days that were here from the beginning to the end, and also to thank NET for broadcasting these proceedings. I think this is an important part of the dialogue that must happen. I think it's important for the legislators, particularly those that sit on the Judiciary Committee, to hear from the public, to take the committee out of the Capitol, into the community, and have an opportunity to hear what people say.

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And I have to say, it is, much of it, very, very compelling. I feel like I have been enlightened. I'm sure other committee members feel the same way. We very, very much appreciate people coming out as they have, sharing their experiences and their concerns and their ideas with the committee. And thank you so much to the Sergeants-at-Arms, the-- the State Patrol, who was here, as well, and I think that's it.

PANSING BROOKS: I just wanted to thank--

LATHROP: Madam Vice Chair.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you very much. I just wanted to thank Senator Lathrop and his amazing staff for setting this all up and for keeping on track with all of it. And it was-- it was a lot of work to get this ready and-- and have this go forward as smoothly as it did. Also, the participants, just to reiterate, it was wonderful. I learned so much. And, you know, I think it was just another indication of peaceful protest. And again, I want to thank the people of Nebraska for coming and informing us and helping us to move forward in the future to protect others and fight for justice and racial equity and look at our policing standards. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Lathrop.

LATHROP: OK. That will do it. Thank you.