

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee February 5, 2019

SALLY SCHULTZ: Mikes are on.

HUGHES: Okay, mikes are on.

FRIESEN: OK, everyone. Welcome this afternoon to the public hearing of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. I'm Curt Friesen from District 34, from Henderson. A few things that I ask is: Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. And I will again ask that you place no cups or water bottles or things like that on your desks. This is kind of an historic chamber and we want to keep it as good looking as we can, and so we've said we'd kind of keep the, the water stains off the tops of the tables. We have coasters up here, so we're going to be kind of special; but we ask that you keep those things off the table. We'll be hearing the bills in the order listed, and we will start with LB356. We have adjusted the order a little bit from previously, but that's the order we'll be going through. Those wishing to testify on a bill should move to the front of the room and be ready to testify. We have set aside an on-deck chair up here in front so that the next testifier will be ready to go when their turn comes. If you will be testifying, legibly complete one of the green testifier sheets located on the table just inside the entrance. Give the completed testifier sheet to the page when you sit down to testify. Handouts are not required but, if you do have a handout, we need ten copies, and one of the pages will assist you if you need help. When you begin your testimony, it is important that you clearly state and spell your first and last names. If you do not do that, I will stop you and ask you to do that. We will use the light system today. We're going on three minutes. You'll have a green light. At the end of two minutes you'll get a yellow light, and then you'll have one more minute to get things wrapped up. And when you see the red light, hope you're finished up. Those not wishing to testify, they may sign in on a pink sheet at the rear of the, by the rear door, to indicate their support or opposition to a bill. With that, staff is-- my committee legal counsel is Tip O'Neill. The committee clerk is behind me to the left-- Sally Schultz. And I'll let everyone introduce themselves, starting with Senator Bostelman on my right.

BOSTELMAN: Bruce Bostelman, District 23: Saunders, Butler, and the majority of Colfax Counties.

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ALBRECHT: Hi. I'm Joni Albrecht, District 17: Wayne, Thurston, and Dakota Counties in Nebraska.

GEIST: Good afternoon. My name is Suzanne Geist. I represent District 25, which is the east side of Lancaster County: the city of Lincoln, Walton, and Waverly.

DeBOER: Hi. My name is Wendy DeBoer. I'm from perfect District 10, and I am from Bennington and the surrounding areas in northwest Omaha.

HILGERS: Mike Hilgers, District 21: northwest Lincoln in Lancaster County.

CAVANAUGH: Machaela Cavanaugh, District 6: west-central Omaha, Douglas County.

HUGHES: Dan Hughes, District 44: ten counties in southwest Nebraska.

FRIESEN: Thank you. And with that, we'll open the hearing on LB356. Welcome, Speaker Scheer.

SCHEER: Thank you, Chairman Friesen and Transportation Committee. I'm here-- well, first of all, my name is Jim Scheer, J-i-m S-c-h-e-e-r, representing the 19th District in northeast Nebraska. I'm bringing you, to you LB356 and wanted to note that this is one of those cases where one individual can start the process of a bill. I had a person that belongs to my church come up to me about six, six-eight months ago and said that his niece had pediatric cancer. And he said our family have all bought the license plates and just realized that there was no funding of the extra dollars that they were paying to help in regards to the research of that. He contacted me in December, after his niece lost her battle, and wanted to know, because they wanted to continue to utilize those plates; it's important to the family. But they wanted to make sure that if they were going to be paying extra for those plates that perhaps some of those dollars could go to help the next child that becomes diagnosed. Everything is important to a lot of different people. This is extremely important to those that have been afflicted by such a tragedy as having a young child, a young baby diagnosed with cancer. LB356 would reallocate the money received from the license plate to the University of Nebraska Medical Center for pediatric cancer research. Currently there are 373 individuals in Nebraska who have made this plate, which equates to about \$26,000. Eighty-five percent of this bill would redirect that to the Pediatric Cancer Center, which is about \$22,000 and change. It leaves 15, it

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leaves 15 percent for the expenses in producing and distributing those plates. I think, which would stand to reason, many individuals, when they started this process, they knew they had to have 250 people sign in order to do that, which they easily were able to do. But I think most of them didn't realize there was a difference in how you went about producing a personalized plate and how the funds might be utilized. It is advantageous for the Highway Trust Fund for most of these because the additional dollars are going into that. And I have no dispute for those, but this is truly, in this case, a matter of life and, life and death. And if we are able to facilitate that extra research, that extra person that can try the one thing that no one else thought would work, and it does and we save some lives, two or three times the amount, 100 times amount is well worth it. So I, in talking to people that have purchased these, I think they look at the additional fee as a donation and they're wanting that perhaps that donation, at least part of it, go to the namesake and the research for pediatric cancer. Right now they don't generate a lot of revenue. Hopefully, with some additional publicity, which obviously this might have, have accomplished, we'll have more people that will purchase these plates. And who knows? It may be we'll have hundreds more that will do that and thousands more dollars will go to the research for pediatric cancer. I would simply ask that I have a amendment being drafted that would throw the emergency clause on this. And I will provide it to Senator Friesen, and I would love to have, perhaps, that be a committee amendment on the floor, showing your support, as well. I know, Chairperson Friesen, that you have received a large amount of mail. And from my perspective, I believe that you can just show that as numerous support provided, letters of support for this bill. And I would be happy to answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Speaker Scheer. Any questions from the committee? Senator Cavanaugh.

SCHEER: Be careful.

CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Speaker Scheer. I just wanted to say that cancer is something that has touched probably every single person in this room's lives. And as a parent to young children, pediatric cancer is terrifying. And I really appreciate you bringing this forward to help support that research, so thank you.

SCHEER: Well, I am a parent and now a proud grandparent. And I will tell you that, you know, next to the birth of a child or a grandchild,

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the next thing is you just want the safety and the health of that child and grandchild to be paramount. And I've been so fortunate; I've been blessed. I have seven grandchildren and three children, and they've had not any problems. But a lot of people have one child and the odds aren't in their favor, as well. So it's just a question of who and when; it's not if. And whatever we can do as a society and as a government to try to provide some additional funds would be well worth it. But thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none--

SCHEER: And I will tell you I will probably stick around, but I will waive closing. I don't think-- this bill is self-explanatory, and I can't imagine that I would need to do any rebuttal. So with that, I would thank you for your time and patience.

FRIESEN: I think we've seen more controversial bills.

SCHEER: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Proponents who wish to testify, come forward, please. Welcome.

MARILYN MECHAM: Good afternoon. My name is Marilyn Mecham, M-a-r-i-l-y-n M-e-c-h-a-m, and I am here, first to thank you, and in support of LB356. I'm a proud owner of this license plate. I don't know if you've seen them yet, but they're pretty fabulous. You know, when you get assigned this license plate, you don't have the option of having a vanity plate but they just randomly give you a number. When I picked mine up at DMV, I kind of "phew" because this number means a lot to me. The numbers on my plate are 859, and they actually tell a lot about my passion for raising money and generating support for pediatric cancer research, because I'm also here representing Gianna Isabelle Carrera. Gianna is forever eight. Five months ago, five years ago this month she was diagnosed with anaplastic astrocytoma, a really big word for little-girl brain cancer. Gigi died on June 25, 2015, leaving an amazing legacy and also some pretty strong messages. I was so fortunate to be part of Gigi's, Gigi's amazing life for nine short months. In fact, during that time she adopted me to be her grandma. Also during that time, I saw what the best treatments that were available did to Gigi, what they did to this beautiful little girl. Radiation burned the hair off her head. Radiation blinded her. The

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medications pumped into her body stretched her skin so much that it became covered with stretch marks and was painful to even touch. Her treatments and her medication were developed for adults, but Gigi was only eight; this was her best option. One message Gigi-- and she left a lot of messages she wanted me to share-- but one that I want to share with you, and I quote: My cancer didn't hurt but my treatment did. I don't think cancer killed me but I think my medicine did. And you know what, Gigi? It did. So what do we do, as responsible adults who have the power to do-- what can we do to change this? Well, we generate as much funding as possible, as quickly as possible, to support some of the finest researchers in the country who are working right here in Nebraska. And if you haven't been in tune to the people that we have brought in to the state, to UNMC and Children's Hospital, it's pretty incredible. We cannot rely on federal funding; we get such a wee bit of the money for research. Better treatments, and even a cure, are going to be funded at the state and local levels, with support from organizations like Sammy's Superheroes and Team Jack, working together with families who are touched by pediatric cancer. Revenue from these license plates not only generate much needed funding, but they also create awareness, which is paramount to raising more money at the grassroots level. These license plates are a small, but important, part of a huge ripple effect, which I believe will ultimately lead us to find a cure for pediatric cancer. Sadly, Nebraska, your state, is one of the highest, if not today the highest, incident rate of pediatric cancer in the United States. It's not something that we want to be number one in. This sad statistic should be added motivation that we will be one of the top states for pediatric cancer research. Most important is the fact that children in Nebraska who are, are now being treated in Boston, Washington, D.C., Memphis, as well as other places, they could be treated here in Nebraska or put on trials. The impact that can have on their health and the well-being of their families is significant. Knowing every dollar matters, I encourage you to support LB56 [SIC] to support all Nebraska children who are battling cancer, as well to honor those who lost the battle but won the fight. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Ms. Mecham.

MARILYN MECHAM: Any questions?

FRIESEN: Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing none, sorry for your loss, and--

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MARILYN MECHAM: Thank you.

FRIESEN: I think everyone probably knows someone who's had a child--

MARILYN MECHAM: That's right.

FRIESEN: --like that so--

MARILYN MECHAM: Way too many. Thank you very much.

FRIESEN: --appreciate you coming in to testify. Other proponents?
Welcome.

DEANA THUER: Thank you. My name is Deana Thuer; that's D-e-a-n-a
T-h-u-e-r. I apologize, my voice is going out a little bit. I am a
proponent for LB356. I didn't prepare a testimony, so I'm sorry. But I
only got approved--

FRIESEN: That's quite ok; we're pretty friendly.

DEANA THUER: Good. I only got approved to come to this meeting from my
social work class today. And the only reason I was in my social work
class, where I am pursuing a degree in social work, is because my
daughter was diagnosed, at 13 months, with medulloblastoma. I feel the
last speaker did a great job telling you how important this bill is,
and the license plate. Just as a pediatric cancer parent, I will tell
you we will buy the license plates, we'll do the 5Ks; we'll do
anything to find a cure for our children. That's pretty much it. Thank
you so much.

FRIESEN: Thank you. Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing
none, thank you for your testimony.

DEANA THUER: Appreciate it.

FRIESEN: Other proponents? Welcome.

ANTHONY PAPOUSEK: Good afternoon. My name is Anthony Papousek; that's
A-n-t-h-o-n-y P-a-p-o-u-s-e-k, and I'm representing the family of
Khloe Papousek. Our testimony is in support of LB356. As you've likely
surmised, most people with cancer-awareness license plates have a
personal connection to the disease. Ours was my 5-year-old niece. She
was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia in August 2016. She
underwent a bone marrow transplant in December, relapsed in June 2017,
and then had a stem cell transplant in September. Her second relapse

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was on June 30, 2018. The doctors had deemed her disease incurable. There was nothing more that could be done. Her body could no longer tolerate the levels of chemotherapy needed to get the disease into remission, as she had already received the strongest chemotherapy and radiation there was. After years of needless suffering, Khloe received her angel wings on December 9, 2018. Here are four facts about pediatric cancer that need to change: 1) Childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children under the age of 19 in the United States; 2) Despite this, less than 4 percent of total federal funding for cancer research goes to pediatric cancer research; 3) Nebraska has the third highest pediatric cancer diagnosis rate per capita; and 4) Only four treatments have been approved for the numerous types of pediatric cancer in the last 20 years. LB356 is a definitive step in the right direction to giving more to research. For Nebraska residents choosing to promote cancer awareness, now their money can help fund treatments for these children. We hope in our lifetime we see pediatric cancers get the attention and funding they deserve. We pray for a brighter future for all families and children that face these devastating diseases. Khloe did not lose her battle. It was science and research that lost the battle against time. This is my second time reading those lines. The first was for Khloe's funeral just a month and a half ago; and I really, really hope it's the last. While it's too late to help Khloe, there are others that need the funding for the research to find a cure. Please approve LB356 and make that a reality. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Papousek. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

ANTHONY PAPOUSEK: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Any other proponents who wish to testify? Welcome.

CASE MARANVILLE: Good afternoon. My name's Case Maranville, C-a-s-e M-a-r-a-n-v-i-l-l-e. I'm here to advocate for LB356. I'm here because my son is 11. He was diagnosed with leukemia October 1st of last year. We're currently going through treatment in Omaha at Children's Hospital, and I wanted to just make my voice known on his behalf. And his treatment is going really well. We're thankful for Children's; they're doing excellent. He was, last week he was declared in remission, and we're thankful for that. In my opinion, this bill allocates some funds toward a much needed goal, to address a serious issue that Nebraska has. And I don't know that Nebraskans are aware of

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the high rates of childhood cancer in our state. As, as the other testified mentioned, it's, we're the third highest; that's not a good thing and we need to take it seriously. And part of that would be advocacy and awareness for Nebraska, and so I think where this is a small amount of money that would be, that would help toward research, it's, it's a step in the right direction. And I think awareness is what direction we need to all move in. So thank you for listening to what we have to say, and I hope that you would also approve the bill. Thanks for your time.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Maranville. Any questions from the committee? Senator Geist.

GEIST: Thank you for coming, and thank you for your testimony. May I ask your son's name?

CASE MARANVILLE: Yeah. River Maranville is his name.

GEIST: And just to let you know, we'll keep you and your family in our prayers, and we appreciate the courage it takes for you to come today. Thank you.

CASE MARANVILLE: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Geist. Any other questions from the committee? Hope all goes well; thank you for your testimony.

CASE MARANVILLE: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Any other proponents on LB356? Seeing none, are there any who wish to testify in opposition to LB356? Seeing none, are there any who wish to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Speaker Scheer, do you wish to close? We do have a letter of support from the American Cancer Society, and then we received approximately 150-some letters in support and a neutral testimony from the DMV. Speaker wishes to waive closing. With that, we will close the hearing on LB356. Next we will open the hearing on LB38.

_____ : The senator will go first and after that, [INAUDIBLE].

CAROLE JULIAN: Oh, I'm sorry.

_____ : No, that's OK.

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CAROLE JULIAN: I'm sorry.

_____ : He's on his way.

FRIESEN: We'll, we'll-- waiting for Senator Hilkemann to show up.

HUGHES: I'm ready if you want--

FRIESEN: OK. We're, we're still waiting for Senator Hilkemann so we're just going to jump ahead to LB128 right now. We don't know quite when he's going to arrive, so we'll, we'll head right back to LB38 as soon as he, as soon as the senator gets here. We'll open the hearing on LB128. Welcome, Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and members of the Transportation and Telecommunication Committee. For the record, my name is Dan Hughes, D-a-n H-u-g-h-e-s. I represent the 44th Legislative District. LB128 will allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to design three additional license plates to be known as the wildlife conservation plates. The plates will reflect support for the conservation of Nebraska wildlife, including Sandhills cranes, bighorn sheep, and cutthroat trout. In 2016 the Legislature passed LB474 to allow for mountain lion plates. The game and parks receives \$30 for every mountain lion plate message plate and \$5 for every alphanumeric plate. The money collected goes into the Game and Parks Commission Education Fund. The commission uses the fund to provide youth education programs relating to wildlife conservation practices. LB128 would follow those same guidelines. Since the inception of the mountain lion plates, the Game and Parks has generated over \$225,000. The money goes towards Wildlife Education Fund. The commission uses the fund to provide youth education programs relating to wildlife conservation practices. In bringing this bill the commission has shared with me that they continue to see needs and requests for more educational activities about wildlife and nature from school teachers, park visitors, and the public at large. This bill will provide another way for the public, through voluntary choice, in selecting a license plate for their vehicle to help provide and expand those educational efforts. I'd be happy to try and answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Hughes. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, proponents who wish to testify in favor of LB128.

TIMOTHY McCOY: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and members of the committee. My name is Timothy McCoy, T-i-m-o-t-h-y M-c-C-o-y. I'm the

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deputy director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, located at 2200 North 33rd Street here in Lincoln. We appreciate Senator Hughes introducing LB20-- LB128, which would provide, with the voluntary purchase of wildlife conservation plates, some additional funding resources for our educational activities. The other thing that we have the ability to do with these funds is to try and-- we work to leverage those with, with other available funding sources, either grants or with our conservation partners. And we strive to, to try to leverage those funds, you know, three to four times, in terms of trying to make that impact for education. We do support and deliver education in a wealth of ways. One of the main things we do in schools with Project WILD, we provide educator trainings, lesson plans, activities, and develop curriculum about Nebraska's wildlife that they can readily use in their classrooms. We also have a trout in the classroom program we've developed that does similar, and similar develops the curriculum but also provides trout and eggs for those activities for sort of a hands-on learning experience that can be used in the classroom. We engage outdoor educators across our system. And some in nature centers, some of them are working within our park system. Many of them work with schools and after-school programs. And we believe that's important and we see that continued demand. And we've also done a fair amount of work recently in some of our park areas, at Wildcat Hills and Schramm specifically, Ponca State Park and at the Lake McConaughy Water Center, where we continue to expand this programming. And it's amazing, the response we see from the general public in our park system, of their curiosity about Nebraska and Nebraska's wildlife and, and conservation of our natural resources. We believe it's important to provide these educational resources so that our students and our public learns about the wildlife that's in their backyard. In many cases they learn a lot about wildlife that might be outside of the United States. And we think it's important for them to understand what's here so that they value those resources. In terms of the plates, plates that we've identified, the Sandhill crane is very iconic in Nebraska. We have a world-class spectacle for crane viewing that's, that draws in tourists from all over the world. Bighorn sheep have been reintroduced in the Pine Ridge, in our, in our buttes and bluffs, species not commonly thought of in Nebraska. And then cutthroat trout, which is actually likely our only native trout in the state, that was in the northern part of the state and historically identified up in the Pine Ridge also. And so I can provide you more information on those and any other questions you may have. But we

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appreciate you considering this and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. McCoy. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Welcome.

JIM JOHNSON: Good afternoon. My name is Jim Johnson. I'm here on behalf of the fantastic organization, the Nebraska Wildlife Federation. We are a state 151(c)(3) [SIC] conservation group.

FRIESEN: Will you spell your name?

JIM JOHNSON: Excuse me?

FRIESEN: Spell your first and last name.

JIM JOHNSON: Oh, I'm sorry. J-i-m, Jim Johnson, J-o-h-n-s-o-n. We support LB128 with a couple caveats. And I've handed some information out if you'd like to follow me along. I'd like to apologize first for some of our logo at the top is missing. Our CPU and printer decided to have an argument yesterday and so they quit talking to each other, and that's kind of the result. But Senator Friesen and the rest of the members of the committee, on behalf of the Nebraska Wildlife Federation, we appreciate the concept of LB128 and believe the intent of the legislation is worthy. However, we have two concerns with the proposed legislation. The first concern is the operating fund within the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission that would receive these license plate funds. The proposed fund, under LB128, is the Game and Parks Commission Educational Fund. We believe the dollars generated under LB128 would be more appropriately placed in the agency's Wildlife Conservation Fund. Nebraska Game and Parks Educational Fund has received generous funding from the proceeds of the mountain lion license plates and will continue to do so in the future. Thus, we believe additional funding from LB128 is not necessary. A much more appropriate location for LB128 funds is the Wildlife Conservation Fund. It requires a much greater infusion of financial resources. Language from Nebraska Game and Parks 2017-19 biennial budget concluded: The Wildlife Conservation Fund, number 23350, simply does not have income-generating capacity to support all the necessary work, and other cash funds are restricted from supporting these activities. The state's only comprehensive system for identifying the ecological significant components of Nebraska's natural diversity conservation and management efforts are stretched. Currently the vast majority of

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the money in the Wildlife Conservation Fund comes from federal dollars through the State Wildlife Grants program. Unfortunately these federal funds have diminished over time, and no dedicated additional federal funding to the states exists. We believe LB128 offers a chance for Nebraska to dedicate funding to the program that's most responsible for conserving Nebraska's biological diversity, the vast majority of which are nongame species. Our second major concern with LB128 is directed at the design choices. As stated in LB128, the department shall create no more than three designs reflecting support for the conservation of Nebraska wildlife, including: Sandhill cranes, bighorn sheep, and cutthroat trout. The Nebraska Wildlife Federation must point out that the cutthroat trout is not native to Nebraska. In fact, no species of trout is native to Nebraska, and all trout species have had, and continue to have, a deleterious effect on the native cool and cold water native fish species native to Nebraska. Several other options exist for a fish logo on the wildlife conservation plates, and we have enclosed images of several native fish species that are far more colorful in breeding condition than the nonnative cutthroat trout and would be far more attractive images for license plates. In addition, we believe a large mammal alternative is warranted for the logo design since the native species of bighorn sheep that once occupied parts of western Nebraska is extinct. We propose the use of the American pronghorn as the large mammal image since this species was observed first by Lewis and Clark expedition for the first time near the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri Rivers in 1804, in what is now Knox County, Nebraska.

FRIESEN: You're going to have to start wrapping up your testimony.

JIM JOHNSON: OK. This observation is considered the scientific type locality for the American pronghorn. In summary, we, we believe that the money should go for the Wildlife Conservation Fund from this bill and it should be passed. And we believe that also the changes should be made for the images. If you look at the other three pages we enclosed in there, we have options of different fish. One is the red shiner, one is the orangethroat darter, and the other one is orangespotted sunfish. As you can see, they're all very colorful fish. And if you talk to anyone that's bought the mountain lion plates, the first thing they're going to tell you is they got them because they were colorful, they were pretty; they're attractive. And we believe this will be the same with these type of fish, plus they're native to Nebraska.

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FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

JIM JOHNSON: Any questions?

FRIESEN: Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing none--

JIM JOHNSON: OK, thank you.

FRIESEN: --thank you for your testimony. Other proponents for LB128? Those wanting to testify further, start moving to the front. Welcome.

MARJORIE KENNEDY: Thank you. My name is Marjorie Kennedy. K-e-- Marjorie is M-a-r-j-o-r-i-e; Kennedy, K-e-n-n-e-d-y. I am speaking today, representing Wachiska Audubon Society. It's located in Lincoln, has been around since 1973. We are an affiliate of National Audubon Society, and we, we represent 17 southeastern counties in Nebraska. Wachiska does support LB128. We also noted the amount of money that came from the mountain lion plates and felt that this was a good idea. The various species, particularly if they are colorful-- I kind of agree with the colorful fish thing; just that's my own personal thing. But I certainly-- it's OK. The other thing that I would like to say about the bill is I kind of think the Wildlife Conservation Fund might be preferable to the Education Fund, as some of that money can also go to education and it could take care of everything and everyone would be happy. We'd have habitat and we would have education. That's it.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Ms. Kennedy. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Welcome.

KRISTAL STONER: Hello. My name is Kristal Stoner; it's spelled K-r-i-s-t-a-l, last name S-t-o-n-e-r, and I'm here representing Audubon Nebraska of the National Audubon Society. And I am here on behalf of the 4,700 members of Audubon Nebraska, and here to convey our support for LB128. Since 1970, Audubon Nebraska has been educating people about Nebraska's biodiversity because it's important that we connect people with the natural world around them. And this is a critical piece for successful conservation. The fact that the Sandhill crane is one of the designs for this conservation plate is of particular significance because Audubon recognizes that we educate approximately 25,000 people every year about Sandhill cranes. And the joy and excitement that is generated through this great Sandhill crane migration is a fantastic opportunity for us to also impress upon people the importance that Nebraskans are good stewards of the Platte River, as well as many of our other riparian ecosystems. LB128 will

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fund valuable Nebraska-specific biodiversity education for children and for adults. Nebraska's children deserve to learn about Nebraska's diverse ecosystems and the wild animals that make their home in Nebraska. It's imperative that the next generation of Nebraskans be informed decision-makers so they can make balanced choices regarding future challenges for national resource conservation. Also, LB128 will have a variety of beautiful images that will help people understand the outdoor activities that we have available to us in Nebraska and also support ecotourism. So as such, we're in support of LB128. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Ms. Stoner.

KRISTAL STONER: --for consideration your testimony-- or my testimony.

FRIESEN: Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Any other proponents who wish to testify on LB128? Seeing none, are there any opponents to LB128? Seeing none, will-- anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity on LB128? Seeing none, we do have some letters of support from the Bird Cons, Conservancy of the Rockies, and we have a neutral letter from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. Senator Hughes? Senator Hughes waves closing. That will close the hearing on LB128. Next we will open the hearing on LB38. Welcome, Senator Hilkemann.

HILKEMANN: Thank you, Senator Friesen. I promise next to keep working on those exercises so I get up those steps faster here, so.

FRIESEN: I thought I was just that slow.

HILKEMANN: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and members of the committee. I'm Senator Robert Hilkemann; that's R-o-b-e-r-t H-i-l-k-e-m-a-n-n, and I represent Legislative District 4. I'm here to introduce LB38, which would change the license plate and in-transit decal requirement for two, from two to one for the remaining group of vehicles which have not yet been exempted in Nebraska's statutes. Currently under Nebraska state law, one license plate is issued for apportionable vehicles, buses, dealers, minitrucks, motorcycles, special interest motor vehicles, trailers, truck trailers, and for those Nebraskans whose vehicles are not manufactured to be equipped with a bracket on the front of the vehicle to display a license plate and are willing to spend an additional \$100, plus the cost of the sticker, every year. Now it's the last exemption that's brought me to

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introduce this bill. I was contacted by a constituent who owns such a vehicle. Her concern was related to the extra \$100 plus the cost of the sticker-- currently \$19-- that must be paid every year. Now after digging into the issue a little bit, I began to question the fairness of this Nebraska law. In 2015, my friend, and our Speaker of the Legislature, Jim Scheer, carried the bill that allowed for this subset of vehicles to be exempted from the two-plate requirement. Now in full disclosure, I voted for that bill. I think that the compromise that Speaker Scheer brought to us that year was well-intentioned, and I don't want to give the impression that I feel it should be repealed. I do think, however, that we need to have a commonsense discussion about the two-plate requirement that remains for the rest of us and examine the fairness of the \$100 annual fee. I want to acknowledge up front; I know the concerns that law enforcement has brought on this. My respect for the job that they do every day to keep our roads and citizens safe is great. When the conversation turns to who commit crimes in vehicles, we need to keep a few things in mind. Most Nebraskans-- probably 99 percent of us-- are law abiding. Criminals can find many ways to avoid detection that have nothing to do with having one license plate or two. And three, having two license plates, in and of itself, creates the opportunity for unlawful activity such as plate splitting. As lawmakers, we have to balance the liberties of our citizens with the benefits of living in a civil society. That is a tall order for us. Sometimes we get it right, and other times we need to reexamine those. In 2015 the Legislature gave our citizens the liberty of putting one license plate on their vehicle for the price of \$100 a year. Basically, they allow people, allows people to buy their way out of the two-plate requirement and holds the remaining people to a higher standard. I find this unfair to the majority of Nebraskans. To acknowledge that there are vehicles purchased that did not come with a front plate, I certainly acknowledge that. I happened to go to the Omaha auto show last week, or two weeks ago, and I noted that how almost all of the vehicles that were on that display did not have a front license plate bracket. And there are certainly people who do not want, wish to change the appearance of the vehicle with a front license plate. And to allow for numerous exemptions existing under the current law, I feel strongly that the commonsense remedy most fair is to adopt LB38 and allow all Nebraskans to go to one plate. I'm looking forward to the testimony you will hear today. I expect it will be robust. There'll be some buried reasons for and against this bill. I

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thank you for your time and attention to this issue. I'm happy to answer any questions that I might.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Hilkemann. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none--

HILKEMANN: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Proponents who wish to testify in favor of LB38? Welcome.

DOC COULTER: Good afternoon. Thank you. My name is Doc Coulter-- Doc, that's a nickname, D-o-c; Coulter, C-o-u-l-t-e-r, Hastings, Nebraska. I'm here in support of LB38. A year ago I was traveling south on 281, between Grand Island and Hastings, southbound on a four-lane highway split with a median, similar to what the interstate is. I met, going north, a state patrolman. I'm driving the speed limit, minding my own business, and shortly, a mile or two down the road, he's behind me with lights on. He comes up to the car, carefully looks at the rear of the car, carefully looks at the front of the car and prompts me, write, promptly writes me a "get it fixed or go to jail," to put a front license plate on. What just happened? My suggestion, not a great use of the State Patrol time, not a good use of my time or money. I hadn't put it on; it was a new sports car. It was not built for a front plate. I was debating whether to spend the big bucks to not have to buy my way out or to spend the big bucks to get a bracket to put on the front of the car so I could remove it. I agree with Senator Hilkemann on this bill. I understand that Senator-- former State Senator Tony Fulton had a similar bill years ago. I supported that. I think most of the car clubs did, at that point in time. And for whatever reason, we are where we are today. A final point-- at least 19 states provide for only one plate. I'm in Hastings, next to Kansas. Apparently we allow the folks from Kansas to visit without getting a go-to-jail card or get the front license plate on. So the fact that Nebraska allows other states with a single plate requirement to drive in Nebraska, it's interesting as to whether or not, if I had had a Kansas plate, the officer would have come up and said, "Oops, sorry about that; have a nice day." Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Coulter. Any questions from the committee? None? Thank you for your testimony. Welcome.

BRAD KERNICK: Good afternoon. Senator Friesen, members of the committee, my name is Brad Kernick, spelled B-r-a-d K-e-r-n-i-c-k. I'm

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from Kearney, and I'm the current president of the Nebraska Rod and Custom Association. Our association of 1,700-plus members is in strong support of LB38. We spend years building, restoring, or collecting vintage and classic vehicles, only to have a modern license plate stick out like a blemish on the front of them. In some cases, there simply is not a good place to put a front license plate or the original bracket is lost. We're talking aesthetics. While I hate to admit it, some of our members simply do not run a front license plate and take the risk of getting a ticket, like the last gentleman referred to. Besides being avid collector car people, our members are great citizens of Nebraska. We're concerned about our taxes and the efficiency of our government. We have appeared in support of similar bills over the past 20 years, but without any success. It seems the concerns of law enforcement carry more weight right now. We know there are many states that only require one plate. My research tells me that 19 states only require one license plate as of August of 2018. Most of them have a population much greater than Nebraska, and it would seem, if one plate is actually a problem for law enforcement, it would be a bigger problem for them. I think about this every time I see a vehicle from Kansas with a Jayhawk or a Wildcat plate on the front. How can this work in our neighboring state and not here? We have felt the power of lobbyists who represent those who make the, the products used to produce our current plates. One plate would cut their sales and our cost in half. We have seen previous physical statements that somehow show there would be no savings. Nebraskans are known for their common sense, and it just makes good sense to your constituents to make this move and save that cost. We're well aware of the budgetary issues Nebraska has faced. Common sense says a dollar saved, when added to every other dollar saved, can add up to big money. From our personal preference of preserving the beauty of the front of our classic vehicles to our feelings, as responsible Nebraska citizens who expect efficiency in government, we're asking that you advance LB38 out of committee. I thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments here today, and would be happy to answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Kernick. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

BRAD KERNICK: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Welcome.

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CAROLE JULIAN: My name is Carole, C-a-r-o-l-e; and the last name is Julian, J-u-l-i-a-n. I'm here today to ask you to support LB38. My husband and I bought a new car last August, and it was exactly the same car that we had bought in '16. We traded that in and got an '18, exactly the same car. Oh, but when we picked it up at the dealership, they had a surprise for us. This car has no license plate holder on the front. It's been redesigned; the front of the car has been redesigned. And they told us, at that time, 15 or 16 states did not require a front license plate, but we still do. So they told us we had two options. If we didn't want to deface the front of the car and drill holes in it, we could pay an extra \$106.56 when we went to pay the fee, the property tax. Well, I don't feel that Nebraskans, most Nebraskans, even know what's going on until they buy a car like we did. They don't know about this. I, I am here today to ask you to please support LB38. Thanks.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Ms. Julian. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none--

CAROLE JULIAN: Thanks.

FRIESEN: --thank you for your testimony.

LOY TODD: Senator Friesen, members the committee, my name is Loy Todd; that's L-o-y T-o-d-d. I'm the president of the Nebraska New Car and Truck Dealers Association. I'll start off by saying that we've never seen a one-plate bill that we didn't like. And this is, this is no different. We are in full support of this legislation. And what it boils down to-- and this has been introduced many times in many different varieties-- but what it boils down to is simply a policy. Is it more important to address some of the legitimate concerns of law enforcement about having two places to look for a, another identifier on a motor vehicle or to inconvenience the entire rest of the population of the state? And we think that the decision ought to fall down on the convenience and benefit of the public. What we run into-- and I, I did, did a phone survey this morning of a lot of my members-- every vehicle, virtually every vehicle-- now there could be exceptions-- is shipped to Nebraska without a front bracket on that vehicle. They ship them-- if they know they're coming to Nebraska, some of the manufacturers ship a front bracket. They put it in the trunk of the car or it's someplace else in the vehicle. It's up to my dealers to put that on the vehicle, if the customer will allow us to. And we're the ones who are making these people very unhappy by telling

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them the status of Nebraska law. We're the ones that are going to drill those holes in the front end of some absolutely beautiful works of art, and it's hard to explain to a customer that, that that's justified. And so what you get is two things: some that will either be in a car club and get an exception, or will pay the hundred and some dollars every year. And that's how much they hate it. They'll pay a hundred and some dollars every year or the other option is what many, many of them do and simply take their chances. They drive without one hope they don't get caught and hope, if they get caught, it's just some kind of a defect ticket or a warning and go that way. And so, you know, we're not questioning the legitimate concerns of law enforcement. I'm sure they would like two places to find the identifier. But what's really going to change? Is, I mean, I doubt if crime is going to run rampant in Nebraska if there's not two places to find the, the license plate. And so what we've got is a situation that we think it's time to seriously consider going to what many, many other states have done without any great harm and that is go to one plate. And as far as timing, you know, we've got the plates out there now. Next time they order, it'd be nice to see this law in place so that the next time the DMV is ordering plates, they can save the money of not spending twice as much money for plates that simply are not necessary. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Todd. Any questions from the committee? Could you tell me which states are the one license plate?

LOY TODD: I don't know, Senator.

FRIESEN: California?

_____ : Texas, Georgia--

FRIESEN: We can't have--

LOY TODD: I will get you a list. I'm not, and I think the senator has a list.

FRIESEN: He can maybe fill us in and so on. Just curious. I'm, I mean we know there's 19 states have one plate, so-- all right. Thank you, Mr. Todd.

LOY TODD: Thank you.

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FRIESEN: Any other proponents of LB38? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB38?

MICK MINES: Mr. Chairman--

FRIESEN: Welcome.

MICK MINES: Thank you. Members of the committee, my name is Mick, M-i-c-k; Mines, M-i-n-e-s. I'm here today; I'm a registered lobbyist for 3M. In full disclosure, 3M is the manufacturer of the sheeting that goes on license plates, both front and back. They also make sheeting for the road signs, as well as reflective lines on the interstate. To hear Mr. Todd describe Nebraska, it sounds like we're an outlier. In fact, there are 30-31 states that do require two license plates. And you know, let's face it, it is the handout I just, I just handed to you. All the testimony you've heard as esthetics. It's what might look good on my car. It's not about-- and what license plates are about-- is identification of vehicle ownership by law enforcement. Now officer safety clearly is the, is the, the next identified issue that we all ought to be concerned with. Identifying vehicles at a distance coming toward you accounts for about 40 percent of the traffic stops in the country. And identifying parked vehicles that are backed in, or their rear plate isn't, isn't viewable. In a parking lot, for instance, that is also very difficult to do if you-- officers have to get out of their car and walk around and see what the back plate is to identify the vehicle. At night, disabled vehicles on the side of the road-- the only reflective surface on the back of that, or on the front of that vehicle, is a license plate. It also helps with Amber and Silver Alerts. Citizens can more easily and, quite frankly, double-- twice the amount of people can, can identify vehicles coming and going. School bus safety, where vehicles can be identified that runs bus stops, and then, of course, drive offs at convenience stores. As far as license plate brackets, I'm sure Mr. Todd is correct, that in Nebraska cars are shipped here with brackets only in the trunk. But there shipped that way to 31 states and, and for those vehicles that don't want holes drilled in the front of their vehicle, there are drill-less mounting brackets for vehicles. Go on eBay and they start at \$9. So this bill comes around every several years. Fortunately, this committee has not advanced this esthetic-related bill. And I am, I-- that's the end of my testimony, and I'm glad to answer any questions you might have.

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FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Mines. Any questions from the committee?

MICK MINES: Oh, Senator. I do have the names of the other states if you're interested.

FRIESEN: They, they brought us a list already, so we do have--

MICK MINES: Thank you. Yeah, they're mostly from the south.

FRIESEN: Thank you.

MICK MINES: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Mines. Any other opponents to LB38? Welcome.

JACK CHELOHA: Good afternoon. Senator Friesen, members of the committee, my name is Jack Cheloha. That's J-a-c-k; last name is spelled C-h-e-l-o-h-a. I'm the lobbyist for the city of Omaha, and I want to testify against LB38, more specifically on behalf of Omaha Police Department. We oppose LB38, as you've heard from other witnesses already, because of the two points of identification on a motor vehicle. Whether it's the officer, him or herself, who can spot a perpetrator in a vehicle that's fleeing or a vehicle that was at the scene of a crime or whatever, that's important, not only to law enforcement, but it's also important to the citizens who may be witnesses to crimes. A lot of times, if you think about it, there's getaway cars that are parked outside of banks after a bank robbery or something like that. And through the course of investigation, the police will interview various witnesses, and a lot of times we find it very helpful if the witness can give us a license plate number of the car that was fleeing. And it's nice to have, once again, those two points of identification, whether it was on the front or the rear of the car. We don't have a position relative to the group now that can get the exception to the rule if they pay the \$100; the cost was not our issue. At the time of that bill, though, we did ask for the exception that they put a sticker on the front of their window because we wanted to know that, for the point of identification again, whether the car was, you know, properly licensed. So those are some of the points I wanted to make. The other thing that I thought about, as the bill was being talked about, is, is sometimes, just where you live, license plates have become sometimes more than just an identifier of a car. And so sometimes there's just, you know, neighbor, a neighbor-on-neighbor curiosity. They want to know, you know, whose vehicle was driving down this road or something. And so that

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identifier is also important to our citizens. So I just wanted the committee not to lose sight of the fact that it's also important to everyday citizens and not law enforcement. But once again, I'm here for law enforcement. We think that two points of ID are important and we'd like you to balance the scale in favor of law enforcement on this bill. Thank you. I'll try to answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Cheloha. Any questions from the committee? Senator Albrecht.

ALBRECHT: Just when-- you did say that--did they, do they now have a sticker for the front windshield--

JACK CHELOHA: It's--

ALBRECHT: --if you do not have--

JACK CHELOHA: It--

ALBRECHT: --if you paid the \$100?

JACK CHELOHA: It's my understanding that you do, that for the \$100 fee that you pay, you do get that annual sticker and you replace it. It's similar-- try to think-- a Game and Parks permit or something like that.

ALBRECHT: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Albrecht. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Any others wish to testify in opposition to LB38? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity on LB38?

RICHARD HALVORSEN: Good afternoon. My name is Richard Halvorsen, R-i-c-h-o-r--h-a-r-d H-a-l-v-o-r-s-e-n, and I guess I'm in the neutral capacity 'cause I already dealt with this. I was in a situation like that where there wasn't a bracket. I got stopped by the State Patrol a couple times and, luckily, the officer was sympathetic and gave me a warning. Then the second time I got stopped, I guess they tracked that somehow, 'cause I got stopped the second time and he says: This is the last warning you're going to get. And just, so-- evidently he knew I got a warning before. So I broke down and, being a cheapskate, I put the brackets in; I didn't want to pay the \$100 a year. And my only suggestion is if: one, would be advance this to the open floor so we

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have a debate but, if not that, have an amendment so it can least reduce the cost. Again, maybe if it had been less, I might have, you know, paid for the sticker but, again, I thought \$100 a year, and I'm going to own this car for a lot of, several years. I did not want to pay that. So again, again maybe, if, you know, but maybe an amendment. If not, you know, like at least reduce the cost. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Halvorsen. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Anyone else wish to testify in a neutral capacity on LB38? Seeing none, Senator Hilkemann, you're willing to close? we do have one letter from the Department of Motor Vehicles, testifying in a neutral capacity.

HILKEMANN: Senator Friesen, thank you for hear-- and the committee members, thank you for hearing this debate on LB38. I'm just going to quickly summarize it up. We know that 19 states presently allow just a single license plate. You know, this argument of safety-- well, we've already said that it's safe to drive a vehicle on Nebraska roads without a front license plate if you're willing to pay us \$100. I think that that's unfair, and I would like you to, that to be addressed. I'm aware that the letter you got from the Department of Motor Vehicles which has to align it, particularly for the dates, I would certainly support that and align it so that we could make this change when there is the, that the cycle changes for all of the license plates. And with that, thank you very much, and answer any questions you may have as a result of the testimony.

FRIESEN: Thank you. Are there any questions? Senator Albrecht.

ALBRECHT: Thank you, Chairman Friesen. Sorry I wasn't here for your beginning, but do you have any idea, Senator Hilkemann, how many people actually have these, pay for these stickers in our state?

HILKEMANN: Well, according to the, the fiscal note, it would be about 2,800, at the present time, are paying that fee every-- and they pay it every year, every year they license it, they have to pay that fee again.

ALBRECHT: And how long have we been having a fee for people who don't have a front license plate? How long has that [INAUDIBLE]?

HILKEMANN: It was-- the first year that I was here we debated that here in, in the--

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ALBRECHT: Eight years?

HILKEMANN: So it's, it was 2014 that that legislation came into play.

ALBRECHT: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Albrecht. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none--

HILKEMANN: As a personal note, I have to mention that Doug [SIC] Coulter who came up here, he and I grew up in the same church back in Randolph. It's been a few years ago, as you can tell.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Hilkemann. We'll close the hearing on LB38. Next we'll open the hearing on LB138. Welcome, Senator Blood.

BLOOD: Well, thank you, Senator Friesen. And good afternoon to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Senator Carol Blood; that's spelled C-a-r-o-l B as in boy-l-o-o-d as in dog, and I represent District 3, which is comprised of western Bellevue and southeastern Papillion, Nebraska. Today I am bringing LB138 forward for your consideration. This bill will provide for additional military honor plates and create a new plate in support of Nebraska's military. It also creates a specific fund that is designed to increase our efforts to recruit this highly skilled work force to stay in Nebraska upon retirement. Let's begin with the license plate design that we refer to as military honor plates. Nebraska has created the designs for all branches of the military and for many of our veterans. I am asking the Department of Motor Vehicles to create four additional designs honoring persons who served in the armed forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf War and the Vietnam War. As with all of our honor plates, the funds that are collected from the purchase of these plates will be used to support the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery. The last plate is especially important to me, as I feel that there are still many Vietnam veterans who have never been welcomed home properly and deserve this recognition. The request for these plates is in direct response to the many meetings that I've had with Nebraska's own veterans. No one can really argue that we do owe a debt to those who have borne the battle of our nation's behalf, on our nation's behalf. In these wars of choice that we require them to do over and over, they and their families are likely tired. Yes, many volunteered but others choose to fight our country's foreign wars. Unfortunately here-- excuse me-- unfortunately here at home, there are many who have come

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to largely ignore these conflicts, even when they are dragged on. There will always be people who cannot fully comprehend the true cost to the troops who have been deployed there. The veterans deserve our support and the best treatment we can provide them for those among them who will carry the emotional scars of their participation on into the rest of their lives. This is why I am also bringing forward the "Support our Troops" plate, and I plan to do something in support of our veterans with the funds generated by these particular plates. The extra funds generated, after the DMV has recovered their cost, will create the Veterans Employment Fund, which will consist of money credited pursuant to Section 10 of this act. The fund will be administered by the Department of Economic Development, and they will use those funds to expand their efforts to recruit and attract retiring veterans to live, work, raise their families, and stay here in Nebraska in tandem with the Department of Labor. We have met with the DED and discussed how they might be able to use the funds to be more proactive, such as attending events at the beginning of a veteran's tenure on the base, and not when they may have already made plans for life after the service when it may be too late to recruit them. Governor Ricketts has clearly stated Nebraska's commitment to retaining former active duty Reserves and National Guard members in our state. This is being done through tax exemptions, sound military families' legislation, and more. Our state is definitely highly motivated as a bipartisan group to surpass six neighboring states where many of our veterans, retirees relocate. Every year, 250,000 men and women transition from military service to civilian life. To quote NDED director Dave Rippy: Our service men and women possess traits that translate seamlessly into what we desire most in our civilian employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders. This demographic most definitely embodies strong values that include teamwork, leadership, decision-making, and specialized training that can be valuable assets to our labor force. Nebraska must continue to work on putting itself in a better position to be a great place for a vet, veterans to stay. Unlike Florida, we can't offer the sunshine and, unlike Iowa, at least for now we can offer a long list of exemptions and support of retiring military. And for me, Iowa is especially concerning. If you drive by Offutt Air Force Base, you will note that many of the contractors that work on the base have Iowa license plates. They drive back and forth between Iowa and Nebraska because, frankly, the retirement dollars go further. In a state that has more cows than people, we are constantly struggling to find bodies for jobs in IT, truck drivers, medicine, to only name a few. We have a highly educated and qualified work force

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demographic in our veterans right here in Nebraska. Why are we so willing to let them move to another state? We can't produce it, why, we can't produce enough new citizens fast enough to fill this gap. Our birth rate is stagnant in Nebraska. Unless we pass a bill requiring all married couples of childbearing age to listen to Marvin Gaye at least once a week, I don't think those numbers are going to change. So to be more serious, we can honor those who have served or are in harm's way, and we can better recruit these heroes to stay here in Nebraska. It's a win-win for all involved. I do understand that you can petition for a particular plate by gathering signatures, and I respect that. If I were requesting only one specialty plate, I would go that route. However, since we are talking about two different funds where the money will go and a list of multiple plates, I felt it would be more prudent to bring a bill forward. In closing, I'd like to add that I am bringing an amendment forward that I would like the committee to consider adding to the bill in Exec Session. This amendment would have us replace the language laying out the veterans' honor plates in the bill with new language that adds a fifth plate for those who have fought in the global war on terrorism, as this is an official classification for certain veterans. It would also make it easier for the DMV to have a kind of guidance on what these plates would look like if it would be used for the official campaign medals as the logos on these license plates. You should all have examples in the handouts that we just distributed. So the language for this amendment was brought to us by the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs yesterday morning, which is why it isn't in the original bill. But I fully support this change and I appreciate the department's feedback. With that, I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. I hope you will please consider voting this bill out of committee at the next Exec Session so it can be heard on the floor for full debate. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Blood. Any questions from the committee? Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Senator Friesen. Thank you, Senator Blood, for bringing the bill. Something just struck me as we were, as I was looking at this. And I'll ask you the question.

BLOOD: Um-hum.

BOSTELMAN: You can answer and then those who are going to come in and testify or, after you. And I'm wondering, instead of-- and, and I

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don't know if this is the intent of [INAUDIBLE]. On your campaign medals--

BLOOD: Um-hum.

BOSTELMAN: OK, instead of having just a plate for the campaign medal--

BLOOD: I'm sorry, having just a what?

BOSTELMAN: Instead of just having a plate specific for that campaign medal. But how about putting that on the military honor plates, so if I was in whatever branch of service, it would be on one side and then, on the other side or somewhere on that plate, you'd have your campaign medal? And that way we're not creating a whole nother set of plates. But it's just an idea that just struck me as you were, as you were presenting this. And I'll, I just would like to listen and, and hear what thoughts are from people who may testify.

BLOOD: Yeah, I do think, and I'm not aware that they are here. I think that's a question for DMV. I do know there's a lot of expense, the more intricate you make the plates. And then the expense, basically, makes it so that it's not worth making the plate. So when we talked about designs, that was one of the things that we specifically discussed this summer, was to keep it as simple as possible to keep the costs down. The change, from what we originally had to the medals, was brought to us by the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, and they felt that having the medals as the plate was the best way to honor our veterans.

BOSTELMAN: That's fine. I just asked the question, so I'll be [INAUDIBLE].

BLOOD: Yeah, absolutely. And that's the only answers I have, but I wish I had other answers for you, so--

BOSTELMAN: No, that's fine. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Any other questions? Senator Cavanaugh.

CAVANAUGH: Senator Blood, I just wanted to acknowledge that Senator Hilgers and I did welcome babies this past year, so we're doing our

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part for increasing the population. But thank you for doing your part to retain our veterans here in Nebraska.

BLOOD: And I do thank you for your contribution to our population. Thank you, Senator.

CAVANAUGH: You're very welcome.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Any other questions? Seeing none, proponents who wish to testify, come forward.

GREG HOLLOWAY: Good afternoon, Senator Friesen and members of the Transportation Committee. I am Greg Holloway, G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y, and I am the legislative advocate for the Nebraska Veteran's Council, here to testify for LB138. The Nebraska Veteran's Council each year has five priority bills, and we considered LB138 as one of our priority bills because it does create this employment, Veterans Employment Fund [SIC] with the funds generated from this plate. Now actually, way back in 1975, if anybody's from around Lincoln here who remember Mayor Schwartzkopf, we had a jobs-for-veterans program and, as I was commander of the local VFW post in Lincoln, I was, I chaired that committee way back in 1975. But we had no funds to generate any, really to promote and try to find funds for the veterans coming back from Vietnam. Myself, I am a Vietnam veteran. So it just kind of went away. So a program that we can actually find a way to fund it so we can make it work for a change, we do promote. So Nebraska Veteran's Council fully-- and we're the seven recognized veterans' organizations in one county Veterans Services Office-- and we have a lot of veterans in town. Now Senator Bostelman's question about whether or not the campaign medals, I believe what it is, now this, this plate would be eligible to most, to anybody that would want this plate, not just to veterans. And to be honest with you, a lot of the civilians probably-- and I call them civilians because I'm an old military guy-- might not even really know what campaign, the campaign medal for each war looks like. So I don't know if it's, it's [INAUDIBLE]. And to keep the cost of the plate down would be, as far as I'm concerned, good. But I like, I would like to see the Vietnam Campaign Medal on it, yes. And Army, I was in the Army, the 7th Cavalry Division. If I was designing the plate, it'd be way over cost. So I'd answer any questions for the Nebraska Veteran's Council that you would like.

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FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Holloway. Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you.

GREG HOLLOWAY: Thanks again for your indulgence.

FRIESEN: Welcome.

JOHN LIEBSACK: Mr. Chairman and members of the council, my name is John Liebsack, L-i-- excuse me-- John, J-o-h-n Liebsack, L-i-e-b-s-a-c-k. I'm here representing the Nebraska Veterans of Foreign Wars; I'm the adjutant quartermaster. We have approximately 15,500 members, and we are in favor of this bill. What you need to consider is that veterans are from very many different services, different campaigns, different wars, and they have a certain pride in the organizations that they belong to, the campaigns that they fought in, the countries that they fought in. And that's, that's why they're going to buy these license plates. And I'd be happy to try to answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Liebsack. Any questions from the committee? Thanks for your service and for your testimony. Any other proponents who wish to testify? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB138? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, we do have letters in support from the Nebraska Veteran's Council, City of Bellville-- Bellevue, and Dean Kenkel. With that, Senator Blood, you're willing to close.

BLOOD: Thank you, Chairman Friesen. I just, again, want to remind everybody how important something little like this can be to our veterans and their families. It doesn't seem like a big thing, especially when you have a long list of plates on your agenda today. But these are plates with true meaning that really do change people's lives. I want to remind you that 30 percent of the veterans that we have in Nebraska are Vietnam veterans. And I can't imagine what it was like for them to come home and not be welcomed. And I feel that every effort that I can make to, to make them feel welcomed and let them know that we appreciate their sacrifices, those are things that I must do and I have to do, especially now as a state legislator. And so I hope that you really do take a serious look at this bill, and I hope that you join me in supporting it and that we can get it onto the floor for full debate.

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FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Blood. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you, Senator Blood. And we'll close the hearing on LB138.

BLOOD: Thank you, sir.

FRIESEN: Next we'll open the hearing on LB696. Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen, the Transportation Telecommunications Committee. My name is Bruce Bostelman; that's B-r-u-c-e B-o-s-t-e-l-m-a-n, and I represent Legislative District 23. I'm here today to introduce LB696, which is a simple bill dealing with a small change in the license plate provision for military honor plates, regarding the National Guard. There are two components of the National Guard here in Nebraska; they are the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. This bill allows for the use of a separate distinct emblem for Air and Army National Guard on those military honor plates. National Guard military, military honor plates are currently authorized for use by statute 60-3,122.03, however, the statute does not separate out this, or specify the plate as either Army or Air National Guard. Yet the emblem used for the National Guard honor plate is the emblem for the Army National Guard. This creates confusion and frustration among Air National Guard members when they order their plates. This bill would simply allow for two distinct plates for the National Guard, one with the Army National Guard emblem, as you, as it is now used, and a separate plate with the Air National Guard emblem. It is my understanding, from speaking with the DMV, that there would be no issues or concerns with fulfilling this legislation on their part, but that this authors, this authorizing legislation is required to implement such a change. The process for obtaining the plates would remain the same. Our National Guard members provide a great service to this state and simply wish to be able to obtain a license plate identifying their appropriate service branch. I therefore request your support of LB696 and its advancements to the General File. Thank you, and I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, any other proponents who wish to testify for LB696? Welcome.

RYAN McINTOSH: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen. Members of committee, my name is Ryan McIntosh, R-y-a-n McIntosh, M-c-I-n-t-o-s-h. I'm here

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today on behalf of the National Guard Association of Nebraska, which includes current commissioned officers and warrant officers, as well as a number of retired officers, as well. Today the National, the Nebraska National Guard is nearly 5,000 members strong. We approached Senator Bostelman with this bill, and we thank him for carrying it on our behalf. It's a very simple change. The, the Nebraska National Guard is made up of two components: the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. The Army National Guard is a reserve component of the Army; the Air National Guard is a reserve component of the Air Force. Although we work closely on certain missions, they remain distinct entities. In other words, there is no National Guard fighting force. Current National Guard military honors license plates lump the two organizations together, and we here, and we are here today to request separate plates. We ask that the committee support LB696 and urge that it be passed to General File. Thank you for your consideration and support.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. McIntosh. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

RYAN McINTOSH: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Any other proponents who wish to testify on LB696? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB696? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity on LB696? Seeing none, Senator Bostelman, you wish to close? We do have a letter of support from Dean Kenkel and a neutral from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. Senator Bostelman waives closing. We'll close the hearing on LB696. We'll now open the hearing on LB697. Welcome back, Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Chairman Friesen and the Transportation and Telecommunication Committee members. Again, my name is Bruce Bostelman; that's B-r-u-c-e B-o-s-t-e-l-m-a-n, and I represent Legislative District 23. I'm here today to introduce LB697, which would remove any cost or fee associated, associated with certain veteran and military license plates. Those plates include: the Pearl Harbor plates, the Gold Star family plates, the military honor plates, the prisoner-of-war plates, the disabled veterans plates, and Purple Heart plates. The current fees associated with the majority of these plates are \$5 for the alphanumeric plates and \$40 for the personalized message plates. You'll notice on the handout, this is the VA. On the bottom it shows reflected of the moneys, funds that are related

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strictly to the Veterans Administration and not to DMV funding. The current fees charged for such plates, into what accounts those fees are credited, are as follows: There is a \$5 fee to obtain the Gold Star plate-- the Gold Star family plate is credited at 25 percent to the Department of Motor Vehicles Cash Fund and 75 percent to the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery system Operation Fund; there is a \$5 fee to obtain an alphanumeric military honor plate-- the \$5 fee for the plate is generally to the Nebraska, is entirely to the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery system fund; there is a \$40 fee for a personalized message military honor plate, of which 25 percent is credited to the Department of Motor Vehicles Cash Fund and 75 percent to the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery system Operation Fund; the regular license plate fee-- typically \$3.50-- applies to the prisoner-of-war plates, disabled veteran plates, and Purple Heart plates-- the regular license plate fees collected go into the Highway Trust Fund. I decided to bring this legislation for a few reasons. First, veterans and the men and women of the armed forces, along with their families, provide a great service to this state and the country. Some of these individuals make the ultimate sacrifice. The family members of those individuals who wish to honor their loved one's sacrifice by displaying a Gold Star family license plate should be, should be able to do so without being required to pay a fee. The modest income gained by the Gold Star prisoner, the Gold Star, prisoner-of-war, Purple Heart, and disabled veteran plates should not outweigh the policy of honoring and supporting these veterans and their families. And the one way to do this would be to allow these plates to be available to such individuals without a fee. Second, I have had several veterans, veteran constituents call my office and relay personally their first, and in person, their frustration with having to pay fees for such military and veterans' plates, and questioning where such money went. Third, the Veterans Cemetery operation is currently being overfunded. If you look at the top of the handout I have, the cash fund there is from the current fiscal years for the operating funds, the cash fund. In the past seven fiscal years, the receipts for the cemetery have doubled or tripled the total expenditures. Furthermore, as of the end of fiscal year '17-'18, the cemetery has \$414,333 of cash on hand. I understand, I understand that removing the fee for such plates results in additional costs for the DMV Cash Fund, Highway Trust Fund, and to the Veterans Cemetery Fund. It is not my intention to create any financial issues for the DMV nor the Veterans Cemetery. And I have spoken to both the Department of Motor Vehicles and Veterans Affairs on this matter, in that it is my intent to bring a bill such as LB697.

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I am happy to work with both the DMV and the VA and the Fiscal Office to determine what amounts may be needed to cover such costs or other financial sources that may be available. I believe eliminating these license plate fees is appropriate and allows veterans and their families to display sacrifices they have made without paying unnecessary fees. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, and I ask for your advancement to General File. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you. Any proponents who wish to testify on LB697? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB697? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity on LB697?

GREG HOLLOWAY: Good afternoon. Again, my name is Greg Holloway, H--G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y. I actually have, my DAV plate is number 12, so I've had that for a while. I have three Purple Heart license plates on three of my other vehicles-- and I have a lot of vehicles. But I am personally not opposed to spending the \$5, because I know that this \$5 is well spent and well taken care of. But I've had a lot of, a lot of veterans that talk to me, and I-- like I say, I represent the Nebraska Veteran's Council on most legislative issues and I represent the military, the Purple Heart, and the DAV pretty exclusively on their issues. And this is an issue that directs the Disabled American Veterans and the military or the Purple Hearts. Hopefully someday, we won't have to worry about having Purple Heart license plates, just like the Ex-POW license plates will be fading away sooner or later. And hopefully we'll never have to issue another one of those plates ever. But Gold Star mothers, I've heard a lot of, lot of talk from the Gold Star mothers-- have contacted me direct, directly, and they feel like they shouldn't have to pay an extra fee for their, for their sacrifices that they've, they've made for our country and the state of Nebraska. Myself, I was wounded twice in Vietnam. But it's not that I don't support it; it's not that I don't oppose it. It's, it's a worthy, worthy thing for the people of this state to contribute to our state cemeteries and some of the other programs. But then again, for some of the Disabled American Veterans and our Purple Hearters, most of the Purple Hearters are on service-connected disabilities-- limited funds, limited incomes. And five bucks is five bucks once in a while, especially when I got about six cars licensed, so, and, and insured. So I'm here to try to testify in a neutral capacity, and I support pretty much what he wants because I like him. He's a good guy and he

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works hard for veterans. Yeah, he is a, he works hard for us; and I appreciate him, you know, so--

FRIESEN: OK.

GREG HOLLOWAY: So that's my testimony. Thanks for indulging me again, so--

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Holloway. You've been here numerous times; you're well-known to the committee, I think. Are there any questions for Mr. Holloway? Seeing none, Senator Bostelman, do you wish to close? We do have letters of support from Dean Kenkel and the, a neutral one from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles.

BOSTELMAN: Sure. I'd just like to say that there is, there is a fiscal note with this. And I have talked to the DMV and I have talked to the VA, and I think there's a workable way that we can work with this. And it's something we just didn't have time to get an amendment up on it, but I think that's something we can get done to take care of the financial responsibilities, but yet also not overfund an area that does not need excessive funding perhaps. We want to make sure that the cemetery is funded appropriately but we don't need to continue to put \$200,000 into a, into a program that necessarily may not need \$200,000 every year. Thank you.

FRIESEN: I'm surprised with our budget the last few years that they've not taken that money. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, we'll close the hearing on LB697. Next we'll open the hearing on LB27, LB215. Yes, you're up, Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and the members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. First time I've ever been here. My name is Lou Ann Linehan; that is L-o-u A-n-n Linehan, L-i-n-e-h-a-n. I represent District 39, which includes Elkhorn, Valley, and Waterloo, Nebraska. I'm here to present LB215. LB215 directs the Department of Motor Vehicles to create a prostate cancer license plate. The plates may be either numerical or personal in message. This bill was written to directly mirror the breast cancer awareness plates, which the Legislature authorized by passing LB977 in 2016. A constituent of mine called me and asked me to introduce this legislation. Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in men. Early detection is vital to confine it to the prostate gland and prevent it from spreading, spreading. There are usually no

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symptoms of early-stage prostate cancer, which makes it extremely important that men talk with their doctors about prostate cancer after reaching the age of 40. A quick and easy test can detect this disease. It can be done with a simple blood test and a physical exam. According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, approximately 174,000 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2018, and nearly 32,000 men died from the disease last year. I believe anything we can do to raise awareness of prostate cancer is worthwhile, and I ask for your support in advancing LB215 to the floor. Thank you very much.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Linehan. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, those proponents who wish to testify in favor of LB215? Welcome.

JEFF SHAPIRO: Good afternoon, senators. My name is Jeff Shapiro, J-e-f-f S-h-a-p-i-r-o. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of LB215, adding Nebraska prostate cancer license plate to the existing, apparently long, list of license plates. We are a net, we are the Nebraska Prostate Cancer Alliance. We are a 501(c)(3) organization. Our mission is to raise awareness for prostate cancer in Nebraska. Prostate cancer is the most diagnosed nonskin cancer in America. In the United States, one in nine men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. For the last eight years we've been putting on a show in Omaha called Cruisin' for a Cure. During the show we provide PSA tests to individuals free of charge. To date we have provided over 1,500 PSA tests. As a result of these tests, we know of six men who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, treated and are now in remission. The car show has also been a great way to raise awareness for prostate cancer in Omaha. Now we are here today to ask you, the state of Nebraska, to join us in our mission to raise awareness of prostate cancer, not just in Omaha but throughout the state of Nebraska. We hope by adding the prostate cancer license plate, we will give out the message that early detection saves men's lives. If prostate cancer is detected early, the success rate is significantly higher. We have lost many of our friends and loved ones because we were not, they were not aware of prostate cancer. When we, they finally were diagnosed, it was too late. Please join us in our mission to save men's lives in Nebraska by raising the awareness of prostate cancer and that early detection saves men's lives. In closing, I'd like to thank Senator Linehan for joining our message and sponsoring this bill. Thank you for your time.

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FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. Shapiro. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Other proponents for LB215? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB215? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity to LB215? Seeing none, Senator Linehan, you wish to close? We do have a letter, in support, from the American Cancer Society and the Nebraska Medical Association. And Senator Linehan waives closing. We will close the hearing on LB215, and we'll close the hearings for the day. We're done?

TIP O'NEILL: We have--

DeBOER: No, we have one more.

FRIESEN: We're not done yet.

TIP O'NEILL: Senator Wishart's bill [INAUDIBLE].

FRIESEN: Oh, sorry. Oh, on the back of the sheet. I thought we'd done so good.

_____ : No.

FRIESEN: We're not done for the day.

_____ : No.

TIP O'NEILL: We have three left. Is she down in Appropriations?

SALLY SCHULTZ: I guess so, yeah.

FRIESEN: Man, I thought we'd rolled right through.

CAVANAUGH: Do you want me to go?

FRIESEN: Yeah, why don't you?

CAVANAUGH: OK.

DeBOER: We're gonna do LB691 instead.

FRIESEN: Since Senator Wishart is unavailable right now, we are going to jump to LB691. Oh, here she comes; here she comes.

CAVANAUGH: Oh. Do you [INAUDIBLE]?

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FRIESEN: We'll-- let Senator Wishart. We were just going to switch to go to somebody else, but now we will, we will open the hearing on LB546. Senator Wishart is here.

WISHART: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Welcome.

WISHART: Well, good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Anna Wishart, A-n-n-a W-i-s-h-a-r-t, and I represent the 27th District in west Lincoln. And I'm here today to introduce LB546. I believe this is probably the first license plate bill you guys have heard this year. LB546 is for all of our four-legged constituents. It provides for the issuance of spay and neuter awareness license plates beginning on January 1, 2020. Applicants for these plates pay an annual \$40 plate fee, which is deposited into the Spay and Neuter Awareness Fund which is established in the bill. This effort is a creative way that does not take any General Fund dollars to help low-income pet owners. Similar laws have recently passed in other states, and the benefits are already evident. More cats and dogs are being spayed and neutered, resulting in fewer animals entering overburdened and underfunded municipal and nonprofit shelters. With that, I'm happy to answer any questions.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Wishart. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you.

WISHART: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Any proponents in favor of LB546?

MARY DOUGLAS: Good afternoon. I am Mary Douglas, M-a-r-y D-o-u-g-l-a-s. I'm the president and cofounder of the Lincoln Animal Ambassadors. I'm here in support of LB546 and its intent to create and administer a grant program to provide funding to nonprofit organizations to spay and neuter companion animals, funded by a spay and neuter awareness specialty license plate. Lincoln Animal Ambassadors is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, volunteer-run organization that has run a low-cost spay-and-neuter program for nine years. We also run an income-based pet food bank which requires recipients to get their pets spayed and neutered with our assistance. We assist 400-500 families each year, many multiple times a year, that have incomes below the national WIC guidelines. We do not allow them to bring new

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pets into the home while they're using our program, but we do work with them to care for the pets they currently have in a responsible manner. Reality is, is that the people with income levels of that level do not have the funds to get their pets altered at a regular price. The result is unwanted litters that get turned into the shelter, turned loose on the street, or sold or given away on the corner, without the proper vaccination or care. Nationally more than 2.7 million healthy, adoptable cats and dogs are euthanized in shelters annually. Nebraska is no exception. Spay and neuter is the only permanent, 100 percent effective method of birth control for dogs and cats. Did you know that one male and one female cat and their offspring can produce 420,000 cats in seven years? And one male and one female dog and their offspring can produce 67,000 dogs in six years. Lincoln Animal Ambassadors has altered 3,000 companion animals since this program began, preventing millions of unwanted cats and dogs. Low-cost spay-and-neuter programs can help low-income pet owners become more responsible owners, reduce the number of calls required by Animal Control, reduce the number of dogs and cats on the street and turned into the shelter and, in turn, reducing those euthanasia numbers. Spay and neutering curbs undesirable behaviors, which allows for less aggressive dogs in the community. Other benefits are that a pet will have less medical issues after they are altered, and it is less expensive to license and alter a pet, making having a pet less expensive for those low-income families. And, most importantly, it goes a long way to reduce pet overpopulation. There are several low-cost, nonprofit spay-and-neuter organizations throughout the state of Nebraska. Although I'm not sure of all of the logistics of the funding through the Department of Ag proposed in this bill, I would hope that an amendment would spell out a process how these funds would be offered and distributed out to these nonprofit spay-and-neuter programs. The bill currently refers to the Department of Ag working in collaboration with an organization dedicated in the care of cats and dogs, doing spay and neuter. I would prefer that the wording be changed to a nonprofit organization dedicated to doing spay and neuter of dogs and cats. I believe the collaborating organization should be a nonprofit entity so that the maximum amount of the funds produced by the specialty license plates can go toward the specified spay-and-neuter goals. Nonprofit, low-cost spay-and-neuter programs are currently funded by public donations. This specialty license plate fund would give Nebraska drivers the opportunity and the choice to support a cause they believe in, and help bring awareness to the need for responsible pet ownership. And I will say that Bob Downey, the

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executive director of the Capital Humane Society, was going to try to be here today to testify for the bill. However, he had a scheduling conflict so he did submit a letter and, hopefully, you guys will have that.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Ms. Douglas. Any questions from the committee? Were you willing to provide language, I guess, or work with Senator Wishart?

MARY DOUGLAS: Absolutely.

FRIESEN: OK.

MARY DOUGLAS: Yeah.

FRIESEN: Seeing no questions, thank you for your testimony. Any other proponents of LB546? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB546? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Wishart, you can close. We do have a letter of support from the Capitol Humane Society and Kissel, Kohout Associates, and a letter of neutral from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. Senator Wishart waives closing. We'll close the hearing on LB546. How could I forget the ornate box turtle? My apologies. Next we will open the hearing on LB691. Welcome, Senator Cavanaugh.

CAVANAUGH: Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. I'm Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, M-a-c-h-a-e-l-a C-a-v-a-n-a-u-g-h. I represent District 6, central Omaha, in the Nebraska Legislature. I'm here to introduce LB691 to create a new specialty license plate for the ornate box turtle, chiefly a prairie turtle. Last year the ornate box turtle was selected as Nebraska's state reptile. LB691 directs funds raised to be used for a turtle habitat, under the direction of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The ornate box turtle, one of four types of box turtles, is only one of two turtle species native to Nebraska and currently exists across a wide range. While it is not endangered, it is classified as near-threatened, and preserving its habitat is sure to benefit many other aquatic species. Nebraska's wide variety of specialty plates have proven to be very popular, given that voluntary purchases of Nebraska's mountain lion license plate are the greatest of any of our many specialty plates. And we can forecast that significant funds will be raised for turtle habitat conservation. The fiscal note for LB691 agrees, estimating approximately \$30,000 in

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revenue through the next biennium. Specialty plates, in addition to beautifying our roads, add to Nebraska efforts to encourage tourism. A new plate for the ornate box turtle is sure to be both beautiful and foster interest in Nebraska as a tourist destination. The ornate box turtle plates, as with all specialty plates, will be required to cover all costs of production. Thus, no new taxes will be required to increase our funding of habitat conservation for the ornate box turtle and its neighbors along the increasing, along with increasing our efforts at tourism. At the request of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, I offer, I have offered an amendment that changes the bill so that, instead of creating a brand new fund, the revenue will be directed to the existing Wildlife Conservation Fund. It also incorporates a request from the DMV, asking for an implementation date of 2021 instead of 2020. I ask for your support in adding the ornate box turtle to our existing list of specialty plates and using the funds raised to support turtle habitat conservation. I've also recently, very recently, been made aware that the ornate box turtle is able to indicate when it will rain which, in Nebraska, in the Great Plains area, I think is really important.

FRIESEN: Thank you Senator. Cavanaugh. Any questions from the committee? I have seen them on the road once in a while, you know, when--

CAVANAUGH: Well, Senator Hughes is an expert if you need any further information.

FRIESEN: Yeah, thank you very much. Any proponents who wish to testify in favor of LB691? Welcome.

MICHAEL O'HARA: Hello. My name is Michael O'Hara, M-i-c-h-a-e-l O-'-H-a-r-a. I'm a registered lobbyist for the Nebraska Sierra Club. Thank you, Chair Friesen and committee members, for being so patient. You've been sitting through a lot. I just came from another committee. Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh, for introducing this bill. Many might think it not very important but, after hearing all the testimony you've heard today, I'm sure you've heard there's a lot of special interest. We are particularly in favor of this-- excuse me-- because we support having plates that will help educate. We support having plates that are going to raise revenue that are going to then fund activities in the Game and Parks Commission. And we particularly like that this is for a species native to Nebraska. The, we like doing that because it helps establish the ecosystem of Nebraska more forcefully.

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Too often, people get accused of being "specie-ous"-- and not specious, but "specie-ous." And the cute species get everything, so you can get down to whether or not you like cats or dogs, but reptiles typically don't come out high on the cute list. And, but they, we picked one that is cute, the ornate box turtle; and it is our state reptile. And from a tourism standpoint, it offers a real plus. If you have a visual stimuli and it then generates a positive experience, you go out into the community, out into our game and parks areas, you're likely to run into an ornate box turtle. And if you're a kid, you're then going to talk about it when you go back. And every time you see that plate, you're going to get another positive experience. So it's going to have a genuine tourism impact, which we find quite positive. The idea of having a species native to Nebraska-- unfortunately I wasn't able to come up and talk on LB128-- would prefer you not do bighorn sheep or because they're not native to Nebraska. But there is no trout that's native Nebraska, so I would suggest you cut that back just to the bird. And with respect to funding, one of the things to like about this bill is it's going to go towards habitat. The mountain lion bill, all that money got dumped into the education and they've been, Game and Parks has been trying to find useful ways for doing that. But that becomes more of a slush fund. Would prefer even the mountain lion money was redirected towards habitat. And the fund that Senator Cavanaugh mentioned does have habitat and a focus on habitat. So I'd prefer the Sandhill crane, the mountain lion-- all that went into that same fund that, as opposed to just getting dumped into the fund that can be anything. As you may know, the mountain lion fund initially was spent for teaching people how to stock fish, not exactly the same thing. But we'd prefer to support that, and would encourage you to support this bill. And Sierra Club is in favor of both of the amendments that the Senator Cavanaugh allowed. If you have any questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. O'Hara. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

MICHAEL O'HARA: Thank you very much.

TIMOTHY McCOY: Good afternoon again, Chairman Friesen, members of the committee. My name's Timothy McCoy, T-i-m-o-t-h-y M-c-C-o-y, the deputy director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. We are in support of this bill. Appreciate Senator Cavanaugh bringing it, also her staff working with us as we talked about whether we wanted to create a specific, separate fund or utilize an existing fund. We do

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have a-- you know, box, ornate box turtles are a native turtle. They're a terrestrial turtle; they actually don't spend much time in aquatic habitats. I'm, I'm going to talk a little bit about the difference in funds. This has come up a couple of times today, and I thought I would take a little time. The Wildlife Conservation Fund primarily is funded by the nongame check-off and donations. And that fund has been around for years, utilized for both wildlife conservation and for education activities in our agency, specific to nongame wildlife. The general funds we receive, relative to nongame wildlife, are primarily used for the required review we do for permitted activities by other agencies, under the Nebraska Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. So we see this, this benefit to bringing this to, to be able to help with habitat enhancements. Primarily a lot of the, you know, box turtles are throughout the state. We have a great stronghold in Nebraska that are considered secure in the state. And one of the things that we did several years ago is we got some help from the Legislature to be able to regulate commercial activity. For many of our turtles, and box turtles specifically, there was a lot of collecting going on, for both pet trade and actually for some medicinal trade overseas. And so that was one of the things that we've tried to put in place across the state to prevent that commercialization, because that is a big risk. It's a big risk because turtles have a long lifespan. They have a lifespan 32-37 years. The females, I think in most cases, don't become breeding age until they're age eight. So they, they're a small turtle, but it takes them a while to really do anything as far as population. I am going to address a couple of things that were recently brought up. The information we have, from historical accounts, is that cutthroat trout was likely the only historic trout in Nebraska; there are differences of opinion on that. I would also like to address some, some things just mentioned, that the mountain lion education fund has been used as a slush fund. That fund was established specifically for use for wildlife education activities. The expenditures that we've made have all been related specifically to wildlife education. One, in a partnership with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, in western Nebraska, they're trying out in Wildcat Hills, they work to work with school kids and have tried to reach about one in every three school kids in the Panhandle each year, providing wildlife education activities, also providing support in our parks system for those wildlife education activities. The other place that we've used funds is for some, some work on the wildlife-related exhibits for the Schramm nature aquarium, including reptile and amphibian tanks, equipment, and equipment for

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those tanks, bird wing spans exhibits, and mammal displays, a bumblebee display, a biodiversity display, and interactive educational components related to those displays. So I would, I would tell you that we've not used that to train people to stock fish and, and I find that a little offensive. So I'm sorry if I'm incensed about that. I'd answer any questions you may have.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. McCoy. Any questions? Senator Albrecht.

ALBRECHT: Thank you, Chairman Friesen. Just in case Senator Cavanaugh should waive her close, I'd like to find out from you, what is this box turtle do to let us know it's going to rain?

TIMOTHY McCOY: I actually do not recall but I know I have heard this before. But I heard that Senator Hughes knows that.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Albrecht. Any other questions?

ALBRECHT: I think I was going to get an answer.

FRIESEN: Senator Hughes?

HUGHES: A box, ornate box turtle, like most other animals, does react to change in the weather. So if you see a box turtle crossing the road, that is a sign of activity and a change in the weather and, most likely, rain.

ALBRECHT: You know that's interesting, because we do see a lot in our area. And that's usually during harvest and they sometimes don't make it across the road. So that's good to know. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Hughes and Senator Albrecht. Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Senator Friesen. My thought with that was, was if the shell was wet, it's raining and, if the shell is dry, it's not.

HUGHES: Thank you.

TIMOTHY McCOY: I think that's true.

FRIESEN: I think we've been here too long [LAUGHTER]. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Mr. McCoy.

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HUGHES: Chairman Friesen, one other point. They taste like chicken [LAUGHTER].

FRIESEN: Welcome.

BRUCE KENNEDY: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Bruce Kennedy, B-r-u-c-e K-e-n-n-e-d-y. I'm here this afternoon representing Nebraska Wildlife Federation. We are definitely in support of LB691. Our Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is in charge of all the wildlife species in the state. These species are divided into two categories. One of them is the game species. These are deer, antelope, squirrels, rabbits, ducks, geese-- that type of thing. Then we have something called the nongame species. This is all basically all the other stuff, the stuff that we think is some of the better stuff, if you will, some of the most interesting stuff. These are the turtles, these are the snakes, these are the salamanders-- all of the other stuff. There's actually 90 of them on the list that need conservation. This nongame department does not have good sources of revenue. We do not have dedicated funding for our nongame program and because, and hence, the program suffers. We, we commend Senator for introducing this bill. This is dedicated funding to a nongame species and we are also very pleased that the funding is directed at the conservation end of it rather than the education end of it. So we are very much supportive of with this bill. We urge this committee to pass this on to the Legislature. And just, we'd just really like to see it take place. Questions?

FRIESEN: OK. Thank you, Mr. Kennedy. Any questions from the committee?

BRUCE KENNEDY: Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you for your testimony. Any other proponents who wish to testify?

MARJORIE KENNEDY: Good afternoon again. Once again, I am Marjorie Kennedy, M-a-r-j-o-r-i-e K-e-n-n-e-d-y. And again, I am representing Wachiska Audubon Society of Lincoln, in support of LB691. As has been said by others, we really appreciate that Senator Cavanaugh has introduced this bill and, particularly, I liked having a turtle habitat fund although I'm sure it's kind of like license plates; you sure have a lot of them, I see. And maybe it gets a little bit spread out too much for Game and Parks. But if it goes to the Wildlife Conservation Fund, we would be very, very happy to see that. As we

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would have liked, as I pointed out before on LB128, we would like to see that with the other conservation type plates, as well. Again, thank you, Senator, for introducing it.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Ms. Kennedy. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. Any other proponents who wish to testify on LB691? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in opposition to LB691? Seeing none, anyone wish to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Cavanaugh, you may close. We do have one letter, in a neutral capacity, from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles.

CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chairman Friesen. Thank you, members of the committee. I am excited to have brought this bill forward and to learn a little bit more about our ornate box turtles, and a special thank you for, to Senator Hughes for making sure that I knew more about our box turtles. And I just hope that we can move this forward. It's been a fun, a fun thing to learn about, and I hope we can have some new license plates. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none--

CAVANAUGH: Oh I should mention I actually do have the, the mountain lion license plate. And I do, I've gotten lots of compliments on it, on how beautiful it is. And I think it is quite, quite pretty. I like the zoo one, as well, so adding more animals, furry and otherwise.

FRIESEN: Thank you. Senator Cavanaugh.

CAVANAUGH: Thank you.

FRIESEN: With that, we'll close the hearing on LB691. We'll now open the hearing on LB699. Welcome back, Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Chairman Friesen. I promise I will not share my meteorological prowess with you any longer this, today. Good afternoon, Chairman Friesen and Transportation Telecommunication Committee members. My name is Bruce Bostelman. That's B-r-u-c-e B-o-s-t-e-l-m-a-n, and I am representative from the Legislative District 3. I'm here today to introduce LB699, which amends Section 60-378 regarding transporter plates, to decrease the number of years an applicant for a track, for a transporter plate is required to keep records associated with the transport of a motor vehicle or trailer

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under the statute available to the Department of Motor Vehicles for inspection. Currently these records must be maintained for six years. LB699 would decrease that requirement to three years. When the current statute was drafted, the time frame of the six years was chosen to coincide with the same retention required for reg, for registration records at the county treasurer and the Department of Motor Vehicles. However, in 2008, LB756 decreased the retention time for records kept by the county treasurers and DMV offices to three years. By decreasing the requirement to three years, this change would harmonize the recordkeeping requirements for owners of transporter plates, county treasurers, and DMV offices. LB699 would not affect the application process or use of transporter certificates or plates, but would simply decrease the number of years that transporters must retain records for such transports for the DMV. The reason I bring this bill is that I had a mechanic con, mechanic contact my office regarding a problem he encountered while conducting business. A family reached out to him about an estate that they were settling. Included in the estate was a vehicle that had not been registered or driven for several years. The family asked if he could come and test the vehicle to see if it would run. However, because the car's registration had expired, the mechanic needed to use a transporter plate and maintain the records of this transaction for six years. This amount of time is unnecessary and burdensome to small business owners like the mechanic, and reducing the six-year requirement to three years would match the record retention time for county treasurers and the Department of Motor, DMV offices. LB699 is a simple bill that harmonizes requirements for both recordkeeping between DMV offices, county treasurers, and the owners of transporter plates. Therefore I ask for your support of LB699 and its advancement to General File. Thank you.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Any questions from the committee? Senator Geist.

GEIST: Yes. Senator Bostelman, I couldn't let you get off without a question. Do you know the original intention of six years?

BOSTELMAN: Yeah, it coincided with the-- if you go back in statute, it coincided with-- the original statute was for six years. 60-3,101 basically said that the license plates, the transport plates, were, were issued for six years, and then retention of records was six years. But then they changed that to three years and the retention

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records to three years. So what we haven't changed is the retention of records by the person who has the transports plates.

GEIST: OK. Thank you.

BOSTELMAN: Um-hum.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Senator Geist. Any other questions from the committee? Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Anyone wish to testify in favor of LB699? Seeing none, is there anyone who wishes to testify in opposition to LB699? Seeing none, is there anyone who wishes to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, Senator Bostelman? Senator Bostelman waives closing. That will close the hearing on LB699. And I think we have just set the records for the number of license plate bills ever heard in one day.

BOSTELMAN: We cleared the house.

DeBOER: Now we're done.

FRIESEN: We will close the hearings for the day.