

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

FOLEY: Good morning, ladies gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the sixtieth day of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, Second Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Williams. Please rise.

WILLIAMS: Good morning, colleagues and guests. Would you please join me in prayer? Dear Lord, we thank you for today and we thank you for all days, especially day 60. As Edge once said, it's a beautiful day, don't let it get away. We have a great uncertainty in our world today, but with you, we have confidence in our future. We know, Lord, that whether we knock loudly on your door with our prayers or uttered them in silence, you are listening. This is the final day of session for 13 of our members. We thank you for your commitment that you brought to the Legislature by Senators Friesen, Gragert, Matt Hansen, Robert Hilkemann, Dan Hughes, Mark Kolterman, Steve Lathrop, Lindstrom, McCollister, Morfeld, Pansing Brooks, Stinner, and myself. As this session draws to a close, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve. We recognize that the talents and gifts we bring to this body are truly gifts from you. Help us to always be humble and kind in our actions toward each other and in the way we treat our daily activities. We say a special prayer today for our support staff that have helped us throughout this session: the Clerk and his staff, the Red Coats, the pages, the Fiscal Office, Bill Drafting, Transcribers, our office staffs, and all other working in and around the Capitol and a special thank you to our friends and family. We pray that during this session, we have used our combined wisdom, our independent imagination, and our abundant compassion to find opportunities for the future and the obstacles we have jointly faced. And as we end this session and return to our homes, let us be guided by the words of the English philosopher, Gordon Sumner, as he penned, whenever the sun refused to shine, whenever the skies are pouring rain, whatever I lost I thought was mine, whenever I close my eyes in pain, whenever I kneel to pray, whenever I need to find a way, I'm calling out your name. Thank you, Lord, for this wonderful day. Amen.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Williams. If I can ask Speaker Hilgers to please lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

HILGERS: Good morning, colleagues. Please join me in the pledge. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I call to order the sixtieth day of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, Second Session. Senators, please record your presence. Roll call. Mr. Clerk, please record.

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

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

CLERK: I have no corrections.

FOLEY: Thank you, sir. Any messages, reports or announcements?

CLERK: I do, Mr. President. A bill read last Wednesday on Final Reading, LB888, was presented to the Governor that day at 2:40 p.m. Reference report referring LR438 and LR463 to the appropriate standing committee for interim study hearings. I also have a communication from the Executive Board regarding the appointment of a special select committee and it also acknowledges the membership of that committee. Mr. President, a series of communications from the Governor, the first to the Clerk. Engrossed LB436, LB450, LB450A, LB519, LB698, LB698A, LB707, LB717, LB769, LB780, LB809, LB809A, LB820, LB840, LB863, LB864, LB887, LB925, LB925A, LB964, LB1015, LB1023, LB1112, LB1112A, LB1236, LB1246, LB1273, LB1273A. Engrossed LB741, LB741A, LB750, LB750A, LB752, LB752A, LB800, LB804, LB804A, LB848, LB848A, LB852, LB902, LB902A, LB917, LB917A, LB917 [SIC - LB997], LB977A, LB998, LB1016, LB1037, LB1037A, LB1068, LB1068A, LB1241, LB1241A. And engrossed LB29, LB59, LB75, LB91, LB691, LB697, LB697A, LB705, LB742, LB779, LB795, LB807, LB808, LB824, LB829, LB851, LB855, LB856, LB905, LB908, LB971, LB983, LB1007, LB1024, LB1024A, LB1057, LB1065, LB1069, LB1082, LB1092, LB1102, LB1102A, LB1124, LB1137, LB1147, LB1148, LB1165, LB1178, LB1184, and LB1204. These bills were signed and presented to the Secretary of State on April 18. Second communication: Engrossed LB376, LB376A, LB598, LB686, LB792, LB805, LB805A, LB843, LB876, LB888, LB896, LB896A, LB921, LB921A, LB922, LB922A, LB927, LB984, LB984A, LB1130, LB1144, LB1144A, LB1150, LB1150A, LB1173, LB1173A, LB1218, and LB1218A. These bills were signed and delivered to the Secretary of State on April 19, 2022. In addition, a communication to the President and members. I've signed LB376 and LB376A; however, I am sharing a structural concern that occurs in LB376A. Section 1 of LB376A appropriates \$500,000 of Home and Community Based Services ARPA federal funds for FY '22-23. There are two references in Section 2 that appropriate and earmark \$6,055,913. Finally, the personal services limitation contained in Section 4 was placed in the Medicaid aid program. The appropriation in Section 1 will necessitate a deficit

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

appropriation of the Department of Health and Human Services in the 2023 Legislative Session. The other items in LB376A also need to be corrected but those changes can be made in the 2023 Session. And finally, Mr. President, communication-- the last communication-- engrossed LB1261 was received in my office on April 13. The bill was signed on April 19. Sincerely, Pete Ricketts, Governor. And finally, an acknowledgment of agency reports available on the legislative website. That's all that I have, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I announce that pursuant to Rule 4, Section 5(b), the following legislative resolutions were all adopted: LR436, LR437, LR439, LR440, LR441, LR442, LR443, LR444, LR445, LR446, LR447, LR448, LR449, LR450, LR451, LR452, LR453, LR454, LR455, LR456, LR457, LR458, LR459, LR460, and LR461. All those legislative resolutions were adopted. Members, Senator Brandt would like us to recognize Dr. Jason Bspalec of Geneva, Nebraska, who is serving us today as family physician of the day. Dr. Bspalec is with us under the north balcony. Doctor, if you could please rise, we'd like to welcome you to the Nebraska Legislature. Members, we have some very special guests with us today: the immediate family of our Speaker, Mike Hilgers. His family is with us today. His wife Heather, his three daughters, Alice, Elsie, and Clara Jane and his son, Mike Jr., sometimes called "Little Mike." All those Hilgers' family members, if you could please rise, we'd like to welcome you to the Nebraska Legislature. Speaker Hilgers, you're recognized.

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Day 60. We made it. Quick announcement as to the scheduling this morning: as you saw from the Clerk yesterday, the Governor did not veto any of the bills that we sent to him last week. So that item on your agenda, there's-- there will be no motions to override any gubernatorial vetoes. Secondly, when we get to the departing senators, I believe the Assistant Clerk, Brandon, is going around and letting everyone know their, their order in line. We did that last week. I will also try to touch base if you don't know where you're going to be, first, second, or last, please come find me or Brandon. We have the list. And last, just because I tend to get questions on this every time we have it, for the escort committee and for the sine-- the motions that we have to do at the end of the day today, at the end of our session, I did pick from all of the departing senators. So if you are not a departing senator and you want to know why it wasn't your chance to be on the escort committee, that is why. Thank you, Mr. President.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, were you going to make some remarks regarding the passing of two former members of the Legislature?

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, as you know, last-- in the last couple of days, we've really received some very sad news. Senator-- former Senator Brad Ashford, as well as former Senator Dennis Byars, passed away. And I've had a number of senators reach out to me about wanting to make some remarks here this morning and so we're going to, of course, accommodate for that. And we're going to start with anyone who would like to make a remark on Senator Brad Ashford and then we'll do Senator Byars. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Remarks regarding Senator-- former Senator Brad Ashford. Senator Lathrop, you're recognized.

LATHROP: Thank you, Mr. President. We lost a dear friend and a true public servant. As you know, Brad Ashford passed away yesterday. I was fortunate to call Brad a friend and a colleague. I rise today to honor my friend. Brad spent his adult life in service to the state and to the city he loved. His genuine love of the state of Nebraska and his hometown came through in every conversation. His decades of service included a tenure on the-- as a commissioner on the CIR, the Omaha Housing Authority, the MECA board, four terms in this Legislature, and one term as a congressman representing Congressional District 2. But his resume, while impressive, is not what set him apart from many elected officials. News accounts, the media over the last day and a half have tried to capture Brad Ashford. In quotes from various friends and other elected officials, he was nonpartisan, a policy wonk, tenacious, a visionary, apolitical, and a social justice advocate. For me, it was Brad's thoughtfulness; thoughtfulness in the way he spoke and in the way he listened, thoughtful in the way he included others in the legislative process, thoughtful in identifying common ground and building consensus. His thoughtful manner was precisely why he became an accomplished legislator. His accomplishments included the then-novel turnback, turnback financing of the arena in Omaha, juvenile justice reforms, his work on truancy, CIR reform, and in Congress, a bill to build an outpatient clinic at the VA Medical Center using a first-time-ever public-private partnership. This is certainly not an exhaustive list. Brad loved this place. I know he cherished the time in Congress, but he loved this place. He loved the people he served with and those who worked here and supported his efforts. He loved this place because it was nonpartisan. He loved the issues and he loved the process. Today, it seems appropriate to share some of Brad's sentiments as he left on

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

the-- on day 60 eight years ago. He spoke then, as many will later today, as a term-limited senator at the completion of 16 years of service. Brad said the following: thank you all very much. I concur with everyone else that's been up here and extolled the virtues of the nonpartisan Legislature created by George Norris in 1937. And if it weren't for the nonpartisan Legislature, I never would have been able to change parties as many times as I have. You are my family and I think about in many ways and I think about 16 years I've been here and I look out and see all of you and I-- when I look at these various chairs in the various places, I see those who are no longer with us, whom I served with 25 years ago, sitting in the very seats that we sit in today. Jerry Warner scowling; Vard Johnson trying to explain that LB775 was really a jobs bill; Howard Lamb telling me the best thing that could happen to Westside is that it would go away. There was laughter then. That was exciting. And then just-- my first year in the Legislature, allowing us to buy the Joslyn Castle for \$75,000. So all these experiences I remember, but most importantly, I remember the last eight years with you. I always tell my friends why do you love the Legislature so much? I said, my father-- find my place-- my father used to take me to the state basketball tournament as a youth and at the-- obviously in those days, the tournament was in the Coliseum and I was always so amazed at the number of teams that were there, some playing in the stage, some playing on the main court, and all the different towns that they came from to play basketball in the '50s in Lincoln. And I think of this Legislature much the same way. We are very different, but we are so much alike and I think what I leave this place with is that thought. There are no bad ideas and we are so much more the same than we are different. And after thanking his family and Ann and the others that stayed with him and the staff and Patrick O'Donnell, he continued and finished this way. And finally, thank you to the people of the state of Nebraska in the Sixth Legislative District and in the 20th Legislative District, who gave me an opportunity to be here. Thank you all very much. Two weeks ago, you all had an opportunity to cosign a resolution for Brad for his public service. We took-- John McCollister and I took that up to the hospital and presented it to Brad a couple of days later and I have to tell you how much he appreciated that. He appreciated the recognition, but he also appreciated that every last one of you signed off on that resolution and it meant so very much to Brad. And finally, in 2007, I came here as a brand-new senator. Brad was a friend and also a seasoned senator. He had already served eight years in this body. And I asked him, how do you do this? We were-- it wasn't on the first day, but it was after the bills started coming and I didn't know-- should I be careful about my votes? Should I-- how should I traverse the

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

political field that is a political body? And Brad responded with a philosophy that really exemplified his approach to public service. He said, you do the right thing and you land on your feet. There is a lot in Brad's philosophy that he shared with me. He did what he thought was right. He trusted the voters he represented. And while he was knocked down in some contests, he remained thoughtful and optimistic and landed on his feet. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Lathrop. Additional remarks regarding Brad Ashford. Senator McCollister.

McCOLLISTER: Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you, Senator Lathrop. Brad was my friend of 65 years, 65 years. His mother was our den mother in Cub Scouts. We went to the same church and of course, we now live in the same neighborhood. I'm, like, four houses away from Brad. And of course, we attended the same high school, Westside High School, where Brad is in the Hall of Fame, justifiably so. Brad was a giant, a gentle giant, an absent-minded professor. That's the best way to describe Brad, but a policy wonk 100 percent through and through. I love Brad. I, of course, succeeded him in District 20 and perhaps we share some of the traits. But Brad was a great friend. I'm going to miss him and I wish him well wherever he is. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator McCollister. Remarks regarding former Senator Denny Byars. Senator Dorn, Senator Dorn, you're recognized.

DORN: Thank you, colleagues, and thank you for those kind words for Senator Ashford. As many of you know, I've been visiting with you about the health of Denny Byars over the last several weeks and he passed away last week and yesterday was his funeral. He died peacefully at his home in Beatrice and was laid to rest yesterday in Beatrice. Denny was a developmental-- development officer and governmental affairs director with the Martin Luther Home, now Mosaic, where he found his passion in advocacy for persons with developmental disabilities. Denny dedicated much of his life to public service. He was grateful to the people of Beatrice and Gage County for allowing him to serve and was elected to various positions 11 times. He proudly served in elected office for 38 years over the course of seven decades as a justice of the peace, Beatrice Board of Education member, and most recently on the Gage County Board of Supervisors until his passing last week. He was Gage County's longest-serving Nebraska state senator from 1988 to 1994 and then again from 1999 to 2006. Denny was appointed to the Legislature in 1988, elected two years later, and served until 1994. He then was elected again as a state lawmaker in 19-- in 2000, serving until he left the Legislature due to term limits

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

in 2007. While a state senator, Denny Byars served as Vice Chairman of both the Education and the Health and Human Services Committee. He was known as an advocate for those with developmental disabilities and worked for Mosaic while he was serving as a Nebraska lawmaker. He was also influential in helping to establish the public health system in Nebraska using settlement funds from tobacco companies distributed to the states, along with dedicated state funding. He viewed his service as an opportunity to help others and promote the community he loved and he cherished the relationships he built along the way. More than anything, Denny enjoyed being out and about in the town he loved; flashing his smile, shaking your hand, and sharing an encouraging word to brighten your day. He was once asked if you could live anywhere else, where would that be? His reply was Beatrice. I want to be able to walk down the street and see and visit with the people I know. We joined with his wife, Janet, their sons, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, and other family members and all of those people he knew to celebrate a long life well-lived in service to others. Danny Byars was currently serving on the Gage County board, was an active member there until his health the last month or two didn't allow him to do that, but he often talked to me about his service up here in this Chamber and of all the people he met and like they just talked about Senator Ashford, about his public service to the people of his community and to the people of the state of Nebraska. For the state of Nebraska to have two servants that did as good a job as they did, we are so, so lucky to have them and we thank both of them for giving their time and their family to serve this great state. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Dorn. Members, as the Speaker indicated, there were no motions to override gubernatorial vetoes so we'll move to the next motion on the agenda. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, proposed rules change offered by Senator Hughes as Chair of the Executive Board. It proposes to amend Rule 3, Section 2. The change was offered on April 12. Senator Clements and his Rules Committee met, reported that rules change back to the floor for further consideration. The change is pending, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Hughes, you're recognized to open on your motion.

HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. As you'll recall, this rule change became necessary because of redistricting. We moved District 36 or-- yes, District 36 from the third caucus into the first caucus. We have done that in statute. Now we need to make that

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

rule a rules change for the Rules of the Legislature. I would certainly encourage your green vote. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hughes. Is there any discussion on the rules change motion? Senator Clements.

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Mr. President. I think Senator Hughes misspoke. The rule changes District 36 from the third caucus to the second caucus. Senator Hughes, would you answer a question?

FOLEY: Senator Hughes, would you yield, please?

HUGHES: Of course.

CLEMENTS: And Senator Hughes, did you mean to go to the second caucus?

HUGHES: I did, my apologies.

CLEMENTS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Clements and Senator Hughes. Any further discussion? I see none. Senator Hughes waives closing. The question before the body is the adoption of the-- Senator Hughes's motion regarding a rules change. Those in favor vote aye; those oppose vote nay. Have you all voted who care to? Record, please.

CLERK: 45 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the adoption of the proposed rules change.

FOLEY: The motion has been adopted. Proceeding to legislative resolutions, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Briese offered LR462. It expresses the Legislature's-- it honors the-- Darren K. [SIC] Krull for making the ultimate sacrifice while serving as a volunteer fire first responder.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Briese is not in the Chamber today. Senator Murman, I understand you can handle this issue for us. Senator Briese [SIC], you're recognized.

MURMAN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. When Senator Briese called me yesterday and asked me to read this resolution, I was very honored to do that. There are several large families referenced in the resolution that all grew up in Glenvil and the town that I'm from so I've known these families for many, many years. And I'll read LR462: whereas, on Thursday, April 7, 2022, Elwood Fire Chief Darren D. Krull

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

was killed in a motor vehicle collision on Nebraska Highway 283, approximately eight miles north of Arapahoe, Nebraska, while responding to a large wildfire which burned over 35,000 acres. And whereas, Chief Krull was born to Gary and Glenda Krull on December 19, 1967, in Hastings, Nebraska. Chief Krull grew up to Glenvil-- in Glenvil, Nebraska, graduated from Sandy Creek High School in 1986, and frequently joined the-- and subsequently joined the Glenvil Fire Department. And whereas, Chief Krull married Cheryl Stolley on March 9, 1999-- 1990. The couple was blessed with three beautiful daughters, Tessa, Christina, and Roxann. Chief Krull was also-- also served the military and for a portion of his duty, was stationed in Oklahoma. And whereas, Chief Krull and his family later moved to southwest Nebraska, where he worked for Aurora Coop. And whereas, Chief Krull dedicated 36 years to serving others as a firefighter and EMS provider. Chief Krull served as fire chief in the Nebraska communities of Overton and Elwood for a combined 18 years. Chief Krull lived his life fully dedicated to helping, teaching, and serving others. Chief Krull was summoned to countless emergencies where he had to drop everything he was doing in his personal life to become external-- an extraordinary volunteer first responder who ran towards danger, not away. Chief Krull was tough enough and selfless enough to put in a full day's work and then be ready for more. And whereas, Chief Krull is survived by his wife, Sheryl Krull of Elwood, daughters, Christina with husband Christopher Davison of Bertrand, Nebraska, Roxann with husband Brad Bieck of Aurora, several chil-- grandchildren, parents Gary and Glenda Krull of Glenvil, sisters, Michelle Harm and Amy Krull of Glenvil, and numerous other family members and friends. And whereas, Chief Krull was preceded in death by his daughter, Tessa Sadd, and grandparents. Now, therefore, be it resolved by the members of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature of Nebraska, Second Session that the Legislature honors Darren D. Krull for making the ultimate sacrifice while serving as a volunteer first responder, that the Legislature offers its condolences to the family of Darren D. Krull, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the family of Darren D. Krull. Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Murman. Members, you've heard the presentation of the resolution. Those in favor of the resolution vote aye; those opposed vote nay. Record, please.

CLERK: 44 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of LR462.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Pursuant to the Rules of Legislature, I acknowledge that LR462 has been adopted by the One Hundred Seventh

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

Legislature on this date. Moving to the next item on the agenda. Senator Pansing Brooks, you're recognized for a motion.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. I move that a committee of five be appointed to notify the Governor that the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, Second Session of the Nebraska Legislature is about to complete its work and to return with any message the Governor may have for the Legislature.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Pansing Brooks. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion has been adopted. Pursuant to that motion, I hereby announce the following escort committee: Senators Friesen, Kolterman, McCollister, Stinner, and Williams. If those five senators could please retire to the rear of the Chamber and then proceed to the Governor's Office to escort him to the Chamber. Mr. Sergeant at Arms, you're recognized.

SERGEANT OF ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting the Governor of the great state of Nebraska, Governor Pete Ricketts and First Lady Susanne Shore.

FOLEY: Members of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature and distinguished guests, I present to you the Governor of the great state of Nebraska, Governor Pete Ricketts.

GOVERNOR RICKETTS: Thank you. Good morning. President Foley, Speaker Hilgers, members of the Legislature, it is a privilege to be with you here on the closing of the second session of the One Hundred Seventh Nebraska Legislature. I have just one word for this session and this body: wow. Wow. What fantastic work you have done in this short 60-day session, historic work, work that will have generational impact. I actually want to take a step back a few years to recount some of the successes that you have had. Let's go back to 2020. We are in a worldwide pandemic. Your session was interrupted and yet, while other states were shutting down, you came back and finished the people's work. You were able to pass bills that protect the pre-born babies from the barbaric practice of dismemberment abortion and one of the most significant property tax relief packages ever, LB1107. This year, Nebraskans are understanding that important work from 2020. When we filed our income taxes, we got a 25.3 percent rebate back from the state for whatever we paid into our local school district in property taxes. That's significant. And then 2021 came along and you built on that by passing tax relief for our seniors, for our veterans. You helped connect 30,000 Nebraskans to broadband and then you came back in a special session and redrew our maps for redistricting. We were

the third state to get that done and your maps are solid. Other states are still fighting over their maps. Tremendous work. And then we come into this legislative session, a short 60-day session, and you are able to pass the most significant tax relief bill we have ever had at the state of Nebraska. You built upon the tax relief in LB1107 to make sure that that wouldn't go away and added more property tax relief. You were able to accelerate the tax relief for our seniors and you were able to provide income tax relief for our individuals and our businesses. Now, working together, we've been able to provide \$4 billion in property tax relief through my administration. This bill, LB873, will provide another \$3.4 billion in tax relief by the year 2027. Folks, this tax bill, tax relief bill, is 12 times more relief than any tax relief bill in any previous administration. It is truly historic. But wait, that's not all. We also took tremendous steps to protect the public safety. You all passed bills that will make investments in our law enforcement training academy in Grand Island so that we can continue to train our law enforcement officers here in the state and make sure they get the proper training they need to serve the public. You invested in our Nebraska State Patrol Crime Lab so that we can help bring justice for those victims of crime. You established reciprocity for law enforcement officers in other states so that they can come work to protect the public safety here. You waived college tuition fees for law enforcement officers who are attending our state colleges or our community colleges and you provide tax relief to retired law enforcement officers who are paying for their own healthcare. In addition to that, you set aside \$175 million to replace our Nebraska State Penitentiary. And while you didn't give us the authorization to move forward, you have set aside the money and a future Legislature will either have to replace the Nebraska State Penitentiary or, I believe, invest millions more in updating an antiquated facility. But all that together, it represents historic investments in public safety. I can't think of another time when the Legislature has done more to invest in public safety than in this legislative session. And then you went on to invest in our water resources. The Speaker and his STAR WARS project will help make investments at Lake McConaughy for a marina there; expand the marina at Lewis and Clark Lake; convention center and lodge, Niobrara State Park; and begin the work on a lake between Lincoln and Omaha that will not only create wonderful amenities, it will also help us store more of our water here in the state. These investments will have generational impacts and help us attract and retain people in our state. Also importantly, you gave the state the authorization to move forward on the Perkins County Canal Project. This is vital for us to protect our water resources. We must build this canal and reservoir

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

system to assure that water from the South Platte River will continue to flow to Nebraska in the non-irrigation season. The state of Colorado has already announced their intention to take every drop of water that they legally can. If we do not have this legal resource, they will take it all, and folks, we can already see the importance of this today here in Lincoln. Just recently, the city of Lincoln asked consumers to conserve water usage because of the drought we're facing. Can you imagine how much more difficult that would be if we were not receiving that water from the South Platte River? It will be important for future legislatures to fund the completion of this project to assure that we can continue to get the water out of the South Platte River that we need not only for drinking water, but for irrigation, power generation, and to protect the natural environment. A fourth historic effort is the work you did with regard to ARPA of \$1.4 billion that you allocated to our state to be able to help us grow. That money will help contribute to the overall efforts to revitalize north and south Omaha, \$255 million. Another \$194 million for other underserved communities across the state that will invest in economic development, housing, financial literacy, and other projects to help our state continue to grow. You made investments in our community colleges so that we can train our workforce and the next generations of Nebraskans to take the jobs that we have. And you've invested in numerous other projects and one of the ones I think is going to be so important for our state is increasing what we're paying people in 24/7 facilities so they can continue to serve citizens here in Nebraska. All-- any one of these by themselves will be historic, but you have accomplished all four and many others, four particularly with generational impacts, in a historic nature in a short 60-day session. You should be very proud of the accomplishments you have made to pull this all together, to work together and get these bills to my desk. It's an amazing accomplishment. Now, as always, there are numerous people who were involved in passing this legislation and I want to thank just a few to highlight who have been so important in passing these things. I want to start by thanking Speaker Hilgers. The Speaker-- and yeah, let's get him a round applause. We can give him a round of applause here. This is a good place. The Speaker and I have had a wonderful working relationship. It's been great cooperation between his office and my office to be able to work on all these different pieces of legislation and I appreciate the time, effort, energy he has put in. I also want to thank Chair Linehan of the Revenue Committee and all the Revenue Committee members for their effort in bringing about this historic tax relief. And, and not only was it Senator Linehan, but also we had other senators who were part of crafting that bill that could get to my desk. Senators Briese,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

Senator Friesen, Senator Hughes all had a hand in crafting that bill as well as the Senator-- Senator Linehan and Speaker Hilgers so I appreciate all your work in getting that done. Another important accomplishment, and not just in this session, but across all eight years of my terms, has been working with you to make sure we craft a budget that serves the people in Nebraska and continues to control our budget. And the man who was in charge of the Appropriations Committee for the last six years, Senator Stinner, has done a phenomenal job. We have worked-- yeah, give him a round of applause. We have worked together to serve the people of Nebraska, but also craft budgets that across those eight budget years, increases spending on average 2.8 percent per year. That's a terrific accomplishment. It keeps it below that threshold of 3 percent and allows us to not only manage our budget, but also vital in delivering that tax relief. And all the work that you have done, we can see today in the results. We can see that the work that you did to provide the resources to the state during the pandemic have helped us have a nation-leading pandemic response. Politico ranked Nebraska the number one state for pandemic response and the National Bureau of Economic Research ranked us number two, still giving us an A-plus. We see that we just got ranked this week for the most recession-resilient state because of our low unemployment rate, low debt, and of course, that's one of the other manifestations of your great work over these years. Nebraska has the lowest unemployment rate in the country and the lowest unemployment rate in state history. In fact, we have more Nebraskans employed today, 1,037,000, than we have ever had employed in our state history, nearly 20,000 more than pre-pandemic. And when you have Nebraskans employed and low unemployment rate, that means there's opportunities for Nebraska families. This is why the Annie Casey Foundation ranked Nebraska the number two place for children's economic well-being. And it makes sense; parents have jobs, children are taking care of. That's part of the accomplishments. And we also see the strength of our economy reflected in the revenues we're collecting here at the state. When we adjourned sine die a year ago, we had a forecast. Since then, the Forecasting Board has raised that forecast by over \$1 billion for this two-year biennium. And folks, through three-quarters of one year of that two-year biennium, we have already collected \$757 million above that forecast toward that \$1 billion and that's how we can provide the tax relief and still make all the investments we talked about in public safety and water and all the other projects we discussed. When you all steward this state well, we see those results. Now, there's several other people I would like to thank. In my team, we have numerous people who have worked hard throughout the years to be able to serve Nebraskans and especially during the pandemic. We had

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

people working very, very hard around the clock, literally, to respond to that pandemic. We had a number of people who were working with you as we crafted legislation for this session, this historic session. I've got wonderful cabinet members. I've got wonderful people in our agencies. It would be-- it would take long-- far too long for me to name all of them, but there are several that I do want to mention. First, I'd like to mention my chief of staff, Matt Miltenberger. He is only 40 years old and essentially the chief operating officer of a 13,000-person organization. He's a phenomenal talent. He has worked to ensure our operations run smoothly and to make sure state government continues to serve people. Can we please give him a round of applause, please? I also want to thank someone you're all familiar with, someone who has worked in this building and has years of institutional knowledge in how to craft law and serve the people of Nebraska, someone who's-- just works, again long, long hours during our legislative session, working directly with many of you, Lauren Kintner, as a director of my Policy Research Office, works for us all through the state. And finally, there's another young man who has stepped up into the role that he just does a wonderful job. It's in my budget office. He has helped us craft these budgets, worked on the tax bills and make sure all the numbers line up, and again, is just another phenomenal talent. Please help me thank my Budget Director, Lee Will. And of course, I would not be able to be Governor if it wasn't for the love and support of my lovely wife, Susanne Shore, our first lady. Can we please give her a round of applause? Oh, look at that. You even got a standing ovation back there. That's awesome, thank you. All the success is always a team effort. It requires you all working together, collaborating, cooperating, and I want to thank you for the work that you do for the people of Nebraska. You clearly have placed that priority, whether it was in 2020 when you came back to finish the people's work, in 2021 when you came back for redistricting, and this year, in this short session, passing historic legislation on taxes, public safety, water, ARPA. You all spend time away from your friends and family and not for a lot of money. I have seen how hard you work and you come to this Chamber and then go to your hearings that can last till 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 o'clock at night. The people of Nebraska probably don't fully appreciate how much time you invest in doing the people's work here in the state. Thank you so much for all you do. We have 13 members that will be leaving us, leaving this body. I'd like to ask those 13 members to please stand and be recognized. As you leave, you can take great satisfaction knowing that you were part of a legislative body that truly passed historic legislation. Once again, thank you all for what you do for the people of Nebraska, the sacrifices you make, the hard work you put in. And

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

congratulations on the great success that you have had in this historic second session of the One Hundred Seventh Nebraska Legislature. God bless you all in your work and God bless the great state of Nebraska.

FOLEY: Thank you, Governor Ricketts. Would the escort committee please assist the Governor and the first lady as they depart the Chamber? Members, as we prepare to resume, I'd like to announce that Senator Halloran has some guests visiting today. We have with us 62 senior government students from Minden High School in Minden, Nebraska. Those students and a couple of teachers and sponsors are with us on the north balcony. Students, if you could please rise, we'd like to welcome you to the Nebraska Legislature. Members, please come to order. Senator Slama, you are recognized.

SLAMA: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning, colleagues. It is my distinct honor and privilege, as the last Chairman of the Enrollment and Review Committee, to recognize a very special member of our body, our current Enrollment and Review Committee Chairman, Senator McKinney. Senator McKinney has been diligent in making motions and being here to make motions. I can only think of maybe one or two times in which I've had to make an E&R motion with him not on the floor. So he is a wonderful addition to this body and he's done wonderful work so if you'll join me in recognizing Senator McKinney for his service.

FOLEY: Mr. Speaker, you're recognized.

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues, it is my distinct honor and I hope you join me in a second in honoring and thanking our presiding officer, the Lieutenant Governor. I could probably think of nothing more frustrating than sitting here and listening to us debate and not have the ability to do anything about it. I am grateful for your teamwork, your professionalism throughout. We've had an amazing working relationship for the last two years to help make this body run as good as I think it possibly could have been and so if you would all join me in thanking our presiding officer, Mike Foley.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for those kind remarks. Senator Hughes, you're recognized.

HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. President. Sorry for the delay. I just wanted to take a moment to extend thanks and congratulations to our Speaker that he has done a tremendous job of a very difficult situation of

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

herding 48 of us cats to try and get us all in the same direction. I've had the privilege of working with-- very closely with Speaker Hilgers on a lot of other issues, not scheduling bills so don't blame me for that, but he's done a great job and he certainly deserves our thanks. Thank you, Speaker Hilgers.

FOLEY: Senator Linehan, you're recognized.

LINEHAN: Thank you, Mr. President. So it's my honor today, because Senator Lindstrom wasn't with us last week, to honor him. So I don't watch a lot of TV, but I've watched enough lately to know that he and I are not in the same generation. Hopefully, I'll still be around here for two years, but I understand that my, my first recollection of a film was The Swiss Family Robinson, which was released in 1960. Another famous film that I remember from my childhood teenage years was A Summer Place. It was scandalous when it was released and my generation's heartthrob was Troy Donahue, whose glamor shots look strikingly familiar to Brett Lindstrom. Google it. I promise. So I'm going to try to do another thing my generation has problems with sometimes-- see if I can do this-- and I actually thought of this before your speech-- oops. Title of that song, A New Hope. Star Wars. That's-- belongs to Senator Lindstrom's generation. Another famous actor from his generation is Tom Cruise, who, like Senator Lindstrom, will never grow old. We have to admit the camera loves Senator Lindstrom, but besides Senator Lindstrom being Mr. GQ, he embodies the abilities of a successful Legislature. Elected in 2014, he committed himself to the goal of not taxing Social Security. Starting in 2015, he brought a bill that would have phased out Social Security tax in just five years, but that bill did not make it out of committee. Again, he tried in 2016 also. Bill didn't get out of committee. In 2017, he tried again. That bill faced the same fate. He kept at it in 2018, passing any bill that began to address the issue. In 2021, Senator Lindstrom was finally able to get tax relief for Social Security income. Finally, this year, his efforts found complete success. Nebraska will now join 37 states that don't tax Social Security. This from a member who was just past 30 when he was elected to the Legislature. He understands to get big things done in the Legislature, it often takes many, many small steps. Senator Lindstrom is also the definition of one of my father's-- late father's sayings: when you get knocked down, get up. In 2019, at the beginning of the One Hundred Sixth Legislature, Senator Lindstrom and I both ran for Chair of the Revenue Committee. It was hard-fought, intense contest and as you all know, they're very personal. I won by one vote. I expected anger and disappointment from Senator Lindstrom. Quite the contrary. He was, in every respect, a professional. He just didn't get

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

up. He jumped up. In the four years I've chaired the Revenue Committee, he's helped guide us in implementing, as we just heard the Governor refer to, the most significant tax cuts in the history of the state, including property taxes, income taxes, no taxes on Social Security. He's been critical to our success as a committee. This year, Senator Lindstrom provided another example of his ability to jump right back up. When the Revenue Committee was working on one of the largest tax cuts in state history, Senator Lindstrom was going to carry the bill that would have provided such cuts. We had to change the strategy and-- to push the bill across the finish line. Senator Lindstrom did not take his ball and go home. He could have. It's happened before in the Legislature. He showed up the next day to support our efforts as a committee. He is a team player by every definition of the word. I also want to thank his family, his wife, Leigh, his children-- and they're beautiful too-- Colette, Barron, Olivia, and his parents who I know, Dan and Deb, who are very supportive and he couldn't have done it, as none of us can unless you have your family's support. Senator Lindstrom's eight years here have helped make Nebraska a better state. This body will miss his presence and his consistent voice. At just 41 years old, Senator Lindstrom is young. I know he doesn't think so, but he is. I know there are many more years of public service ahead of him, wherever that may take him. I wish him the best of luck. This body will miss you and I will miss you as my Vice Chair. Thank you, Senator Lindstrom, for always willing to lend a hand to Linehan. Thank you.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Linehan and Senator Lindstrom. Colleagues, we are now going to do the farewell remarks. When you are called, please come up to the Clerk's desk to make your remarks. First is Senator Lindstrom. Senator Lindstrom.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's hard to follow that so thank you, Senator Linehan. It's been a true pleasure to work with you over the last several years and all of you. I've had the privilege and honor of being in this body for eight years and I used to sit where Senator Lowe sat my first couple of years. And watching the senators leave and give their farewell speeches, I never thought I'd get here, but here I am. And so first I'd like to say thank you again to my, my family for letting me jump into this endeavor. I couldn't have done it without you. All the hours spent knocking on 10,000-plus doors over the summers and in the cold weather, the warm weather, all of that in between, and I want to thank everyone who helped me on that journey to first get elected and then reelected. That's my wife, Leigh, of soon-to-be 15 years, Colette, Barron, and Olivia, who are at school right now-- and I don't know if they'll watch, but maybe they can

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

watch later-- and then my mom and dad, who have always been supportive in what I'm doing and especially this job. I've had a lot of different opportunities as a state senator, both to serve as a Chairman and Vice Chairman of Banking Commerce, and Insurance, Vice Chair of Revenue Committee, Vice Chair of Retirement Systems. And so the folks that have worked on that staff as my staff, Bill Marienau, Jan Foster when I was on the Banking Committee, Mitchell Clark, Tim Duey, Sam Trofholz, Sam Pynes, who have served as my administrative aides over the years, and one of the things I encouraged them to do is if they ever had an opportunity to become a legislative aide, to seek that out. And I'm happy to report that a lot of those folks have become legislative aides with some of the members here in the body to this day. I want to thank my legislative aides, Randi Scott, who's now working from outside the glass. I saw her earlier. I just got a wave out there. And then Krissa Delka, who's been with me the last several years, who originally served on Revenue Committee. I apologize to the Revenue Committee, I took a good one from you and took her on my-- under my administration. I want to thank everyone up here who's helped us look good from time to time and all my staff who has helped me look good-- when I first came to the body, I, I was pretty quiet and I tend to be relatively quiet on the floor. I like to do my work behind the scenes and have the one-on-one conversations before we ever get to, as we all term it-- defined as prime time. But I had the opportunity to sit there for, for a couple of years and watch Senator Chambers and watch the other senior members work on legislation and got to observe what I thought was right and how people could accomplish those things. And I always found the most effective members of the body were the ones that engaged not on a political basis, but on policy and trying to interact with individuals. As we know as Nebraskans, we're all one degree of separation, probably in the crowd right now, we're half related anyway. And I can tell you that's true no matter where you go in the state and so relationships matter. And I think as a senator, what was very important to me was no matter what topic, no matter what issue, no matter if it was coming down on who is going to be a chairman or not a chairman, we're all on this together. There's 1.9 million of us in the state and we're all in this together, no matter if we're Republican, Democrat, urban, rural. And it's vitally important, especially in this body and the uniqueness of this body, that we come together and work on the big issues. And so I've been very proud of the fact that over the last eight years, I've-- hopefully, I, I-- is the feedback of the senators that I've worked, if you felt that I have been that. I've been that voice. I'm somebody that you can work with and I hopefully can do that here in the future as well. But I've really appreciated the opportunity to serve the

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

district, District 18, both as it originally was and even through the redistricting. For them to take a chance on me when I was very new in the political world, had never served in any political office and they took a chance on me. And one of those issues was when I was knocking those doors, as you all know, and you have your 15 elevator-- 15-second elevator pitch was the-- ending the tax on Social Security income. And it took it several years, but persistence pays off and I want to thank everybody in this body for encouraging me. And ultimately, your vote to accomplish that goal is very important to me and so thank you for doing that amongst other things. You know, we-- when I, when I first got down here, I think I passed one bill and I thought, wow, I don't know how, how I'm going to do this. I don't know if I'm too good at this job, but again, you learn the ropes, you learn how to interact. And I think it-- when it's all said and done, I'll have worked and passed about 60-plus bills that I've-- I brought on a lot of different issues that I never thought I'd be involved in working with the different members down here. School funding, never thought I'd be involved in that. The opioid epidemic, never thought I'd be involved in that. Nurses and everything that kind of came through the, through the experience. And so finally, I-- just thank you to the state of Nebraska. Thank you to District 18 for allowing me to serve you. I look forward to maybe having an opportunity to do that again and just want to again, say thank you to all my colleagues past, present, and all the members that I've served with in the state of Nebraska and District 18. So thank you. It's been a privilege to serve you the last eight years. Thank you.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Lindstrom and for your service. Senator Morfeld, will you please come down?

MORFELD: [MICROPHONE MALFUNCTION]

CLERK: Test, test. Can you hear that? Better? OK, I'm sorry.

MORFELD: Did you do that on purpose, Mike? His last prank on me. A recurring theme since I was elected in 2014 has been observing my friends and colleagues coming up to this desk every two years and bidding farewell. Never before did the speaker not work on them, but in any case, I'm glad to be the first. I had always wondered what that would be like and I suppose now I get to, to find out. One of my good friends, Galen Hadley, once told me a few weeks before he was term-limited that while he was opposed to term limits, it certainly was a graceful way of departing without disappointing anyone. And I think he was right. No one will fully understand the immense honor it is to serve in the Nebraska Legislature until they've had the

opportunity to do so themselves. No one will understand the sacrifice it takes on your friends, family, and even your own mental and physical health. I'm so incredibly fortunate to have Rachel in my life who really keeps me on track and grounded; the long nights, sometimes sleepless ones, and incredible happiness, and also equally incredible disappointments that it can also bring. No one will understand also the incredible bonds that you create with your fellow senators, either. Some of my fiercest debates and filibusters have been with some of my closest friends leading the charge on the other side, one of them right behind me now. While there are plenty of things that I will not miss-- and I won't dwell on those, so don't worry-- I will spend some time on the things that I will miss. First, first and foremost, representing and learning for my constituents. We are just stewards of our districts, but when you spend all that time knocking the doors, making phone calls, going to community events, and spending late nights in here, you can't help but grow attached to it and the people that you represent. I will never forget the satisfaction of being able to help a constituent with an issue or policy that they need. And I can remember a lot of them feeling very grateful in talking to me about it still to this day or the feeling of disappointing someone you represent and deeply respect. Second, the incredible bonds that we forged with one another. Many of my closest friends are now many of you. The friendships you create in this body are unique and no one can fully understand your experience here the way that the person sitting next to you right now can. These bonds often know no ideological boundaries and truly, in many respects, I think we are a family; happy, sometimes sad, and often dysfunctional. Third, I will miss the opportunity to constantly learn from all of you and Nebraskans across the state. Never when I was running for office did I realize the incredible ability and opportunity to learn from so many knowledgeable people during my time in the Legislature. Every day, a new issue, a new opportunity, and a new problem to be solved presents itself and so many incredible Nebraskans to learn from and all of those issues. Finally, I'll miss the opportunity-- this is where I'm going to break up-- finally, I'll miss the opportunity to work with my incredible staff who have been with me the entire eight years in the body and for many years before that. I've been so incredibly fortunate to have such amazing people working with me: Julia Holmquist for her ability to make even the most mundane legislative tasks fun and comical-- and you all know what I'm talking about-- and her collection of amazing socks that make any number of political statements or nonpolitical statements, for that matter. And Nancy Bowen, who kept both of us on task with-- and out of trouble with Patrick and many people in the legislative divisions. Nancy not

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

only demonstrated enormous patience with constituents who were sometimes understandably upset, but also more impressive patience with Julia and I. Both Nancy and Julia started out as staff and quickly became family along the way. While my time here has come to an end, many of your terms of service have just begun. I hope that those continuing to serve will maintain the independent and nonpartisan institutions of this body in the spirit of the father of it, George Norris. This will not always be in your immediate interest, but it's in the best interests of the state and the respect of the institution among Nebraskans, which has one of the highest approval ratings of any Legislature in the country. That is something we should all be proud of. Short-term gains when it comes to our institutions often lead to long-term losses and future legislatures will do well to remember it. But above all, I hope you stay in touch and know that you always have a friend and an open door on Holdrege Street in the "Fightin' 46th" Legislative District.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Morfeld, for your service. Senator Gragert, please come down.

GRAGERT: Well, thank you and good morning. This has been a day of thank yous and it's going to continue with this address. I just thought I could maybe do this without any notes, but then my wife reminded me yesterday that I could hide my own Easter eggs and I did Sunday. I hid, I hid 12 of them and I still got to find six of them, so. So I, I have some notes today. Well, I'd like to start this farewell address off with a quote from President Reagan. We can get a lot done here if we don't worry about who gets the credit. That being said, I want to thank all my colleagues for working with me and me working with you in passing some great legislation for all Nebraskans. One individual particularly I want to thank is Senator Colonel Tom Brewer; senator as a colleague, colonel as a comrade, and Tom as a, as a friend. Senator Brewer has always-- has had my six from day one. He was out there walking with me in the parades and when needed in the committee briefings and on-- here on the floor, he always spoke up for me. I appreciate that and I thank you, Colonel and God bless. Next, the most important people in this building-- and I'd like to have them please rise. They're up here in the south balcony. I think it is over there, but my staff, my past and present staff, Alex Brechbill, Turner Adams, and Kim Warneke Davis. I can't thank them enough for their dedicated service. To Alex and Turner, who always kept me in the right place at the correct time and was-- and provided our constituents with the best communications possible. To Kim, the heartbeat of the operation, who her dedication, professionalism, and friendship-- for all her dedication, professionalism, and friendship over the last four

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

years. Kim's dedication and professionalism is second to none. Kim will be retiring after 40-plus years of service in this State Capitol. Please give me-- help me give her a round of applause. Kim has been responsible for a lot of great legislation for all Nebraskans. I want to congratulate and wish Kim a very long and fun-filled retirement with her husband, Brett [PHONETIC], kids, and grandkids. Kim, now relax and go enjoy your well-deserved retirement. Lastly, thank you to my wife, kids, family, and friends for not-- for all their support over the last four years. One cannot even come close to success without family and I have had the best. Finally, before I sit back down, I want to leave you with this. I have never prayed over this Legislature, but I will promise you this: I will pray for you all who remain and the new legislators for their wisdom to do the right thing-- for doing the right things for the right reasons. Also, for those of you who fish, my wish to you is for tight lines and calm winds. Take care, everyone. Thank you. God bless you all.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Gragert, for your service. Senator Matt Hansen, will you come to the podium? Senator Hansen.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Speaker Hilgers. Thank you all. So first, let me say that when I was writing this speech, it began solely as a list of names of people I wanted to thank and a long list at that. I know I will not be able to thank everyone I should, so let me just say at the beginning that everyone who's ever helped me get to this point in my life, who's ever knocked a door, testified on a bill, sent me a kind note, thank you. You mean more to me than I ever can truly convey. Let me also thank the people of District 26 in northeast Lincoln for believing in me and giving me a chance to represent you for the past eight years. I knew I was a bit of an underdog in my first race, a 25-year-old first-time candidate a couple of months past the bar exam, but you saw something in me and I'm forever grateful for that opportunity. Getting to work on the policy of the state in Nebraska has been a true joy and I'm hopeful that I've repaid that honor through my service and votes over these past eight years. Next, I'd like to thank my family, to my mom and dad, Dave and Mary Kay, and my sister, Marie. Thank you too for believing in me and supporting me throughout this adventure. I am grateful that you supported me both becoming the person I am and supporting my career, especially that first campaign. One of my dad's favorite things to share over the course of my serving in the Legislature is that he's gone from being recognized-- I've gone from being recognized as Dave's son to he's gone to being recognized as Matt's dad. So mom and dad, with the level of service and altruism that you two show, I'm honored to be compared to you like that. Over the course of my tenure here, I've been lucky

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

to work with a number of wonderful staffers, all of whom I owe a debt of gratitude and who have contributed and taught me something in their own way. Amanda Johnson: starting off with me on day one, you created so many of the norms and traditions of our office that we still carry to this day. The longer I serve, the more I appreciate all the behind-the-scenes work that I now recognize you must have done during those two sessions. Kate Gotsdiner, at a time of changing staff and shuffling duties, you were able to come in and build upon the team and build upon the foundation that Amanda and Joey had started. Thank you. Keenan Roberson, at a time of unprecedented challenges during 2020, you kept our office engaged, connected, while also lively and cheerful. I'm so delighted that we got to know you and work with you during your brief career stop back in Nebraska. Maggie English, our newest member of the team, you are just a shining example of empathy and compassion and your sense of humor is unrivaled. I'm so glad we've got to work for you for the past year. Tom Green-- and they're all in the back of the balcony, if you want to point and look. Tom Green, thank you so much for your service as my committee counsel. The state of Nebraska does not truly know how lucky they were to have you serving the Business and Labor Committee during the start of the pandemic and the amount of people you helped during that stretch alone. Given your close to two decades of service to the Legislature, I have felt lucky to have your counsel and your guidance. Courtney Lyons Breitreutz, you are one of the most thoughtful and analytical people I've ever gotten to work with, to borrow a phrase I heard earlier, a true policy wonk. I appreciate your eye for good policy and your ability to balance that with a strategic view of how the Legislature actually operates. Sarah Wagelie. Sarah, for whatever reason, I found yours one of the more difficult ones to write so I literally just have your nickname written down-- it's "Swags" for the record, for everyone. Working with you over these past six years in a different-- several different roles has been one of the true joys of the Legislature. And having your friendship is one of the true things that I'm going to remember and enjoy from my tenure here-- down here. And finally, Joey Adler. Joey posted the reflection of my first campaign the other day, a campaign he managed, and I was really touched by his words. I was really reminded that how back in 2013, we were both just too underemployed 20-somethings who decided that if we worked together, we could truly make a difference. Joey, I don't believe either of us would have had the career we've had or be the person we'd be without each other and I'm truly grateful for all of your trust, support, and friendship. Next, next is a thank you to my legislative mentors, Kate Bolz and Sara Howard. I had a difficult time fitting in here my first couple of years and getting pulled in

different ways and struggling to find my role, before in my third year, really, asking for the help I needed for both them. Kate and Sara, I'm so grateful for the time you invested in me and I hope you both know your legacies for the state are secure in all those who were likewise supported and championed by your leadership. I thought next about what should come in this part of the speech to-- normally, there's some sort of pivot to reflection on service or advice to colleagues, current or future. I decided I don't really have much of that, not because I don't have thoughts on the Legislature. I think you all know I have plenty, but because, but because in the last eight years, I've actually left very few of them unsaid. What-- wasn't a laugh line there. That was really a commitment to myself that I had a finite amount of days here. I think this is day 600, as Senator Hilkemann counted, and making sure that I made the most of each bit of it. The only thing I feel the need to really say again from this point is in the future, this body needs to make sure we figure out a way to continue to support our staffers better. They really are our lifeblood of our institution and support us in more ways than I think the public or the state really ever appreciate. Regardless of what next steps in life turn out to be, I will continue to be willing to serve as support and counsel to my friends. I feel so privileged to have so many in this building in all roles. I believe I'm leading the defense of the state in the hands of people who are better prepared than I was at the same point in my careers. And finally, a final thank you to my wife, Jane, who has-- who is hiding behind a photographer-- to my wife, Jane, who has been a partner to me through all of this these past eight years. I told her that I wanted to run for the Legislature on our first date ten years ago and she accepted that as a good thing and not something else. And now we here-- now here we are, five years married, with me ending my two terms. You've been there every step of the way, from the first inkling of a campaign through some tough election years, late-night filibusters and vetoes. I think as we all know, serving in this body, our family, our spouses, our partners, our friends serve and we carry about as much as we do. So Jane, thank you for all of your support and your love over these past few years. I'm excited to see what our life beyond the Legislature will look like since it's been so much of our life together and ready to move on to new things. With that, a final thank you to the body and everyone I've ever gotten to serve with. It's been an honor. Thank you.

HILGERS: Thank you for your service, Senator Hansen. Senator Friesen, please come down. Senator Ben Hansen would like to welcome 16 fourth- and fifth-grade students from St. Paul's Lutheran School in West Point and among them, I think Senator Albrecht would like to welcome her

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

grandchild, Keegan Fischer, her other grandchild, Kylie Fischer, Laura Fisher, who is the mother of Keegan and Kylie. They are all seated in the north balcony. If you would rise and be welcomed by your Nebraska Legislature. Senator Friesen.

FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. President. So I always said I would never come up here and talk. I wanted to use the podium back there, but they didn't leave me a choice. You know, I, I sat next to Senator Chambers for quite a few years and I learned a lot from him and one of the favorite things he always said as he didn't come here to make friends. And I said I didn't either; I came here to do my job. But along the way, I think everybody makes some friends here and it's been no exception. I have enjoyed most parts of this, not all. You know, I've had good staff and that's what I will tell anyone thinking of running for this office who-- that gets here is make sure you have good staff because they can make anyone-- almost, almost anyone look really good. And my staff has been that way the whole time I've been here and I'm going to run through-- I've had a few staff changes, but not a lot, and first, as Kurt Bulgrin, who has been with me all eight years. I've known him for probably 16 years when he first helped me, at one point in time, run for office. And I've always appreciated working with him and his sense of humor. And that first couple of years, Barb Lococo was also with me and very much enjoyed her advice and her long tenure here and helping me get started. It was kind of-- it was awesome, really. I mean, it was-- having two experienced staff here really sets the stage for where you go. After that, I'm just going to go down in no particular order, really. It's Tip O'Neill and I think most of you have met him. He was-- he did look like Tip O'Neill, the other one. He does have a picture of himself in the office that way. Elice Hubbert, she was one of my sweetest committee clerks. And when I first met her-- she is, I think, a retired English professor from the university and she was one tough lady. Sally Shultz, the woman that knows everything. She has been my committee clerk now at the end and she has been great. Mike Hybl, he has worked for me twice. He had to quit in the middle and go work for the Public Service Commission and get that fixed and then he wanted to make sure I finished out without messing up so he came back and helped me out to finish up. And Andrew Vinton-- I think I see him sitting up there-- he helped me out great. And as a young man, he is going to go places. What a, what a smart guy and I think he's going to do well longer term. One other person, Audrey Vaught, a good friend, my treasurer forever, has always kept me out of trouble. Appreciate everything she's done for me. And obviously, my family. And Nancy, I will finally quit, I promise, and I'll spend more time at home. My oldest daughter, Shannon, and her daughter, Zoe

[PHONETIC]. She is my princess. My daughter, Tiffany and my son, Neal, and my one other daughter didn't get to come today, but she's been here quite a bit so I do appreciate everything. The one thing I'll say that I always felt that I represented District 34. I've always represented rural Nebraska, but I've also looked at what is best for the state. And I hope down the road-- you know, we have done a lot of things for north Omaha and south Omaha and I really hope, I really do, that that succeeds. I hope that that's the answer. And then I hope that we look at rural Nebraska and try to get some growth there because longer term, that's what's going to make this state successful. A lot of people can look to us as an example and I think we're a place that people can come to, anyone. We can work together. I have carried bills for Omaha, but we've got to think of the whole state when we're doing things. And I think this place is nonpartisan. A lot of us voted our beliefs and always politics is injected, but truly, we vote our beliefs and how we feel. I have always tried to do that. There's only a couple of votes in this whole eight years where I've struggled with how I was going to vote. Otherwise, it's-- I've been a pretty black-and-white guy and maybe I've been committed too strongly sometimes, but I have never struggled with, with votes. I've always felt that I represented my district. I hope I have. I, I want to thank the district, all of Hamilton, Merrick, Nance, and part of Hall Counties, for supporting me my eight years and making sure I didn't have an opponent. That always makes things a lot easier. But again, I, I do believe that this body is, is capable of doing great things every year, not just in short sessions, not just when we have money. And that's one thing I think overall is that I have always thought I was a conservative and I did not like spending as much money as we spent this year. I really didn't. And I hope it does good things for the state, but I think our taxpayers are going to appreciate the tax breaks we've given, the tax-- property tax, the income tax, Social Security tax. I do think they'll appreciate that, but it took a lot of time and effort to get there and we're not done. And no, we still haven't gotten enough property tax relief. With that, I appreciate and I will miss this place at times, but otherwise I'm going to spend a lot of time at home. Thank you.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Friesen, for your service. Would Senator Pansing Brooks please come down? Senator Pansing Brooks.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you, Mr.-- thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can you hear? Hello. OK. First off, I want you all to know that you can be really relieved because I added it up and I spent 63 minutes talking about you all before so that could have been added to this speech right now. So no matter how long this goes, you should all be quite grateful. So

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

the other thing is, Senator Gragert said he's never prayed over this legislative body. What the heck have you been doing? Geez. OK. Start it now, OK? Please. I've been praying over the body a lot. Also, I just-- this is certainly a bittersweet and a really bittersweet day. I'm thankful. I feel so privileged to have, have done this work and to have been able to represent my constituents, to get to know each of you. First, I want to thank the true blessings in my life: my husband, Loel, who is the wind beneath my wings, my rock, my knight in shining armor, the one that helps me every day and says, get up and keep going because he is amazing. So I love you to pieces. I also want to mention my, my-- three of the, of the family and children who are here. They aren't children. They're adults now, but anyway, we have Arianna Elnes, who's engaged to Graham, and also Avary is up there videotaping and on-- I know on the, on the TV is-- are Greg [PHONETIC] and, and Taylor. And I just feel so blessed to have had these children, these adults who have really encouraged me and helped me every step of the way. The younger people have been able to advise me and, and help me to go forward and I feel so grateful. I also want to thank Patrick O'Donnell and Dick Brown. You have both been amazing and Brandon for helping us maneuver through all of this. I told Patrick that I actually did last night write a song to the 12 Days of Christmas about the Legislature. The fifth one was "not another filibuster." So, and I was going to bring my guitar and do it. But just so Patrick didn't have a complete heart attack, I did not do that today. Also, I want to thank Carol and Diana, who have been so amazing, and Jenni and Vicki and Kitty, whom we miss, like-- all the pages and the staff and the committees and all of our offices, really, we-- you all make us so much better and I, I want to thank you and the pages as well. So I also want to thank the-- my incredible staff that I've had through the years. First it was Anna Eickholt and Adele Burke, and Anna really helped me get up to speed right away so I felt like I had a better handle on what I was doing in the Legislature. And then, then they went on to other jobs, and Chris Triebisch followed up and he has been my rock and my right hand. He can write in my voice better than anyone, and I don't know how I would have done any of it without him. And Billy Stock, who knows everybody in this-- in this whole building and everyone loves him. Tanner DeBoer and Kenna Bancroft filled in then once-- once we moved on and, and people went on to other jobs. So-- and they've done a great job filling in with that, and I can't thank them enough. So to my constituents, I am so honored to have been elected to represent you. I hope that you continue to see the value, Nebraskans and to my constituents in 20-- in LD28 of this nonpartisan Legislature, of the fact that we are a Unicameral. We are the only-- we are a small gem in the middle of this country, able to get more

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

done than any other Legislature in the country. We are, we are about people and not parties, and I think that's what's so important, and most Nebraskans don't live in a partisan prism. I also want to thank two people whom I've been privileged to work with and who really made an impact on my life in this body, and one is Judi Gaiashkaibos, the executive director of the Indian Commission. She really helped me on, on a number of the Native issues. She's bright, foresightful, creative, really passionate about our First People's needs. And also, Senator Chambers, what a joy it was to be able to serve with him, and what an honor. I know each of us learned a lot from Senator Chambers and I feel fortunate to have had six years with him. I have three pieces of advice that I've learned here, basically, besides kindness in your voice, which I have on my-- on my podium. And Dan Quick, one of the nicest guys that served in the Legislature, wrote over it "meanness in your voice." [LAUGHTER] But anyway, I-- some of the things I've learned here, number one, is to be ready to forgive and move on. I learned that the first year when Senator Morfeld brought the LGBTQ+ bill and I prioritized it. And I was so distraught, because of my son, because of the people I know working in this building, because of the, because of the people I love that embrace me and are so kind, and I-- that, that was really destructive to me. But the very next bill was about licenses for the DREAMers. And so I had to gear up and get back and, and get under control and recognize we had a whole different coalition of, of senators working together that needed to help the DREAMers, the people that are-- that we've educated and were thereby, then, just sending off to Iowa and to other states where they did accept the DREAMers. So instead, we geared up and we got that bill passed. So again, at that point, my son said, reset your expectations for some of this group, Mom, and I'm like, OK, good point. Also, my second piece of advice is to embrace those in need with abandon. I think that it's important because, you know, when the stores closed in Whiteclay, that did not take a bill that any of us passed. What it did take was an interim study. It took, it took the advocates for generations wanting to close the stores. But then we started looking through the laws and recognized that one of the, one of the triggers for the, for the licenses in the liquor stores was that we had to-- they had to have enough law enforcement. So we had a-- we had an interim hearing. This is what you can do in this body, how you can be creative and think of a difference, and we had people helping and we, we had an interim study on police and law enforcement up in the area of Sheridan County and-- including Whiteclay. And people came, public officials came and talked to the-- talked to the people at the hearing, and said, no, we don't have enough law enforcement, thinking, of course, that they'd get more money from the state for law

enforcement. What they actually did was trigger the Liquor Control Commission laws that said you must have law enforcement or your licenses will not be renewed. So I tell you that story so that you can remember what's important is to be creative, figure out how to help people with abandon, and to do it creatively and figure out the best way. I didn't need to bring a bill on that. We had a study, and two weeks after that, the, the licenses were not renewed and the Supreme Court ruled that they were not going to be renewed, so-- and finally, let's see, I have a third piece of advice. Oh, be persistent, and that's, that's because I've, I've fought for counsel for kids in Nebraska ever since I got in this body and found out we didn't have lawyers for kids automatically across the state in this-- for Nebraska kids. To me, that was one of the most heartrending things that I learned when I first got here, and I had to bring it back year after year and work with, with the people who are fighting most ardently against this until we finally got it passed. And people know that it's a Supreme Court law, so we passed it, and I, I just want everybody to feel persistent. Don't give up. And with that, I want to read you one last thing that is one of my favorite quotes. It's called "You were Made-- You were Made for This," and it's by Clarissa Pinkola Estes. She's an author, educator and philosopher. Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely. It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will tip-- will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing. We know that it does not take everyone on this Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a determined, small group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale. One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. The light of the soul throws sparks, can send up flares, build signal fires, causes proper matter to catch fire. To display the lantern of soul in shadowy times like-- like these-- to be fierce and to show mercy toward others; both are acts of immense bravery and greatest necessity. Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show it. If you would help to calm the tumult, this is the-- one of the strongest things you can do. There will always be times when you feel discouraged. I too have felt despair many times in my life, but I do not keep a chair for it. I will not entertain it. I will not allow it to eat from my plate. In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbor and

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what the great ships were built for. And that is not what any one of us were built for, either. My love and blessings go to each of you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this blessed, wonderful opportunity.

HILGERS: Thank you for your service, Senator Pansing Brooks. Senator McCollister, you're recognized.

McCOLLISTER: Patty, have you finished hugging everybody yet?

[LAUGHTER] The Speaker and I were talking about the pictures that we took eight years ago and, my goodness, how we have all changed. It's true. The Legislature has been the capstone of my career: 35 years at McCollister and Company, three decades, or 30 years, at MUD, 4 years of running a think tank, and now 8 years in the Legislature. I've truly enjoyed my experience. Thank you very much. When people ask me why I was willing to work for \$12,000 a year, mere peanuts, I tell them the psychic income was enormous. Where else can you make laws that help people, make laws that help people and have fun doing it? What else about the job? Knocking on 20,000 doors, getting bitten, peed on, falling through a porch, and chased by turkeys, I mean, that's all part of this job and we know it. The practice of politics is an art. Play it well and you are successful. Other times you fail. Unless your name is Kolterman, sometimes you fail and sometimes you succeed. He always wins. Some advice: Don't allow part-- partisan bickering to consume this place. We have seen the cancer it causes, and the rancor just isn't productive to our Unicameral. It's important to maintain collegiality and not hold personal grudges. Vote for a bill on its merits, not the position of the party. We have painfully seen what partisanship does to government in Washington and other states. Let's be sure and hold the vision of George Norris of this place in our hearts. Lastly, compromise isn't a dirty word; it's the stuff of successful lawmaking. Needing a 30- or a 33-vote threshold means compromise is essential, and in the process hard edges are rounded. I do need to make some thanks as well. First, I need to thank John Lowe, Senator John Lowe, and Senator Pansing Brooks for the candy jars they have on their desk. The candy, along with the lobbyists, I've been gaining ten pounds since we came into se-- or I came into session eight years ago. I think we've all gained a few pounds as well. I need to thank a few other folks as well, my staff: Justin, Will. Sherrie Geier, who was with me for six years, helped me stay out of trouble and I'm thankful for that. And when I get lonely for you all, I'll go down in that west hallway on the first floor and look at that composite of us all, because you're all there, and I, I know that the good memories will flow. You've all touched my life in one way or other. Thank you, friends. Thank you, friends all, for the late

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

nights, the good times, and the outstanding discussions. I'm grateful for my time in this Legislature and the time I had with you here. Thank you.

HILGERS: Thank you for your service, Senator McCollister. Senator Hughes, you are recognized.

HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, as I've started most of my speeches on the floor, I'll be brief. First off, I want to thank my wife and kids, who are here today underneath the north balcony. My son, Tyler, my daughter Ashley, got two sons, Easton [PHONETIC] and Nolan [PHONETIC]. They have made a lot of sacri-- excuse me, a lot of sacrifices in order for me to be here today, so I do appreciate that. We do have a sizable operation that my kids manage when-- in my absence, and Josie does, too, so I do want to thank them. Also, getting to my staff, they're sitting over here under the south balcony: Jeni Bohlmeier has been with me for all eight years-- thank you, Jeni-- Mandy Mizerski has been with me for six years as committee clerk and AA the last two; and Janice Satra, for the last two years, as my committee clerk. They have been integral members of "Team Hughes." There have been a lot of members of Team Hughes over the eight years. There are a couple of members who are in the-- still in the Legislature who started in my office: Grant Latimer, who was poached from my staff by Senator Linehan; and Edward Boone, who was poached from my staff by Senator Briese. But I sent them on their way, you know, because they were improving their lot in life. There are a couple of other people who work here in the Legislature that I do want to recognize. They were my committee clerk-- or my committee counsel in Natural Resources, Laurie Lage and Andrew Vinton. Andrew was up in the balcony. I don't think he's still there. Unfortunately, they have gone to the dark side. They are lobbyists. So, you know, I tried, but money talks. I would like to thank Patrick, Dick, and Brandon, and all the Clerk's staff up here in the front. When you're sitting in the President's Chair, you rely on all of them every day. They do a good job of keeping the ship running on time, keeping us headed in the right direction, so thank you to all of you. As Chairman of the Exec Board, I have a unique opportunity to deal with all of the divisions in the Legislature, and there are a lot of them here and I'm certainly not going to name all of them because I would not get that, but I have had the opportunity to visit with them and the staff that they have. There are over 350 people work in this Legislature to make us, the senators, look good, and we get to take that glory from them. How many of you know Bess over here, taking our pictures? Doesn't she make us look good? She's our staff. She's our staff. [APPLAUSE] But there are countless other individuals who we never see that we owe a big debt of

gratitude to. To my colleagues. I'll remind you that we are standing on the shoulders of those who have come before us. A lot of the problems were solved before we got here, thank goodness, but circumstances change, so there are still some problems that need to be addressed. But the institution remains the same. The faces out there, the faces here, do change, outside of maybe Patrick [LAUGHTER], but the institution stays the same, and that's the lesson or the point I want to leave with you, that our time here is very short, but the institution stays the same. It does need to be protected. Senators come and go, but the institution same-- stays the same. And it is so important that we respect the institution, that we respect the bo-- the work that has gone on before we got here. We need to hold ourselves to a higher standard. We are family. That's been said before. And we can fight like cats and dogs, like families do, but at the end of the day we are family and it needs to be kept in the family. We don't need to be getting it outside the doors. We solve the problems in-house. That's the way it works best, whether it's during debate or during discourse. Because tomorrow's another day, we have to work together. If we do not respect this institution, how can we expect the people to respect this institution? And if the people don't respect us or this institution, we have chaos, and none of us wants that. That outcome would not be good for anybody. Before I go, I want to give a big thank-you to Speaker Hilgers. He and I have worked very, very closely together on a lot of issues. It's been an interesting two years. Two years-- two years-plus ago, when-- when he and I sat down and talked about who would be Speaker and who would be Chair of Exec Board, he didn't tell me how much fun being Chair of Exec Board was going to be-- liar. [LAUGHTER] But we've made a good team. I think we've shepherded-- shepherded the One Hundred Seventh Legislature through some tough times and some good times, so thank you, Mike. Thanks to the people of the 44th District, who've elected me twice. And to the people of the state of Nebraska, it has been a privilege and an honor to serve. I thought about what would I have liked to have known when I got here eight years, so I wrote down ten things that I wished someone had told me eight years ago when I got here. The first one is: Do not be afraid of Patrick. The second one is: Do be afraid of Janice Satra. [LAUGHTER] She knows where the bodies are buried. Never try to understand what the Referencing Committee does. Figure out which faucets stay on in the bathroom so you don't have to keep holding them and trying to wash one hand at a time. Chuck Hubka's bark is worse than his bite. Never take it personal. Never make it personal. Trust, but verify. Eight years will fly by very quickly. Work hard, be yourself, and have some fun. Thank you.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

HUGHES: Senator Hilkemann, you're recognized.

HILKEMANN: Thank you, Mr. President. It was a beautiful day in May, nine years ago, I was out on a bike ride just west of Valley. The day before, I had made the decision that I was going to sell my podiatry practice that I had worked for 38 years. I was relishing the fact that after 38 years I was going to have a freedom I'd never had before. I didn't have to worry about the practice. I thought, what are some of the things you'd like to have always done if you had the time? Well, in 1988, I had made the goal that I was going to ride my bike across America and I thought, I can do that now, but that accounts for nine weeks, what am I going to do with the rest of my life? Then I thought, what were some of the things that gave me the great joy during my years? And I remembered back, as a young podiatrist, the scope of practice for podiatry in Nebraska was horrible. It was about the worst in the country, and one of the things that we had to do if I was going to practice here was to get that scope of practice improved. And there were several of us that came down to the Legislature in efforts to improve the scope of practice for podiatry. It took us several years to get it where it is today, but one of the men that I got to appreciate was a young man by the name of Senator Don Wesely, and he became my hero. In the mid-'80s. I was serving on the State Board of Health and I became elected its chair. Because, being chair, I would come down occasionally to testify on bills before the HHS Committee, either as testifying or lobbying, and I worked with Senator Wesely again, and I remember driving home in the mid-'80s. I thought, you know, if I ever get the opportunity, when I retire, I would love to serve as a senator in the Nebraska Legislature. And as I was writing, I recalled that and I thought to myself, when does Pete Pirsch's term end? So I stopped and I pedaled back home as fast as I could. I wanted to check. And sure enough, Pete's term ended in 2014. It was absolutely perfect. I made the decision that day that I was going to run for the Legislature, the Nebraska Legislature. That evening, Julie and I were out on our tandem. I was riding around Lake Zorinsky and I said, honey, I'm going to run for the Nebraska Legislature-- total silence, just as we've had now. And she said, well, you-- you've just sold your practice, we don't have a million dollars for you to run for the Legislature, you've never been involved in politics, you've never been to a Republican meeting. My brother and I married sisters. The next day, she called her sister and she said, Robert has this idea that he wants to run for the Nebraska Legislature. And her sister's advice was don't bring it up, it may pass. [LAUGHTER] Well, it didn't pass. It took a few weeks, but she warmed up to the idea and she was my number-one campaigner. Two friends I talked with almost immediately

afterwards. One was a long-term friend, Rick Kolowski. Two years previously, he had run for the Legislature and won. We had breakfast together. He was so encouraging. Little did I know that, for the next six years, we would be carpool mates. I love that man. We had differing political philosophies, but we had marvelous conversations. We had some days after critical votes when we'd been on the opposite end. It was pretty silent in the car, but by the time we got back to the Platte River we were visiting again. Rick's had a hard time since leaving this body. Just last week, he's had his fifth surgery on his left hip. I'd like us all to pray for Rick that he can get back to living the life that he really wanted, that he thought about in retirement. The second person I met with, another long-term friend, as Senator Lathrop so eloquently recognized this morning, with a friend, Brad Ashford. We had coffee together over at a place in Midtown Crossing. He, too, was such an encouragement to me. He left a few minutes ahead of me, and as I was getting ready to leave, I saw that he had left his laptop. It was just Brad being Brad. As I look back on these eight years, I think of the challenges, the hugs, the sometimes tears, disappointments, time of elation, the sleepless nights pondering key votes. I am so glad for the wonderful friends I have made. It has been an honor to serve the district and this state. Every day, as I walk into that east door, I marvel at the fact that I've had this opportunity to make the decisions that affect all Nebraskans. I have never taken that responsibility lightly. You know, about 80 percent of our votes are easy, but then we get those hot-button issues when you know, whichever way you vote, you're going to disappoint a certain portion of your constituencies. Those votes have never gotten easier for me over these eight years. If I could do it again, I would do it all over. I know I'm a better person for having served in this body. I have grown through those tough decisions. I have grown through learning. Before I got here, my life had a lot more black and white than it does on my leaving. When I got elected, I hoped that I would serve on HHS. I think I had aspirations that maybe at one point I could follow my great friend Don Wesely as Chair of HHS. But as you know, the Committee on Committee process can be difficult, and there was not a position on HHS that year that I could-- that I could get. So Senator Jim Smith, our representative: Bob, it's not going to work for you to be on HHS, would you consider being on Appropriations? You can do a lot for healthcare from that committee. I rather reluctantly agreed. Little did I realize then that I would spend all eight of my years on Appropriations. I am so grateful for that opportunity. Indeed, I could be a voice for the healthcare community. My first year, I brought the legislation for the iEXCEL Center, a \$25 million appropriation creating simulated learning. It was right down my alley

as a, as a podiatrist, as a lifelong learner, as a teacher. I loved carrying that bill. The university said, this is a-- this is a public-private partnership. We allocated \$25 million; before a spade was ever lifted on the dirt, the university had raised another \$100 million; and if you ever get the opportunity to now see the Davis Learning [SIC--Global] Center, take it. It is a marvelous facility. It is a model that other universities are using. I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to bring that. And now this year, along with Senator Lowe and Senator Stinner again, I was able to bring the rural health initiative bill, the \$60 million that we got from ARPA for the healthcare center at Kearney, which will include a new medical school dedicated to rural health. One of my very first meetings was with-- with Dr. Gold, our chancellor of UNMC. And I said to him at that time, I said, Dr. Gold, we need to get a medical school at Kearney. I am so grateful that day has come. It will be transformative to healthcare in this state. I was also able to be an advocate for other healthcare pro-- professionals when it came to provider rates. I could be there to help support our entire university system, our whole postsecondary education program. I want to thank this entire body for supporting our committee in raising the provider rates for learning disabilities, for long-term care, 15 percent going forward. What a pleasure it has been to work with John Stinner over these eight years. John's hard work, understanding of budgeting, state finances, has been an incredible gift to this state. Oh, we had some tough years. We had to make some painful cuts. John, I will always hold you in highest regard and thank you for a job well done. I had a fun serendipity occurred in the summer, or 28-- 2018. As Chair of the Committee on Committees, I was able to be the acting Governor for two-and-a-half days of this state. I came down to the office to be available, just in case. [LAUGHTER] I spent most of my time in the office praying that there would be no tragedies, no storms, no violence, and my prayers were answered. But it gave me the opportunity to grant all of my grandchildren admiralships into the Nebraska Navy, along with numerous friends and colleagues. That was a wonderful opportunity, a memory I will cherish the rest of my life, the acting Governor of my state. And I didn't have to endure one attack ad, Senator Blood or Senator Lindstrom. Other serendipities include standing in Statuary Hall when we had the unveiling of Standing Bear statue, of being a Toll Fellow, of attending NCSL and CSG, meeting many multi-- multiple dignitaries. Well, that's what it was for me. I have some people I really want to thank. First of all, to Kate Wolfe, Kate has worked for me for the last eight years. Kate is just an absolute gem. She's kept me out of more scrapes than you can imagine. She has a giftedness for writing. And whenever I had an interview, she was always good about stick to

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

your point. A year ago, I challenged Kate to get her law degree. So those of you who will continue working here, I want you to encourage Kate to complete that law degree. Thank you, Kate. And thank you, Brad, for your work this last year. Of course, how could I not thank my dear wife, Jules, for all of her sport over these nine years, but for the last 52 years, as we celebrate our anniversary at the end of next month? She's always been encouraging me. Without her tireless efforts of knocking on the doors, connecting me with so many of her-- of our friends from two neighborhoods, and keeping me focused, I doubt I'd have ever gotten elected. Forty-five years ago, as I processed down and received my doctor degree, I said, we did it together, Honey. Jules, we represented Nebraska together. Thank you. So today, as I did nine years ago, I ask the question, what am I going to do with the rest of my life? Julie and I are going to retire. We both enjoy good health. Our minds are good. We love being outdoors and active, so our next job is to stay physically, mentally, and spiritually fit. We have 11 grandchildren, and we hope to encourage and guide them through their years. Our three wonderful adult children are doing well and leading fulfilling lives. We hope that we can encourage and be supportive of-- to them without being too intrusive. And finally, to the voters of District 4, who made this all possible, nine years ago, Julie and I began knocking on the doors, thousands of doors, and we had a simple message. I'm Bob Hilkemann, a lifelong Nebraskan. I was raised on a farm near Randolph. I taught in a small school in Table Rock. I practiced podiatry for 40 years. I have never been in politics. I would just like the opportunity to serve you. Sixty percent of the people of my district bought that message and elected me. And now, for the last seven years, I've been trying to tell you, please, call me Robert and not Bob. While I have always been a registered Republican, I ran because I wanted the opportunity to serve. To me, it has never been about the party. I disappointed and pleased people on both sides of the political spectrum. This legislative-- legislative process is so much more than you can imagine. And for me, again, the issues are not always black and white. I pray that going forward, as a state and nation, we grow together to build one another up and see the best in each other. If we do, we will become a better state and nation. May God bless each of you, this wonderful state, our beautiful country, and this beautiful, nonpartisan Legislature. Thank you and goodbye.

HUGHES: Senator Hilkemann, thank you for your service. Senator Lathrop, you're recognized.

LATHROP: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. Is that on? OK. Colleagues, I-- this is my second time doing this. [LAUGHTER] The

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

first time, eight years ago, I stood up here with no notes, came up here and blubbered about the institution and how much I loved everybody and barely got through it. Today, I thought about this on the way down. By the way, I do have some notes, so hopefully I'm not going to stand up here blubbering my way through this. But I was listening to-- the-- the one thing about being the ninth person to do this, you get to hear other people's speeches, and I thought Senator Hansen made a great point, which is there are a lot of things I'd like to say about the institution, how much I love the institution, offer advice. You've already heard it, so I'll skip that part. I do have a lot of people to thank and I-- and I do want to express what a, what a great honor it's been to serve in this body for 12 years. For me, being a, being a practicing lawyer has been a great honor. This is something special. To be able to serve, to have your hand in the making of policy that will affect the lives of people you may never meet, has-- it's, it's something very special and something I'm very grateful for. I'm grateful for a lot of things today, grateful for a lot of things and for a lot of people in my life. Those people-- so the voters in District 20 sent me down here three different times and-- and to me, it's sort of marvelous, you know, that-- that I had knocked some doors and talked to some people in LD12, and for them to check the box next to your name on the ballot and send you down here and trust you to speak for their district is a-- is a great honor, a great honor, and I feel very blessed by that opportunity. I-- when I got here-- you heard me speak this morning. There are a lot of people that I've served with in this body over 12 years. Some of them were people who were sort of pre-term limit, wonderful mentors that I had, Brad being one of them, but not just Brad, a lot of people. I, I served with Ron Raikes and, and Pat Engel and a-- and a whole bunch of other people who really were passing the culture of the nonpartisan Unicameral down to those of us that showed up in 2007. I'm incredibly grateful for their example, for their mentorship, and for showing us and teaching us the culture and the unwritten rules of the Unicameral. I have been-- and-- and you may have heard me say this over the years. I feel like I've been the luckiest senator that's ever served with the staff. We've recognized a lot of great staff and many of them are friends. But that notwithstanding, I have been blessed with some of the, some of the most wonderful people to serve Legislative District 12 and in my office. Because I did this for 12 years, there's a lot of names here, so it's not because I was hard on staff, but because-- [LAUGHTER] and I don't see anybody jumping out of their chair over there to disagree with that. I had administrative assistants: Chris Chapek was my first one; Kate Wolfe, who we talked about earlier, or Senator Hilkemann did, Kate was an AA for me; Paige Hutchinson; Dan

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

Jenkins; and Samantha Chavez; and Isela Gutierrez, wonderful people committed to the work we do in that office and to the people of District 12. Legislative assistants, I, I only went through three of those: Sean Harding, who was my first legislative assist-- or my, yeah, my first legislative assistant and my last. He came back. In the meantime, Doug Koebernick was my legislative assistant for six years when I was over in Business and Labor, and Zach Pluhacek before Sean. I had three lawyers that worked for me, and that's kind of a special thing for me, as a lawyer, to have lawyers that work for me and to be able to lawyer-talk in the office, if you will. Molly Burton served as my legal counsel for six years over in the Business and Labor Committee, also legal counsel for the Special Investigative Committee into the Department of Corrections. I've also been blessed over the last four years to have Neil Erickson and Josh Henningsen work for me. And then finally, when I became Chair of the Judiciary Committee, which itself was a great honor, I inherited a committee clerk, Laurie Vollertsen, who is-- I don't-- I don't know who the next Chair of the Judiciary Committee is, but she kind of comes with the office. She has 30 years in, in service. She has stories going back to Kermit Brashear and many others in the meantime. Lori is the one that makes sure everything is done properly. The rest of us are just kind of flying by the seat of our pants sometimes. But Laurie's terrific and, and I appreciate your service, Laurie. I-- so there are people in the-- in my office that I recognize. There are so many people that have supported what we do here, Pat O'Donnell, the Clerk's Office, the folks over in Fiscal, the people who-- the agency folks that come before us and give us information and help us craft good legislation-- I am grateful for your support-- those people that helped me get elected, and, and I'm going to give a shout out to my colleagues at Hauptman O'Brien. To come down here and leave my law practice meant that a lot of people that are still there, my partners, the associates, the paralegals, the secretaries, and the support staff at Hauptman O'Brien picked up the slack while I-- while I served, and I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for the relationships that I've made here. Many of them will be lifetime relationships, and I look forward to a lot of golf with many of you, and other recreational kind of pastimes. And then I need to thank my family. When I came down here the first time, I was 48 years old, I still had kids at home, and I missed a few baseball games and dance recitals and one thing or another, the kind of sacrifices we all make when we come down here. I so appreciate the sacrifice family makes so that we can come down here and serve. And then in August I got married to a-- to a terrific lady who spent the first several months of our marriage married to a state senator, and it may not surprise you to know that, that when I leave

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

here, I don't exactly leave everything here and some of it comes home with me and I'm not always-- not always fully present, I'm told. I appreciate that. I think we all appreciate that, the sacrifice that our, our families and our spouses and the people we love make so that we can serve. And even when you get home, sometimes it's still on your mind, you're still taking phone calls, and I just want to express my deepest appreciation to-- to my, my kids. They're, they're, they're-- I have grandchildren now. I'm looking forward to spending more time with them. Anyway, thank you all so very, very much for the privilege and the friendship.

HUGHES: Thank you, Senator Lathrop, for your service. Senator Kolterman, you're recognized.

KOLTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. It was nice of you to give me a stool to stand on. Now I understand Senator Day's dilemma. Well, how does one say goodbye after-- or farewell after eight years in just a few minutes? To start with, I really need to say thank you to my colleague, Tony Vargas. You know, that \$100 they gave you last week to say those nice things about me, they'll pay huge dividends on my next resumé. But all kidding aside, you and I will always share a common sorrow. You lost your wonderful dad. I lost my wife, Suzanne. They were role models, and have been and continue to be very much a part of our common successes. So thank you, Tony. We're all one big family here at the Legislature. I believe together we make things happen. Senators, I have enjoyed serving with each and every one of you. Our staffs are our lifeline. Kenny Zoeller, Joe Neuhaus, David Slattery, Todd Wiltgen, they were all LAs for me. They all got promoted, so I had to find somebody else. Katie Quintero, Tyler Mahood, Kate Allen, you've all been terrific associates for me and made me successful. Without the seven of these individuals, my wife-- my life would have been very difficult. You're seven rock stars to me. And "Guido," also known as Kate Allen, your legal advice will be missed, but you've helped navigate the Retirement Systems for many years, and I believe we're leaving all the plans in great shape. To the legislative staff, Patrick and your team, thank you for all you do to keep this organization sailing in the right direction. You are all true professionals and wonderful people. To the lobby and the press, continue to push for quality legislation and accurate reporting. You've all been a pleasure to work with, and you all serve a great purpose in this state. To my constituents in District 24, I'd like to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you the last eight years and trusting me to use my independent judgment and my votes. To my mom, who's watching; my mother-in-law, who's watching; Margaret Brink, a constituent; Rick Endicott; Don Anderson, who calls

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

me every morning; my siblings, my in-laws, Michelle, you're my go-to people who help keep me informed and grounded. I will continue to need your influence and advice. Thanks for all you do for me. To my family, Jessica, Jennifer, B.J. and my grandkids, thank you for being there to support me through some very difficult and challenging times. We all know what family is all about. For my colleagues who are staying, my advice-- my advice to you is to never quit learning. Coming from a predominantly white, rural community, I was never really exposed to any kind of diversity. Patty, Ray, Tony, Ernie, and Tonya, who I had the privilege of serving with, Megan, Terrell, Justin, Colonel Brewer, you've all helped me and this body become more aware of the challenges you have faced and the challenges that we face as a state. I have appreciated your strength and candor as we have discussed and wrestled with challenges of the minorities in this state and hope we have made it a better place together. Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't say something to my so-called RINO colleagues [LAUGHTER] and my classmates. John McCollister, Robert Hilkemann, John Stinner, Matt Williams, and Brett Lindstrom, who's even getting called a RINO on TV, wear that label as a badge of courage. We were elected by the people of our districts to resent-- represent all of them in a nonpartisan way. I believe George Norris would be darn proud of us. Political parties are important, but they shouldn't run our State Legislature. This body needs to remain nonpartisan so all people are represented. To my two close "apostle" friends who get to follow me, John and Matt, thank you for being there for me, through thick and thin. God bless you all. It's been an honor and pleasure to serve this great state. Thank you very much.

HUGHES: Thank you, Senator Kolterman, for your service. Senator Stinner, you're recognized.

STINNER: Thank you, Mr. President. This is really weird, being up here, I have to tell you the truth. I don't know about anybody else. I'm five minutes away from starvation, so I'm going to try to [LAUGHTER] fly through this as best I can. I don't know if all of you know this, but on my first year, I traveled back and forth to Gehring just about every weekend, and that's six hours out, six hours back if I'm speeding, which I normally am. But after the first year, my wife looked at me and she noticed that I was starting to sag quite a little bit, and she decided that she would end a very, very successful and outstanding career as a vocal music instructor, head of the music department at WNCC. So I do want to say thank you, Rita. I'm eternally grateful for you. It's been a 50-year interesting ride. This is actually our 50th year to be together, to be married, in November, best business deal I ever made. [APPLAUSE] She does deserve a standing

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

ovation, anybody put up with me for 50 years. But I do want to give a shout-out to the past and present staff, certainly the present staff who had to deal with not only a regular budget, which was a short budget season, which would have been easy, except for one thing. They threw in ARPA, so we had two of them. But interestingly, Brittany, who is our committee clerk, decided to have her baby right at the beginning of session, so it was Tamara Hunt and Mitch Clark who, who really kind of sucked it up and were really, really busy, and for that I truly appreciate your efforts, truly appreciate having Britney back as well, but thank you very much for, for your efforts this session. It was a difficult one from the Appropriations side simply because we had-- what was it? One hundred and twenty-five hours of, of hearings. I have an extended staff as Appropriations Chair. That extended staff really deals with the Fiscal Office, and I want to acknowledge two 40-year-plus people who are retiring this year. Certainly, Tom Bergquist, who's over here, is the director of the Fiscal Office and deserves a standing ovation for the work that he has done over his 46 years. Thank you, Tom. It was an interesting session. He's smiling at me because usually he's my sounding board and he'll say, no, Senator, I don't think we can do that. So anyhow, I appreciate that. Liz Hruska also is a 40-year-plus person. She is a valuable person, HHS expert, hard to replace, but thank you for all of the work that you've done, 40-plus years there too. I do want to thank the entire Fiscal staff for all the work that they did this year, obviously, two budgets and fiscal notes, relatively new staff, too, but they dug in and did a very, very quality job, so thank you very much for that. I can tell you, from my side of things, this has been a broadening experience, broadening from the side of how much subject material we're all kind of shoved at all at one time. I can tell you that, over the first two years, all I did was read and pepper the old guard with a lot of questions. And after eight years, I can tell you, I'm still reading a lot and still learning quite a little bit. I think also from-- broadening from the side of learning the Legislature and the fiscal process that we have to go through and the process of bringing legislation to the floor, that has been-- that has been an enlightening process, one that I, I have actually pretty much enjoyed. And I'm also thankful, all the people that I've got to know. They're wonderful people that surround this Legislature, certainly wonderful people who are in the Legislature. I never would have had that opportunity had I stayed in Gering, Nebraska, so thank you for that. I can tell you that the first time I walked through those glass doors and I looked up and I saw my name on the board, it was a sobering experience, pretty awestruck by it. And I remember saying a little prayer to-- to the Lord, saying, please don't let me do any harm. And

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

interestingly, two years ahead of that, I was elected Chair of Appropriations, which I don't necessarily want to thank you for because we were [LAUGH]-- yeah, where we've-- we started out almost a billion dollars short, ended up \$1.2 billion short. But I can tell you, during that process, there were two guiding principles that I used. One of them was to stay fair and balanced in the approach as it related to cuts that we had to make. The second one was to do the least amount of harm. And so that-- there was kind of a tricky balance in between those two things, but we did survive it and obviously now we had a billion dollars of extra money. And I, along with the committee, we took a look at this billion dollars, along with the Legislature, and we decided what we could do with that that would do the most good. So my message today is, do the least amount of harm and the most amount of good. Thank you very much.

HUGHES: Thank you, Senator Stinner, for your service. Senator Williams, you are recognized.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. President. If we had started that way of going down the aisle earlier, we would have been a lot quicker doing this and, and we'd be getting to lunch. It is a little awkward, and Senator Stinner and Senator Kolterman and I talked about it, coming up and talking up here instead of talking at our, our normal lecterns that we have at our-- at our desks. Well, if you didn't know the reason for that, it's because that lectern that is back where I sit, Stinner finally did break it last week with that pounding on the desk. There's always been one thing that I've wanted to do before I've been out of here and, you know, I don't know if there's a better opportunity, Pat, to do it than, than, than right now. By the way, Patrick has been a dear friend of mine since we graduated from law school together many years ago. But have you ever wanted to call for a roll call vote? You know, we do it in regular order, reverse order. Did you ever want to do a roll call vote starting from the middle out? I think Patrick's head would explode. [LAUGHTER] When I-- when I first got here, a dear friend of mine said to me, democracy works if you're willing to engage in thoughtful compromise. I didn't understand that quite as well eight years ago as I do today, that democracy works when you're willing to engage in thoughtful compromise, and that's what we do a lot of here. For those of you that know me best sitting back in that corner, and some of you sitting up here, you know that there is a set of core values that I have tried to follow all of my life, and the first core value is to recognize the importance of people in your success and recognizing that very little can be accomplished when we try to do it by ourselves; but when we work as a team, lots can get done. I watched that work at our bank, I've watched at work with

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

association work that I've done and across the state with economic development and, boy, have I seen that work in here. Policymaking is a team sport, and this group has participated in that very well. I've had the opportunity to have a great team here in this Capitol, starting with Jeremiah Blake as my first LA. And I will never forget the day when I was a freshman senator sitting on Judiciary, Senator Lathrop, and there was a very sensitive issue that came up. And I walked back as I was getting ready to go down to that hearing and, and suggested that this shouldn't be all that hard, we'll just do what's right, and Jeremiah put his hand on my shoulder and said, oh, my naive freshman senator. And Jeremiah, you remember that day. I've also had Natalie Schunk from the day I walked in here till the day I will walk out being the mother hen of our office, caring deeply about everybody, and always encouraging me and supporting me. Following Jeremiah, Dexter Schrodtt showed up, hired Dexter almost the day he graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Law. Both Dexter and Jeremiah have gone on to greater and better things with Blue Cross Blue Shield and Nebraska Medical Association. And then I was fortunate enough to be elected to go move to that Banking office where I acquired Bill Marienau, first of all. And we've honored a lot of people here today, but Bill Marienau is incredibly bright, incredibly knowledgeable, has spent over 40 years in this body, and the last 35 of those have been as legal counsel to the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. And Bill is retiring at the end of this year, so let's recognize Bill Marienau. [APPLAUSE] We also have added to our staff. Aaron Heyen, who has been working for us for the past several years, came as a graduate from UNL and has been accepted to the University of Nebraska College of Law and will be starting there this fall. Also, Peg Jones works in our office, and Peg has had some health issues with her family that has kept her away from us a little bit over the past couple of years, but she has been a stalwart, and Peg is also retiring at the end of this year, so thank you, Peg, for all you have done. I also-- yeah. [APPLAUSE] I also want to say a very special thank-you, as we all have, to our families at home, and in my case, my work family at home, at-- at Flatwater Bank, several of whom are setting up in the balcony today: Nate, Ruthie, Moe and Marcy sitting up there. You have been doing those things back home that are necessary, that make everything work, along with my son-in-law, Luke, who is sitting back here, as president of our banking operation. Thank you for what you do. Ruthie-- Ruthie has been my personal assistant for the past 35 years, so that has made everything work. And, and, Ruthie, just-- I only brought this red pen up here to let you know that my office staff over here told me, now that I have-- I'm leaving, I have to bring this red pen back to Gothenburg, so-- she knows what I

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

do with that red pen. I also want to say a special thank-you to the lobby, and there's many of them sitting around here today. The importance that they have been to me, the friendships, the help was so many things, we deeply appreciate that. And finally, to my family, who many of-- here today: son Robert and his wife Meredith, and Reed and Joelle and Lyla, sitting up in the balcony over here; my son-in-law Luke, sitting in the back; my granddaughter Ainsley and her friend-- friend Adam Cole were here, and she actually had to leave and go back to class; and especially to Susan. And there's been a lot of people that have been married a long time, and I got married when I was 12. We will be celebrating our 53rd wedding anniversary in August, so. [APPLAUSE] And, you know, I, I graduated from high school in Gothenburg and I graduated in the half of the class that made the top half possible. [LAUGHTER] You got that? But I went down the road to Lexington and found the valedictorian, and that improved my life from then and always forward. So, Susan, thank you for always being there. Thank you for saying yes to the things that I've wanted to do in this crazy life-- so recognizing those people that are important. Second core value is conducting yourself with a sense of responsibility, and it's pretty simple: just doing what's right. And we come in here as freshmen senators not recognizing that, at the end of the day, on all these difficult inch-- issues that we deal with, we got a red button and we got a green button and that's all there is. There's no maybe button. There's no nuance button. And we don't end up making decisions because they're popular. We don't make decisions because they're easy. We make them simply because they're right. I got asked a couple of weeks ago by a reporter on my, my weekly radio shows that we have done consistently for these eight years, what are you most proud of during your eight years? And I think he thought the answer was going to be, is there a piece of legislation that you're most proud of? Well, for me, what I'm most proud of is that I've never sacrificed my character while I've been here, and I think that's important, and I appreciate that from all the members in here, never sacrificing doing that part of it. Third core value is always striving for improvement, striving to do better. And I think human beings are really interesting that when we go to bed at night, we wake up tomorrow morning wanting to do it again and doing it just a little better than we did it the day before. About 12 years ago, I was, I was jumping-- getting ready to jump on an airplane, to fly to Florida to speak to a group of bankers down there. And my wife gave me a book that was written by a dear friend of mine, doctor of psychology, that in this book made the conclusion, which I agree with, by the way, that humans will only react in one of three ways when faced with adversity. You got three choices as a human when you're faced with adversity. You're either

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

going to quit, you're going to blame, or you're going to step up and accept the responsibility of working together for positive change. And I think you know me, and I know most of you very well in here, and even though we have disagreed oftentimes on issues, nobody's quit and gone home. Yes, sometimes we've blamed and we recognize it's never done us any good when we do that, and at the end of the day, there's only one choice, and that's stepping up and accepting the responsibility of working together for positive change. As we think about and reflect back on these years, there's much, much that we have done. But I don't know about you. I'd rather worry about the future than reminisce about the past. So if there's one last parting remark that I would have, it's to encourage each one of us to not let our memories of the past be more important than our dreams for the future. And I choose to dream big, and I challenge each one of us to dream big. To the "apostles," I've never had better friends, never will. You're my rocks. Thank you. And today, I, for the last time, will get to say thank you, Mr. President.

HUGHES: Thank you, Senator Williams, for your service. Speaker Hilgers, you're recognized.

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon, colleagues. Thank you for everyone that-- all the departing senators for those amazing remarks. I know I speak for all the remaining senators. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your teamwork. Thank you for all that you've done for me and for the body and for the state of Nebraska during your service here in the Nebraska Unicameral. I understand Senator Stinner needs to get to Omaha and eat lunch, and I'm the last thing between here and there, and so I will try to be as brief as I can. One of the things, as Speaker, that is really a great honor is the ability at the end of session when we adjourn sine die to give thanks to so many people who mean so much to the successful functioning of this body. And so I'm going to do that and I'm not going to ask you to hold your applause. This is an important moment for all of us to show appreciation for all the people that have done so much great work. I'm going to go through the list and please join me as we go through them, this list and-- and give thanks to these wonderful people, first, our Clerk, Patrick O'Donnell and his assistant clerks, Dick Brown and Brandon Metzler [APPLAUSE] and the-- and the rest of the "dream team" up front, Carol Koranda, Jenny Svehla, and Kennedy Zuroff. Please join me in thanking our wonderful pages and the rest of the Clerk's Office, which includes the Bill Room, the Transcribers, the Unicameral Information Office, the Legislative Technology Office with our new technology mana-- manager Jayne Scofield and our Sergeant-at-Arms, led by Burdette Burkhart,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

along with our rookies, Scott, Laurie, and Gerry-- please give them a round--and Charlie. [APPLAUSE] Thank you to the State Patrol for keeping us safe over the last two years. I want to thank all of our division directors, who have done such amazing work, starting with the Fiscal Office, Tom Bergquist, 40 year-- 46 years of amazing service to the state. Our Revisor's Office, led by Marcia McClurg, this is a special one, if you could remain standing. Diane Nickolite, after 40 years serving the state of Nebraska, is retiring this year. If we could-- and she's been, as you know, in the Accounting and Budget Office, if we could give her a very warm round of applause. Legislative Research led by Bed-- Ben Thompson. Legislative Performance Audit Division led by Martha Carter. And our outstanding Ombudsman's Office led by our Public Counsel Julie Rogers. I also want to thank all of our committee staff, both the committee staff and our personal staff, and I want to have a special call-out to the people who have allowed my office to operate so well and to ensure that the ship of state actually gets safely to port, starting with Laurie Weber, Danny Vaggalis-- did I say that right, Senator Ja-- Jacobson? OK, good. He's, you know, he's going to be part of the family here soon-- Patty Wade and Beau Ballard, who was with me five years, who left last year, if we could give them a round as well. And I, I want to say-- I'm going to say a comment in a minute about this body, but I do-- and even though he is not part of my staff, I do want to give a special thank-you to Senator Hughes. There has-- being Speaker is one of the loneliest jobs I've ever had. It's one of the most rewarding, but one of the most difficult, and about the only person in this body over the last two years who I could go to in those difficult moments was Senator Dan Hughes, and there is no better friend, no better ally, no better teammate that I've had in this body, Dan, than you. Thank you. And with less emotion, I would like to thank the Nebraska Public Media for their gavel-to-gavel coverage of the State Legislature. [LAUGHTER] This might take me five or seven minutes, colleagues. You're welcome to sit or leave, I guess. I don't know if anyone's leaving for the exit. I'd want to do two things. One is I do want to have a brief recap of the work that we did over the, over the last two years and, as well, just say a personal note at the end. But I will tell you, when I showed up here in the Legislature, the very last thing that I wanted to do or be was Speaker. It seemed like maybe the worst job of this entire building because all I could tell is, when you're Speaker, you age by dog years, you get yelled at all the time, and if anyone doubts the bipartisan nature of this building, I will assure you it is alive and well because I've been yelled by Republicans and Independents and Democrats. And it takes-- you really take your eye off the policy ball. That's what I perceived. I didn't

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

want to be Speaker. But as the sun rose on the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, I was excited to play this role, and the reason I was excited was because of you, because we have 48 outstanding Nebraskans, 48 people channeling the voices of their district, people who have a track record of success, people who wanted to swing big, people who wanted to do great things and work together. I tried to do this job because of you. And as we look at our successes of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, and I-- when I-- when we started, I was confident that we would have one of the best and most historic sessions that this body has ever had. And I didn't know how it was going to play out, but I can know, sitting here today, that what we set out to accomplish, we have had one of the best sessions in state history and it is because of the 48 of you. And so if you could give-- we, we have applauded everyone else, rightfully, but, colleagues, the work we have done and the successes we have had is because all of you, and I want to give you a round of applause for the work you've done over the last two years. I would encourage-- I know sometimes, especially at the end of session, we have late nights, we're running out of General File time, Select File, and sometimes it feels like, boy, we are not getting anything done. And I know last week on Final Reading, I think we've sent over 100 bills to the Governor. I would encourage all of you to take some time when you've got a moment after the session is over and look at all the bills and the bills that we pass and the accomplishments that we did together. There are so many, and every senator here has a hand in success. Every senator has had a bill that has mattered that has gotten across the finish line. Every senator has played a role in getting a big thing done for Nebraska. It was very fulfilling for me to go through the list of successes that you had this la-- these last two years, and I'm only going to name a few. There is such a long list, but I think there's a few that are worth highlighting, but I would recommend you take the time. And when you ask yourself, was it worth it to be here, I think the answer you will find is yes. So when I start on some of the big things that we accomplished, this is-- everyone might have a different order. I'm going to start with maybe one of the last bills that we passed, which is our tax-- we-- our tax cuts in not just LB873. LB3-- LB310, which is Senator Clements' priority bill to cut inheritance tax, Senator Albrecht's ethanol tax credit, as well as Senator McKinney's work to cut taxes on hygiene products. Colleagues. With the leadership of, for my money, the greatest Chair of Revenue this body has ever had, Senator Linehan and her outstanding committee, we had the greatest year in state history giving money back to taxpayers. Senator Wayne challenged us early, often, to invest in people. Senator Wayne, I couldn't be more proud of the process over the last 60 days, the work

you did, the imagination, ingenuity, grit, and I couldn't be more excited for what I think might be one of the most transformational investment [SIC] this-- this state has ever had. LB1024 and the state of Nebraska's commitment to north Omaha, in my opinion, will be one of the greatest achievements this body has ever achieved. I'm grateful for your leadership, Senator Wayne, and for this body, for getting it across the finish line. Thank you. The other half of the dynamic duo, and sometimes I felt like part of my role as Speaker was talking to Senator Linehan and then going to talk to Senator Stinner, but I will tell you my job as Speaker is made a whole lot easier when I have got two titans in the game, heading two of the most important committees in Revenue and Appropriations, because not only did I have the best Revenue Chair in state history, there is no doubt in my mind that I-- we had the best Appropriations Chair this state has ever seen in Senator Stinner. And Senator Stinner and the Appropriations Committee, the work that they did and the investments they made, that's way too long of a list to reference, but I will tell you, I tell-- I told him every time he got his linebacker voice, I said, Senator Stinner, I think you're going to get 100 percent, every dollar that you appropriated is going to get passed into law, and he should-- he and his committee should be incredibly proud that that's exactly what happened. Two billion dollars of investment from that Appropriations Committee got into law and left the state of Nebraska; with that and with the tax cuts, a \$1.3 billion Cash Reserve, incredible work by the Appropriations Committee and incredible work by Senator Stinner, who I think is the greatest Appropriations Chair we've ever had. Colleagues, any one of those, I think, would be something that would be a-- a cornerstone success of this session, but we-- to do all of those three-- and I did have a fourth. I almost forgot my own. The-- we had one of the best water sessions of all time, and I hope that when "Lake Morfeld" is built and we're all-- [LAUGHTER] the-- we had-- and all, all kidding aside, I think-- I think there are going to be generations of Nebraskans who are going to enjoy the-- the opportunities at Lake McConaughy, Lewis and Clark, and Niobrara, some of the most gorgeous vistas in the entire state of Nebraska. For this body to invest the resources to be able to open up those areas and resources to generations of Nebraskans after us while preserving our water supply through LB1015 and the, and the canal, I think, is an incredible testament to the work of the commit-- of this body, and I'm very grateful for the support of those bills. In addition to those, there are a number of other things, and I'm just going to go-- I-- I try to put these by category, because sometimes we focus on tax cuts or spending or this thing or that thing, but there are so many other things that I think you can envision impacting generations of

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

Nebraskans to come in real, meaningful ways, and I'm just going to go through a couple categories. First, we made historic investments in Greater Nebraska. Senator Lowe's LB792, the Rural Health Complex in Kearney is going to transform smaller communities in greater Nebraska by ensuring that the next generation of healthcare professionals are trained and available to them out west. Senator Friesen helped ensure \$40 million of broadband went to communities in the 3rd District of 5,000 people or less. You can't tell me that that won't help catalyze those communities for success and growth down the line. Senator Slama, LB977, helping ensure resiliency in the electrical grid in southeast Nebraska near Falls City. We also made historic investments, too many to count, in North Platte, Niobrara, Knox County, Ogallala, Keith County, as well as passing Senator Murman's Nebraska Advantage Rural Development Act in LB1261. We had a record year for places like Grand Island investing in-- we put money into the training facility for the law enforcement training facility, into the State Fair. We passed LB902, Senator Aguilar's bill, the number-one priority for the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce. We had a record year for, for the city of Lincoln, putting money towards the second water source, workforce housing, and, with Senator Bostar's constitutional amendment, helping to ensure, if the voters pass it in November, that we were-- are doing everything we can to protect, enhance and grow our regional airports around the state, including in Lincoln. As the Governor mentioned earlier, we had a record year for law enforcement. I-- he went through the list. I want to add a couple though: LB717, Senator Morfeld's In the Line of Duty Act, I will tell you, colleagues, I had several notes after the passing of Senator Briese's heroic nephew in the wildfires out in western Nebraska, thanking the body for passing that particular bill. I want to note and acknowledge Senator Lathrop and Senator DeBoer and their work on LB1241 with the reciprocity for recruiting officers back to Nebraska. We had tax credits and an investment, as I mentioned, in Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island. Senator Bostelman and the Natural Resources Committee, for-- in a forward-thinking way, have set the foundation both from LB84 last year on modular nuclear technology, as well as his hydrogen working group, and LB1099 this year, to help make sure Nebraska is prepared for the energy challenges to come. Senator McKinney last year in LB451, and this year following up with LB1112, financial literacy and computer science curriculum expansion-- standards expansions, I think, has passed one of the most transformative long-term things that we could do in this body, and I'm excited to meet someone who might be three or four, maybe it's little Justin, Senator Wayne, or someone else who's not born yet, who will take advantage of that learning and be able to get a good-paying job in 20 or 30 years. I think that is going to

impact families across the state of Nebraska. We did a lot of the, of the dirty, difficult work to make building infrastructure easier, some of the things that don't feel-- the things that have the sort of flashing lights around them but are just as important. Senator Wishart expanded our design-build in LB414. Senator Hughes, with the 404 permit assumption, which is in LB978, incorporated in LB809, and Senator Walz, with the innovative, progressive design-build. All those bills-- that was in LB1016. All of those bills are going to have long-term positive impacts on the state of Nebraska. We did so much on workforce housing. We've talked about the funding, but, as well, it should go with-- it should go with noting, Senator Williams, LB1069. And we did a lot to help some of the least among us with our animal friends around the state, with Senator DeBoer's LB829 and Senator Wishart's LB851. Those are all forward-thinking things, colleagues, things that we didn't-- we weren't forced to do those things, but we did them because we thought they were right. There are other things that we had to tackle, not necessarily by our choosing, but they were issues or problems that were handed to us. We did outstanding work under Senator Briese's leadership responding to the initiative petition on casino expansion, including passing LB876 this year, a very measured, thoughtful, strategic approach to implementing gambling in the state of Nebraska. Senator Bostelman with L-- LB1102 and Senator Blood with her focus getting additional funding for the AltEn, in Mead, disasters that we have seen. Senator Arch, in the HHS Committee, LR29, responding to the Saint Francis and child welfare issues. LB1173 and the procurement process overhaul that they are proposing, I think, are going to-- were, were very outst-- were outstanding responses to a crisis that was given to this body. And it should go without saying, even though some of us have memories that might be repressed of this for a couple of years, this body did the right thing by getting redistricting done in a special session last year. None of the successes that we have now-- as difficult as it was last fall, the successes we have from this session were done because of the leadership of Senator Linehan and Senator Wayne and all the members who were able to get that through. There's no doubt colleagues, the One Hundred Seventh Legislature has been a smashing success. There's no doubt it's because of your hard work, but there's also no doubt that we know the One Hundred Eighth Legislature will have work to do. There will be things to build on. There were missed opportunities this year that will come up next year. There are issues and problems that we don't envision today that will be present in January 2023. And for those of-- those of you and us coming back next year, the challenge is to build off the great work and the relationships and the work that we've done during this Legislature

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

going into next year. I do want to just me-- say one last series of comments, colleagues. You know, when we run for these offices, we run based on issues. We run to cut property taxes. We run for education. We run for all those things. That's what we've done. That's what we do here. We, we vote. We vote on amendments. We vote on bills. We argue. We debate. We compromise. But one day-- for some of those senators it's going to be this year, for others it might be years down the road, but one day we're all going to leave here. We're all going to leave and we won't be able to take with us the lapel pin. We won't be able to take with us the ability to vote or come onto the floor. We won't be able to take with us the ability to introduce a bill. That will all stay here. But the one thing that we will take with us are [SIC] the relationships, the friendships, the people, the memories of serving here. Now, I gotta tell you, I wouldn't come back to the Legislature just to come back and try to bring new bills and run for office. I think Senator Lathrop, Senator Flood, Senator-- Senator Aguilar, they're more courageous people than I am. Let other people come and bring the bills. Let other people come and try to fight it out and hash it out. Certainly I wouldn't come back for the pay, but I'll tell you what I would come back for. I'd come back for you. I'd come back for Senator Geist. I'd come back for Senator Friesen. I come back for Senator Bostelman. I'd come back for Senator Wayne, for Senator Painting Brooks. You give me an opportunity to lock horns with Senator Lathrop and then break bread with him, I'm back for that. You give me the chance to battle and fight and celebrate and to do it all over again with a different set of people the next day, I'll come back for that. We had two colleagues over the last week pass. They were called home. When I'm called home, whatever day that is, I'm not going to bring or remember any of the negative emotion or the fights or the things that may-- might weigh heavy on your heart in a given day. I'm not going to remember fighting with Senator Wayne about some procedural issue that he thought I mishandled. I'm going to remember the late-night discussions, the inspiration that I had talking to Senator Wayne about big ideas, strategizing, thinking through how to solve tough problems. I'm not going to remember all the conflict at times that I had with Senator Machaela Cavanaugh. I always appreciate her candor and giving voice to customer complaints to the leadership of this particular institution. [LAUGHTER] But I sure will remember comparing notes about what it's like to be a parent down here with a three-year-old son and talking about Barrett and little Mike, comparing notes and talking about what it was like to grow up in the '90s and go to Catholic school. I'll remember that, Senator Cavanaugh. I'll remember that friendship. I will not remember fighting with Senator Morfeld on issue after issue after issue, some the most

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

difficult things we battle on, guns, abortion, you name it. I won't remember that, but I will remember the laughs. I will remember the times we've had the opportunity to talk together, hang out, think through how to solve problems, developing a relationship and friendship. I'll remember that, Senator Morfeld. I won't remember Senator Erdman every other day threatening me with a sine die motion. I might, actually. [LAUGHTER] But I will remember, I will remember the warmth that his wife, Cathy, and Steve had for my children when we went by and visited their ground the last couple summers. I will remember him telling me that he was going to pray for me and my family. I will remember each of you, and I'm beyond grateful for what you have done for me and for my life. I can't say at the moment, because Senator Stinner has to go to lunch, something nice that I'll remember about each of you, but I will say, as this chapter closes, as the sun sets on the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, if you'll indulge me, I do want to read the roll-- call the roll one last time with a note of gratitude on my heart and a note of thanks on my lips. Senator Aguilar, Albrecht, Arch, Blood, Bostar, Bostelman, Brandt, Brewer, Briese, John Cavanaugh, Machaela Cavanaugh, Clements, Day, DeBoer, Dorn, Erdman, Flood, Friesen, Geist, Gragert, Halloran, Ben Hansen, Matt Hansen, Hilgers, Hilkemann, Hughes, Hunt, Jacobson, Kolterman, Lathrop, Lindstrom, Linehan, Lowe, McCollister, McDonnell, McKinney, Morfeld, Moser, Murman, Pahls, Pansing Brooks, Sanders, Slama, Stinner, Vargas, Walz, Wayne, Williams, and Wishart. You are my family. Thank you.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Two items, Mr. President. First of all, Executive Board communication regarding appointments to the Economic Recovery Special Committee created in LB1024. To that end, the Economic Recovery Special Committee will meet underneath the north balcony upon adjournment. That's all that I have, Mr. President.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Hilkemann, you are recognized for a motion.

HILKEMANN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that all bills not otherwise disposed of, excluding bills on Final Reading and vetoed or line-item vetoed bills on this date, be indefinitely postponed.

ARCH: All in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. Motion carries. Senator Matt Hansen, you're recognized for a motion.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate April 20, 2022

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the Chairpersons of all standing committees file with the Clerk of the Legislature all standing committee records so that the proper record may be made of the final disposition of all bills.

ARCH: You've heard the motion. All in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. Motion carries. Senator Lathrop, you are recognized for a motion.

LATHROP: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the Legislature approve the preparation and printing of the permanent Legislative Journal, session laws, and indexes by Patrick J. O'Donnell, and that he be directed to send to each member of the Legislature a copy of the permanent Legislative Journal and session laws, and that the Clerk for the sixtieth day-- pardon me, and the Journal for the sixtieth day, as prepared by the Clerk of the Legislature, be approved.

ARCH: Senators, you have heard the motion. All in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. Motion carries. Senator Hughes, you are recognized for a motion.

HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, Second Session of the Nebraska Legislature, having finished all business before it, now, at 1:53 p.m., adjourn sine die.

ARCH: Senators, you've heard the motion. All in favor say-- there has been a request for a record vote. [LAUGHTER] All right. We take a machine vote. All in-- all in favor of vote aye; opposed, nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Aguilar, Albrecht, Arch, Blood, Bostar, Bostelman, Brandt, Brewer, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, DeBoer, Flood, Friesen, Geist, Gragert, Halloran, Hansen, Hansen, Hilgers, Hilkemann, Hughes, Jacobson, Kolterman, Lathrop, Lindstrom, Linehan, McCollister, McDonnell, McKinney, Morfeld, Moser, Murman, Pansing Brooks, Sanders. Slama, Stinner, Vargas, Walz, Wayne, Williams, Wishart. Voting no: Senators Dorn and Senator Lowe. Senator Lowe would like to change from no to yes. [LAUGHTER] Senator Dorn would like to vote yes. 44 ayes, 0 nays, 1 present and not voting, 4 excused and not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: Motion carries. Senators, we are adjourned sine die.