

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Business and Labor Committee March 26, 2024

RIEPE: Welcome to the Business and Labor Committee. Today is Thursday, March 26. I am Merv Riepe, Chairman of the Business and Labor Committee, and I represent District 12, which is Omaha and the city of Ralston. The committee research analyst to my right is Micah Chaffee. And to my left is the committee clerk, Logan Walsh, who is also president of his fraternity house. And today's page is Molly, and we're glad to have her here as well. Thank you, Molly. I will say this for anyone that's maybe-- I guess they're not, they're not going to hear it if they're coming in, but on the table near the door there are green testifier sheets. If those who intend to testify to please legally [SIC] print all the information and hand it to the page as you wish to testify. Anyone that's not testifying at the microphone but would like to go on record as having a position on the hearing, there are white sign-in sheets at the entrance where you have-- may leave your name and other pertinent information. Also, I would like to note if you aren't testifying, if you aren't testifying, but have a position letter to submit, the Legislature requires that all letters must be on record by 8 a.m. the day of the actual hearing. For purposes of the recorded record, we ask each presenter to state one's name, spell it, and state your-- who you represent. Senators who serve on the committee are encouraged to ask questions, but the, the presenter and those testifying are not allowed to ask questions of the senators nor the committee senators. The committee senators may come and go, assuming you were in here, of-- because of other duties. We have-- should anyone have any handouts, please provide ten of those to the page. And if you don't have copies, we'll ask Molly if she will be able to make copy-- copies. As a committee, we work diligently to provide fair and full hearing. We'll make every effort to accommodate special needs at this hearing, but we ask you to be respectful of the process and to one another. With that, we will begin today's hearing with Mr. Spencer Hartman for the Committee-- Commission on Industrial Relations. So, Mr. Hartman, thank you for joining with us.

IBACH: [INAUDIBLE]

RIEPE: This is Vice Chairman Teresa Ibach and committee member Senator Halloran.

HALLORAN: Senator Steve Halloran. How are you?

RIEPE: So we read the introduction while we were getting started.

IBACH: OK. Thank you.

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RIEPE: So, Mr. Hartman, if you would just go ahead and tell us who you are. If you'd start by spelling your name and so we can get it into the record correctly.

SPENCER HARTMAN: Sure. Spencer Hartman, S-p-e-n-c-e-r, Hartman, H-a-r-t-m-a-n.

RIEPE: Now, if you would just go ahead.

SPENCER HARTMAN: Sure.

RIEPE: Have you served on the Commission for Industrial Relations before?

SPENCER HARTMAN: Sure. I have not. I'll provide a brief introduction maybe.

RIEPE: Please.

SPENCER HARTMAN: So, Mr. Chairman, thank you for having me here today. Senators, thank you for joining. Spencer Hartman, I grew up in rural southwest Nebraska near Imperial in Senator Ibach's district, where I was involved in 4H and FFA. I started a hydroponic tomato greenhouse in the eighth grade, which grew to become a family business and supply tomatoes to grocery stores in about a 45 mile radius of Imperial. I went on to serve as the Nebraska State FFA president in 2013-2014. Came to the University of Nebraska Lincoln to study agricultural economics with an emphasis in public policy. During my time in undergrad, I had invested some money that I'd saved up from 4H projects with a friend who'd saved some money mowing lawns in high school. And we purchased our first piece of residential real estate here in Lincoln, where we worked on that on the weekends and evenings. Sold that property and have continued doing-- make real estate investments in Lincoln since then. During undergrad, I became involved in student government. I was elected student body president. Served as student regent on the business fair-- Business Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents with now Governor Pillen. The only part of my record which I'm not the-- not proud of, is that I was the last student regent to get to attend a Husker bowl game. And I hope we can break that record sooner rather than later. After undergrad, I worked a year for the Depart-- Nebraska Department of Economic Development building industry sector partnerships across the state, which confirmed for me that I wanted to attend law school, which I also did here at the University of Nebraska. Graduated with distinction and have worked at O'Neill, Heinrich. Damkroger, Bergmeyer and Schultz

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since then as a business transactional and estate planning attorney. My wife Morgan, who is the sustainability coordinator at the university, and I live in Lincoln with our dog, who's also named Lincoln. I'm humbled to be here and would be happy to, to answer any questions you may have today.

RIEPE: Well, thank you very much. We'll open up for committee questions if we have some?

HALLORAN: Just a quick observation.

RIEPE: Yes, Senator Halloran.

HALLORAN: I, I couldn't live another 75 years and have that much resume. It's very impressive. Very nice. Thank you.

RIEPE: He's an overachiever.

IBACH: Most District 44 folks are.

RIEPE: OK. That was, that was a little opportunity to take there. I guess one of the questions I have goes back to when you started, you were talking about you had a greenhouse and then you were talking about a distribution process of a 40-mile radius. That must have not been a small greenhouse.

SPENCER HARTMAN: No. So we-- each, each winter of my high school years, we built an additional one. So we built a greenhouse every winter. So we had three of them by the time I graduated high school.

RIEPE: Did you have siblings involved in this?

SPENCER HARTMAN: I very quickly recruited them in that process, yes. Yes. And now my dad-- we were actually just back this weekend helping to plant-- transplant tomatoes that are about ten inches tall or so now.

RIEPE: Yeah.

SPENCER HARTMAN: And he still runs that, so.

HALLORAN: So another stupid observation or question, but these are--

RIEPE: Please.

HALLORAN: --glass? Excuse me,--

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RIEPE: No, no.

HALLORAN: --Mr. Chairman. These are glass greenhouses?

SPENCER HARTMAN: Plastic. Plastic, double walled, so the air insulates in between and--

HALLORAN: So hail insurance--

SPENCER HARTMAN: Very--

HALLORAN: --isn't quite so bad as glass.

SPENCER HARTMAN: Yes. Yeah. Right. Very susceptible to it.

HALLORAN: I know we're getting off topic, by the way, but--

RIEPE: That's OK.

HALLORAN: --but it's fascinating.

RIEPE: Now are you the oldest?

SPENCER HARTMAN: I am.

RIEPE: I guessed that. Any other questions?

IBACH: I have-- I just--

RIEPE: Yes.

IBACH: I will just ask a point of interest more than anything.

RIEPE: You can pry a little bit more if you want to.

IBACH: Well, I'll keep a lid on that. So Commission on Industrial Relations, have you been on this Commission?

SPENCER HARTMAN: I have not.

IBACH: Is this a reappointment? No.

SPENCER HARTMAN: This is a new appointment to the Commission, yes.

IBACH: OK. Why did you become invol-- in-- interested in this?

SPENCER HARTMAN: Sure.

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IBACH: Just because of your experience?

SPENCER HARTMAN: Sure. So have been interested-- I mean, as you could tell from my, my resume, I've always been somewhat interested in getting involved in the community that I'm in and have been looking for opportunities to be involved and, and the Governor's Office reached out and said we have this opportunity.

IBACH: OK.

SPENCER HARTMAN: And it seemed like a, a natural fit for me as, as an attorney, which is a requirement of this Commission, and, and someone with experience in business as well. So I'm excited. I, I will be very honest that, that I do not know all the inner workings of the CIR, but have read the statutes, done some research before saying yes. And I'm excited to, to serve pending your confirmation and to continue to learn there as well.

IBACH: Great. Thank you. That answered all my questions.

RIEPE: I'm impressed that you obviously have a high work ethic. So on the CIR, I think that's a, that's a good quality to work with it. Do you have higher political expectations that you're willing to share?

SPENCER HARTMAN: Well, that's a loaded question.

IBACH: Hopefully he doesn't move back to District 44.

RIEPE: Or at least for--

IBACH: --another 6 years.

RIEPE: --6 years.

SPENCER HARTMAN: I will say on the record, I have no intention of running against Senator Ibach at any point in the future. I, I do, I do value community service and, and would continue to, to like to be involved in [INAUDIBLE].

RIEPE: We'll take that as a strong maybe.

SPENCER HARTMAN: Yeah.

IBACH: A strong maybe.

RIEPE: That's, that's, that's great.

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HALLORAN: I won't hold it against you, I understand it's a requirement to be an attorney, but I won't hold that against you.

SPENCER HARTMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

RIEPE: OK. Are there any other questions? Hearing none, then what we will do is we will be taking action, and then we will be getting back with you, and then ultimately, assuming that it's a go forward, which I have no reason to believe it won't be, then we have to present you to the entire Legislature for confirmation. You know that routine. OK?

SPENCER HARTMAN: Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

RIEPE: Thank you for being--

IBACH: Thank you.

RIEPE: --here. And sounds like you're a great citizen to a great state, so good for you, God bless.

SPENCER HARTMAN: Thank you, Senator.

RIEPE: Thank you. OK. We don't need a motion for adjourning, we-- I think we're done. Thank you very much, both of you, for coming.