

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee February 6, 2024

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MOSER: Our Transportation and Telecommunications hearing will now come to order. I'm Mike Moser and Chairman of the committee. I represent District 22. That's Platte County and close to Stanton County. We'll introduce senators, starting with Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Good afternoon. I'm John Fredrickson. I represent District 20, which is in central west Omaha.

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

DeKAY: Barry DeKay, District 40, represent Holt, Knox, Cedar, Antelope, northern part of Pierce, and northern, northern part of Dixon Counties.

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

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

MOSER: Our committee clerk, clerk is Lynne Woody. Our legal counsel is Mike Hybl. There are blue testifier sheets on the table near the entrance to the room. Please complete one and hand it to the page when you come up to testify. Our pages today are Ethan and Ruby. If you are not testifying but would like to record your presence at the hearing, please sign the gold sheet in the book on the table near the entrance. There's a reminder that the policy of the Legislature requires that letters for the record be received by the committee at 8-- by 8 a.m. on the day of the hearing. If you have handouts, they will be included as part of the record. Provide 10 copies of the handouts and give them to the page. Senators may come and go during our hearing. This is common and required, as they may be presenting other bills in other committees during this same time. Testimony will begin with the introducer's opening statement. Then we'll hear from supporters, then those in opposition, then those in the neutral capacity. The introducer of the bill will then be given the opportunity to make a closing statement if they wish to do so. Please give us your first and last name and spell them for the record. We'll be using a 3-minute light timer today. There will be no demonstrations of opposition or support on testimony allowed. As a friendly reminder, please be sure to shirt-- shut off your cellphones

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or put them on vibrate. OK. That brings us up to-- going to start with LB1298, from Senator Lippincott. Senator Lippincott, welcome.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you, sir. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and Transportation Committee. My name is Loren Lippincott. That's L-o-r-e-n L-i-p-p-e-n-c-o-t-t, and I'm here representing the 34th District. LB1298 started with a desire to mimic what Georgia previously had for its veterans, which included different and distinct driver's licenses for veterans, as well as honorary licenses for widows of veterans at no cost. When I lived in Georgia, I did not have to update my license for 20 years because I had a veteran license. However, with the arrival of Real ID, which happened in 2005, that's after 911, and a little star every Nebraskan has on their license, things have changed dramatically. The fiscal note reflects the initial bill and not the update, and I'll tell you about that in a few moments. Upon conversation with our Department of Motor Vehicles director, we have changed the bill significantly with the white copy amendment before you. We have scaled down our ask, and I believe this now is a very simple bill with a very small ask to honor our veterans in the state. I am now asking that the department provide driver's licenses to veterans who qualify at no cost and no additional cost for the veteran designation or replacement of such IDs. There is already a process for receiving the veteran designation, which requires the upload of DD-214 as proof of veterans status to the Nebraska VA's website, where there are other options like in-person and mail-in. By the way, a DD-214 is simply a piece of paper which says you have served in the military and you've been honorably discharged. Very simple. All military people have that. The VA system is integrated with the Department of Motor Vehicles, so that once it's filed with the VA, anyone should be able to look up in the DMV, Department of Motor Vehicles' system, to confirm veteran status and receive those benefits. The amendment would also change the length of validity of a license from 5 years to 10 years, which is well within the Real ID standards. Again, this removes the cost for a Nebraska driver's license, which is around \$24, for any veteran who qualifies. And you might, might note that the fiscal note should change significantly with this amendment.

MOSER: OK. Questions? Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Senator Lippincott. When a person's on active duty, you-- as long as you're stationed

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outside the state of Nebraska, you don't have to-- you, you do not update your, your driver's license. Are you aware of that?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes. If you--

BOSTELMAN: So if I-- when I was on active duty, for as long as I was not stationed in the state of Nebraska, I did not have to-- I got my driver's license when I was 16-years-old. Even though I was 26-years-old or 30-years-old, I still had the same driver's license. My question, my question-- second question is, so if I'm 85 or 90 and I have a driver's license, what this does, it says I automatically get my driver's license for 10 years. Is that-- my understanding, is that what we want to do?

LIPPINCOTT: Well, we know that right now, it's every 5 years. Correct? Just normally, just everybody has to get their driver's license redone every 5 years, I believe. And this would just simply extend it to 10 years.

BOSTELMAN: I understand that. My question is--

LIPPINCOTT: And also--

BOSTELMAN: --if I'm 90-years-old and my my, my, my extension comes up, my 5 years comes up that makes me eligible for the driver's license till I'm 100. So that would be 10 years. So is that-- is there, at some point in time, that we need to look at this driver's license from the capability of the operator? Should-- well, should they really have that license for that time?

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah. Um-hum. Well, again, this just extends the time and eliminates the cost to the VA-- to, to the veteran.

BOSTELMAN: OK.

MOSER: Senator Bostelman, if you look at the bill summary, the last line says, shall be valid until the 10th birthday-- each license will require annual renewal on and after the 65th birthday of the holder. Right.

BOSTELMAN: Yeah.

MOSER: Is that what you're asking?

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BOSTELMAN: So I asked the testifier--

MOSER: Right.

BOSTELMAN: --the question, so thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you, sir.

MOSER: Senator DeBoer.

DeBOER: Thank you. So, I'm sorry I came in in the middle of your introduction. Can you tell me, is there a cutoff date-- an upper cutoff date? Because I know that there is, so that the frequency with which you have to renew your driver's license changes after, I think it's 65, but it might be 70. So at some point, you have to actually renew it more frequently.

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

DeBOER: Would it-- would you be open to a similar sort of measure here, because I think what they're worried about is like eyesight and things like that.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah. Yeah.

DeBOER: Would you be open to a measure like that?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

DeBOER: All right. Thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you.

MOSER: Other questions?

BOSN: I have, I guess, a follow up.

MOSER: Oh, I'm sorry. Senator Bosn.

BOSN: So we're going to really beat that horse dead here, because I also saw that in the statement of intent, that it says licenses would be valid for 10 years, and require annual renewal after the age of 65. So my impression was even if you get it when you turn 64, you still have to do it annually at 65, 66, 67, and on. But I don't

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actually see where that is in the verbiage of the bill. So am I missing it or-- I've been wrong before. So I could be wrong, but-- do you know where it is in the bill, or you're-- that's just something you're willing to address because you're also agreeing it's not in the current language?

LIPPINCOTT: If that's not in the bill right now, we'll ensure that it is.

BOSN: OK.

LIPPINCOTT: Yep.

MOSER: OK. Other questions? Thank you, Senator. Anybody-- we also received 1 letter of support. Any other supporters for this bill? Any testifiers in the opposition to this bill? Any in the neutral? Looks like there's a couple. Welcome.

GREG HOLLOWAY: Good afternoon. I am Greg Holloway. G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-- o-w-a-y. I'm the chair for the Nebraska Veterans Council, so I'm here to testify in a neutral capacity to this bill. We didn't get a chance to really discuss this bill at our last meeting, so we're still kind of feeding through it, so I don't understand it 100%, but I'm the kind of guy that don't like a few words once in a while. On page 2, line 16, the department "may" adopt. And I never did like the word "may." I like the word "shall" a lot better. "May" has too many different definitions where you could-- how you could use it. But I think what I want to do is actually meet with Senator Lippincott, and kind of-- so we can digest this bill a little bit better and see how the Nebraska Veterans Council-- whether it wants to support it 100%, or, or be being against it, or just stay as a neutral capacity for it, because there's things in here that I don't understand 100%.

_____: So.

GREG HOLLOWAY: But I'm just here to say I don't like a couple words, more or less. [INAUDIBLE] if we could talk about that. So.

MOSER: OK. Any questions for the testifier? Thank you for your testimony.

GREG HOLLOWAY: Thank you.

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MOSER: Other neutral testifiers? Welcome.

RHONDA LAHM: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and members of the Transportation Telecommunications Committee. My name is Rhonda Lahm, R-h-o-n-d-a L-a-h-m, director of the Department of Motor Vehicles. I'm appearing before you today to offer testimony, neutral capacity, on LB1298. I want to thank Senator Lippincott for reaching out to the department for feedback on the bill and meeting with us to discuss the technical concerns with the bill. My testimony today is related to the bill as introduced, not the amendment that was handed out earlier by the Senator. As written, LB1298 would create 3 new documents, types, in contrast to the veteran designation which currently exists on the licenses of eligible veterans. The bill creates an honorary license, which would be issued to surviving spouses of veterans who have not remarried, and there's currently no database which contains that information. The bill indicates the honorary license would also be issued to spouses of qualified veterans who are disabled to the extent they cannot drive. Additional language would be required to clarify how that would be determined. There's also confusion in the language regarding expiration of documents, which would need some clarification. In addition, more guidance on the Legislature's intent would be required to promulgate rules and regs. There would need to be some technical language changes to remain compliant with Real ID, and an operative date would need to be moved further out than 90 days after the session ends. The bill will have significant fiscal impact and loss of revenue. This impact is not sustainable for the DMV Cash Fund without identifying an alternative funding source. Thank you for the opportunity to share comments. The DMV is happy to review and provide feedback to the Senator and committee on any proposed amendments. And we received the amendment, but just haven't-- yesterday, but just haven't had time to thoroughly look at that yet to determine all the impact. I'm happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

MOSER: Senator DeBoer.

DeBOER: Thank you. You heard us discussing the over 65 years of age. Is that taken care of within the bill? It is--

RHONDA LAHM: So, so I just want to purview my comments with a glance at the amendment. We've looked at it a little bit, but again, not detailed. So my understanding in the amendment would be what Senator

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Bostelman was asking or referring to, is that currently, the way it's written, veterans would have to-- would only renew every 10 years, regardless of age, the way it's currently written. The way it currently works is you can renew online every-- you have to come into the office every third time. You can renew online 2 times, up to age 72. After 72, everyone needs to come into the office, is the way it currently stands.

DeBOER: For the eye test, right? It's--

RHONDA LAHM: I'm sorry. Yeah.

DeBOER: It's--

RHONDA LAHM: Right.

DeBOER: For the eye test and things?

RHONDA LAHM: Right. Well, it just-- you know, physical observation.

DeBOER: OK.

RHONDA LAHM: From being an examiner myself, there are sometimes people come into our offices where they physically are not even able to tell us what they're there for, or provide--

DeBOER: Got it.

RHONDA LAHM: --us documents, where we then seek the professional advice of a medical professional to determine if they're able to drive.

DeBOER: OK. So let me understand this fully, here. Seventy-two is when that change happens?

RHONDA LAHM: Right. Right now.

DeBOER: There's nothing that happens at 65. OK.

RHONDA LAHM: Not currently.

DeBOER: That's-- I thought it was-- I didn't think it was 65. So if we wrote this bill that it was every 10 years, but at age 72, everyone has to renew, that's a veteran--

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RHONDA LAHM: In person.

DeBOER: --under this program. And then it goes to the same rules that everyone else over the age of 72 is. Would that work?

RHONDA LAHM: So, I guess a couple of things. In terms of that would be similar to the rest of the population now, in terms of that. In the tenure situation, there's a concern with CDL compliance because while that meets a Real ID standard, we also have to follow the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Alliance standards in relation to commercial driver's licenses. The maximum for a commercial driver's license is 8 years. The other issue with commercial driver's licenses is hazardous materials endorsements are only valid 5 years, which is one of the reasons we stick with the 5 years. So there's some other things that we would have to work with. I don't think anything is like a mountain you can't climb. It's just we would want to make sure we've checked all those boxes and all those things before we say, yeah, this is good to go, because we don't want to have an unintended consequence.

DeBOER: So it sounds like we haven't addressed all of your concerns with the amendment yet.

RHONDA LAHM: Yeah. And, and in all fairness, you know, we just haven't had time.

DeBOER: Yeah. So I mean, I look at this and I don't think it addresses all of those issues, so.

RHONDA LAHM: And, and those are not necessarily things Senator Lippincott's office would have known about, because when-- they weren't things that were on the table when the original bill was built. So we didn't-- or written, so we didn't talk about those when we met with him, so.

DeBOER: Got it. Thank you.

RHONDA LAHM: Like I said, I think just further conversations have to happen.

DeBOER: Thank you.

MOSER: Senator Fredrickson.

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FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Moser. Thank you, Director Lamb, for being here today and testifying. I had just a little bit of a follow up question. In terms of-- can you speak a little bit more about the compliance with the Real ID? Is that limited to the CDL requirements, or are there other compliance-related concerns with Real ID, with this?

RHONDA LAHM: So, for, for-- mostly for this, for Real ID, there's another piece about the 10 year-- we have to have a photograph on a license. No photograph on it can be older than 16 years. And so, if you have a 10-year renewal, veterans would not be able to renew online ever, because that puts them in a 20-year cycle. So the last 4 years of their license would not be-- we would not technically be in compliance, so-- which doesn't mean it couldn't happen. It just means they wouldn't be able to go online. So we just have to make sure that when we're looking at it-- so there's that and then just the period of renewal. So we have those pieces we comply with for everybody. And then the federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration makes certain rules that we have to comply with for CDLs. So.

FREDRICKSON: You, you also in your testimony, you mentioned the significant fiscal impact of loss of revenue. Is that primarily just from renewal fees, or can you elaborate or shed a bit more light on that?

RHONDA LAHM: Yeah. So in-- Senator Lippincott is correct, in that the fiscal note would change with the amendment. I can't today tell you those numbers because we just haven't had time to look at all those numbers yet. But part of the fiscal note that talks about the fee for a vendor to do changes, if we're not creating new licenses, we would not have those expenses. So primarily, what we would be looking at is the loss of revenue from issuing the free documents. And then depending on the cycle, whether or not we end up having to incur costs of printing additional documents. I don't anticipate that the way it's written right now, but I just have a look at that. I still think the revenue loss is significant. To what degree, I don't know exactly yet, but to a lesser degree than it currently says in the fiscal note.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you.

RHONDA LAHM: Yeah.

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MOSER: Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you, Director Lahm, for being here today. To, to follow up on the fiscal note that Senator Fredrickson was asking about, and you alluded to this, so going off the original-- and I don't imagine the amendment will change it much, because they're saying that 20% of the people-- of the veterans who apply in a 5-year cycle would result in a fiscal loss of \$730,000 annually. To cover that loss, will we have to raise other licenses or revenue streams or-- because I doubt you're in a position to give up \$730,000 in your department.

RHONDA LAHM: That would be accurate. So what my- what I'm just saying is that we're a completely cash funded agency, so our-- we don't get general fund appropriations. So if we were to enact this legislation, there would have to be some piece identified to make up the revenue loss. And that would be at you guys's-- that's that's a policy decision for you guys. Obviously, changing the fee on a document is one way to do that. And I'm-- you know, there could probably be other creative ways, but I don't-- could, could our cash fund absorb it for 1 or 2 years? Probably. Sustaining it long-term, I don't think we-- it's viable in the long-term, with that. So.

BRANDT: So what is the cost per license that we're giving up here? Is it \$15, \$20? Do you know?

RHONDA LAHM: It's a, it's a \$29 revenue loss. It's a 24-- \$24 fee plus-- no. I'm sorry. It's 21-- \$3.50 goes to the county. So it's \$20-- \$20.50 of the document fee and \$5 security surcharge fee, or fee for processing the requirements to meet-- that was instilled in the requirements to meet Real ID.

BRANDT: Does the-- I didn't see anything in the fiscal note on the county loss. Did you look at the fiscal note on the original bill?

RHONDA LAHM: Yeah.

BRANDT: Was there-- was that captured?

RHONDA LAHM: So on our fiscal note, our instructions are we only provide information about our agency's impact and not--

BRANDT: OK.

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RHONDA LAHM: --impact to the others. I don't believe-- because that fee is spread out across a lot of counties, I don't think it's huge amounts for any one county. Because in the 3 bigger counties, Douglas, Sarpy, and Lancaster, when we actually do the complete transaction, that \$3.50 goes to us. So, if they go online, that goes to us. The \$3.50 is what the county gets for actually physically collecting the money and issuing a temporary receipt.

BRANDT: All right. Thank you.

MOSER: You?

BOSTELMAN: Yeah. Thank you, Chair Moser.

MOSER: Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Yeah. Thank you, Chair Moser. On-- it goes-- the bill goes to give survivors of-- which is spouses of the deceased. How do you-- how are you going to track that?

RHONDA LAHM: Well, you know, that was one of the things we originally talked about in our conversation with the Senator. And we said, we'd try to-- have to try to figure out a way to do that, probably have to work with Veterans Affairs, but I believe that that piece has been taken out of his proposed amendment--

BOSTELMAN: OK. That's--

RHONDA LAHM: --I believe. So that would be-- and I actually reached out to my colleague in Georgia, to see how they do that. And the process-- well, it's a little bit-- it's-- well, I'll just say it's more complicated than what the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs has set up, is much smoother than what they've set up there. So.

BOSTELMAN: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? OK. Thank you for your testimony.

RHONDA LAHM: Thank you.

MOSER: Any other neutral testimony? Seeing none, Senator Lippincott, you're welcome to close.

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LIPPINCOTT: With this amendment, the fiscal note that's here in our little package really is not applicable. It would have to be recalculated, because the ask we're making now is much less than what the original bill proposed. So in essence, this only applies to veterans that are aged 21-65. And after that, then they just goes-- it goes back to regular law that we currently have. It's, it's a small ask, and I believe that-- driver's licenses cost approximately \$24 each time you go in, and this would just be a savings to honor our veterans. Simple.

MOSER: OK. Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Moser. So, Senator Lippincott, I just want to make sure I understood you correctly, and I'm, I'm reading this amendment. So once a veteran-- so should this pass into law with the amendment, once a veteran turns 65, requirements based on the general population will apply to them when it comes to driver's licenses. Am, am I understanding that correctly?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

FREDRICKSON: OK. Excellent. And my other question was just are you-- it sounds like with Director Lahm having the ability to maybe review the amendment a bit closer, do you plan to work with DMV on, on any concerns they might have with the amendment or?

LIPPINCOTT: With the amendment?

FREDRICKSON: Yeah.

LIPPINCOTT: Am I concerned with what?

FREDRICKSON: I was just wondering if you, if you would be amenable to continuing to work with the DMV's office on, on the bill?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

FREDRICKSON: OK. Great. Great.

LIPPINCOTT: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

FREDRICKSON: Yeah.

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MOSER: Senator Cavanaugh.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Lippincott. So the fiscal note obviously will be adjusted based on the amendment, but there will still be a fiscal impact. And the current fiscal note states that this is essentially untenable for the department to absorb that cost. They can't absorb the cost in here. Partially, that's because the department, to Director Lahm's credit, is very judicious in their-- in how they operate. And they don't operate with much of an excess. They use those fees from the licenses for their operations. Last year, I believe we passed legislation where we took 2 of the dollars that go, for reasons beyond my understanding, into the General Fund. We took them back, and now they go to the DMV to pay for updates. So my question to you is, if we were to enact this legislation, what is the plan for backfilling the budget of the DMV? Because we would essentially be defunding the DMV with this legislation.

LIPPINCOTT: Correct. Yeah. That's right. So there will be some fiscal impact, because-- let's say we have 1,000 veterans that apply for this. It's 1,000 times \$24. Obviously, that's going to cost something. So, I can't tell you flat-out where that money would come from, but yes, we would have to replenish that to the DMV.

M. CAVANAUGH: So how, how can you ask us then, to pass this legislation if we don't have resources to fund the DMV? And I will say that the DMV is the model for how all of our state agencies should probably operate financially, because they keep track of the dollars and cents, and they don't ask for more than they need. And everything is based on fee-for-service. It's very-- it is a very thin line for the DMV. And if we do anything to hit their bottom line, we have to be willing to put the money back in. So would you consider an amendment to take general funds to go to the DMV, or is there a cash fund that we could tap into? I just-- I'm not comfortable having a conversation about doing this and defunding the DMV.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah.

M. CAVANAUGH: So they, they do have to go together. It's not a we have to figure it out. We can't move this forward without an answer to that question, in my view.

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LIPPINCOTT: Yeah. Yeah. That's very valid. I need to check with DMV. We would have to have a fiscal study on it. You know, we can't just pull a number out of the air, I will say.

M. CAVANAUGH: Right.

LIPPINCOTT: So at that point, then, I would need to get back with you folks with an amendment, with a game plan.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you. I appreciate it.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah, it's on target. Thank you.

MOSER: OK. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you, Senator.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you sir.

MOSER: OK. That'll conclude our hearing on LB1298. Now, we'll do LB1129. Welcome.

KATE WOLFE: Hello. Bless you. Good afternoon, Chair Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. My name is Kate Wolfe, K-a-t-e W-o-l-f-e, appearing before you on behalf of Senator Jane Raybould. Senator Raybould regrets that she cannot be here and has asked me to introduce LB1129, a bill to create an Autism Acceptance license plate and to restructure the statutes that deal with specialty and other license plates. First, I want to address a drafting error that came to my attention after seeing the fiscal note and the letter the committee received from Rhonda Lahm. We did not intend to lower the special interest plate fee to \$10 for a message plate. We included the restructuring language in LB1129 based on language that was in Senator von Gillern's one plate bill, LB807. The section of his bill that lowered that plate fee was inadvertently included in LB1129. I have brought an amendment to address that, which should, should resolve the department's concern, as well as the issue raised in the fiscal note. The restructuring language you see was a recommendation from the Revisor's Office. Senator, Senator Raybould requested a draft to create an Autism Acceptance license plate. Before elaborating on why the restructuring is important, I want to go back in time just a little bit and catch us up to where we are now, in regards to specialty license plates. I know that a few of you have heard your fair share of specialty license plate bills during your time on this committee, but out of respect for Senator

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Bosn's foray into the subject, let's go back. According to legislative lore-- perhaps I should say "once upon a time," when a senator would introduce a bill that proposed a specialty plate, Senator Ernie, Ernie Chambers made it clear: It was dead on arrival. It was Senator Chambers' opinion that license plates should be nothing other than an identifying mechanism for a vehicle, to show that it is legal to drive. The body did manage to adopt the Disabled American Veteran, ex Prisoner-of-war, Pearl Harbor survivor, and Purple Heart plates in 2005, and Gold Star Family plates in 2007. But like other measures adopted during Senator Chambers' 4-year absence due to term limits, the Specialty License Plate Program wasn't created until 2009. These are the plates that any organization can bring into existence with originally, 500, and today, 250 prepaid applications. The fee for those plates is \$70. This was an innovative solution for those groups, such as the friends of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum, Cattlemen, Creighton University, and others. To no one's surprise, Senator Chambers returned to the body just 4 years later, and was met again with specialty license plates-- specialty license plate bills, specifically, Senator Charlie Janssen's bill to create Military Honor plates. When the bill was on Select File, Senator Chambers filed his infamous amendment that would prohibit the hunting of mountain lions in Nebraska. Senator Janssen then filed an amendment to his bill that would create Mountain Lion Protection plates. As expected, Senator Chambers welcomed this amendment and wholeheartedly supported it. The amendment, yet, was met with resistance. And I bring this up because it speaks directly to the popularity of specialty license plates. In a floor speech, Senator Beau McCoy stated about the mountain lion plates, quote, I can't imagine that there would be 500 Nebraskans who would want such a license plate, end quote. I guess you could say that Senator McCoy was right, because there are not 500 Nebraskans who would want-- who wanted that plate. As of the end of 2023, there are 19,955 vehicles displaying the Mountain Lion Conservation plate, passed in 2016. It is as popular as the Husker Spirit and Military Honor plates. It was a rare occur-- occurrence to witness Senator Ernie Chambers change his mind on something. When he opened on his mountain lion plate bill before the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee in February of 2015, he said, quote, down through the years, I opposed anything on the license plate other than the identifying number. I lost that battle some time ago. So now, I'm going to be like the person who used to want to travel, to be according to the rules of

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the Amish, where you have a cart and horses, but if the only means of moving are super highways and 4-lane freeways, then you have to update the way you travel, end quote. I shared a handout that lists the number of specialty plates registered as of December 31, 2023. The numbers always tell the story. 143,128. These are Nebraskans who have chosen to put their dollars towards a plate other than the standard-issue plate, and that is due to some of you here, as well as those who came before you. The debate over whether specialty plates are good or bad is the equivalent of whether pineapple belongs on pizza. There are those who love it and those who don't. The good thing is that for those who don't, there are other options. Soon, you will all be voting on Senator Brandt's Czech Heritage bill and passing it into law. As I'm sure you know, Senator Brandt put in a provision that the plates will cease to be issued if registrations drop below 500 with any prior consecutive 2-year period. This concern was not raised with our office, but what I will offer the committee to consider is if that there are concerns about ensuring that the cost of production is covered, we are open to a minimum consideration on our proposed plates today. If you looked, again, to the handout with the number of registered specialty plates, the committee might consider adopting a minimum across the board, once an accurate analysis of the current cost of production could be provided by the department. OK. Let's talk about LB1129. The need for the restructuring language can be illustrated by pointing out that we have special interest, special use, and specialty license plates. Senator Brandt's Czech Heritage plate, for example, is none of those by definition. Additionally, if you look at 60-3104, types of license plates, they are all listed in alphabetical order. So upon adoption of Senator Brandt's bill, Revisors must renumber this entire section. Without adopting this restructuring this year, should Senator Brandt pass a bill-- plate bill next year, called "Brandt is Best," Revisors would have to renumber it all again. To help out our hardworking Revisors, we are separating what we colloquially call specialty license plates and naming them as alternate license plates, and moving them to the end of the section. This way, should a plate be added in the future, perhaps "Wendys Always Win," only 1 paragraph will have to be changed. Additionally, we are renaming specialty license plates as organizational plates, reducing confusion and calling them what we all call them anyway. So why an autism acceptance license plate? You will hear from testifiers today that will tell you what it means to them. Senator Raybould believes that

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our Legislature has the ability to join movements across our state and our country, working to help ensure that autism spectrum disorder, disorder, those affected by it, as well as their families, are accepted, seen, and treated with compassion and care. As many of us here were growing up, there were undoubtedly individuals with autism who were not treated well by their peers. We can all probably think of an example. Fortunately, though, diligent diagnosis, education and awareness, a lot of progress has been made. LB1129 continues that progress. The additional funds raised from the Autism Acceptance plates will go to the Autism Treatment Program Cash Fund. This cash exists to be used as the state's matching share for a waiver to provide medical assistance for intensive, early intervention services, based on behavioral principles for children with a medical diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder or an educational verification of autism. It's a great opportunity for families and supporters to put their money towards something that could benefit their loved one. There is a letter that I believe that you received from the Department of Health and Human Services addressing this waiver, talking about how there was a need for it, they had to withdraw. And what I will tell you is that I know that stakeholders on-- with autism, I think you could probably hear from, from Cathy Martinez a little bit more about this. They actually are working towards putting that waiver to use. So it is not something that's going to just be going away anytime soon, and this still maintains an appropriate place to put those funds. In closing, I would encourage the committee to consider the popularity of alternate license plates. Just earlier this year on the floor, Senator Erdman pointed out that many people are dissatisfied with the standard design. Maybe these are the same people who don't think pineapple belongs on pizza. It is fair to question how many plate designs would be too many. Florida offers over 100 options. Is that too many? Nebraska plates-- Nebraska's plate options are as far from that as are-- we are miles from the Sunshine State. It's also fair to ponder which causes are deserving and which are not, but you shouldn't shy away from it. As policymakers, those are the decisions you make every day on behalf of your constituents. Senator Raybould encourages the committee to support LB1129, for all Nebraskans who live with autism spectrum disorder and their family and friends who love and care for them. Thank you. I'll be happy to take any questions.

MOSER: Generally, we don't ask staff questions, so.

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KATE WOLFE: I am OK with that, Senator.

MOSER: Yeah. Yeah, you're good to go. Thank you for your testimony. Are there supporters for LB1129 here? Anybody want to testify? Greetings.

CATHY MARTINEZ: Good afternoon, Senator Moser and members of committee. My name is Cathy Martinez, C-a-t-h-y M-a-r-t-i-n-e-z. My husband, Cesar [PHONETIC], and I have raised 8 children in Lincoln. Our youngest son, Jake, is 20 years old and he lives with level 3, or severe autism. He attends LPS Special Education Program for 18-21 year olds. He was diagnosed at his 24-month checkup in 2005. Jake cannot speak. He is an elopement risk. He wears a Project Lifesaver bracelet provided by the Lincoln Police Department. He is not the person with autism you see featured in movies: Not a prodigy, not a doctor. Jake needs assistance with all of his ADLs except for being able to run, which he does very well. We toilet him, we bathe him, we prepare all of his meals. He will always live with a caregiver. Jake exhibits aggressive behaviors, and he needs 24/7 supervision. He has the difficult kind of autism filled with lots of challenges. Regardless of all the negative characteristics of autism that comes with his diagnosis, we love him unconditionally and we would do anything to keep him safe. According to the CDC, autism now affects 1 in 37 child-- 36 children in the United States. It is the fastest growing developmental dis-- disorder in the world, and it's the most prevalent disorder in the world. If we had an Autism Awareness plate, it would let law enforcement officials and other motorists know that a person with a developmental disability is most likely on board. It would let law enforcement be prepared to potentially have a passenger or a driver that may have behavioral issues and communication deficits. When we realized we couldn't do anything to cure our son of the challenging parts of autism, we became very involved with the local autism community. We helped form a support group in 2006 called the Autism Family Network. We help pass legislation for the autism treatment waiver that this bill would fund. This waiver has remained unfunded since it was passed years ago. The revenue generated from the sale of the plates would begin to fund this waiver. Families affected by autism would love to see this legislation produce some types of service for our children, and it could potentially address the 5-year wait list for services for people applying for developmental disability waiver. It would also give families like mine representation, such as the families that Down's syndrome,

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breast cancer, prostate cancer and organ cancers have in our state. Even several animals get specialty plates in Nebraska. I'd like to see that families with autism get that, as well. Passing legislation for a plate would make the plates more affordable than the organizational plate route, reducing the cost significantly from-- for families from \$70 to \$40, making it more accessible for families affected by developmental disabilities. I'd like to thank, thank Senator Raybould and her team for their work and advocacy on this bill. I appreciate your time, and I hope you give our families the same consideration that other groups have received, with the approval of their specialty plates. Thank you.

MOSER: Thank you. Questions for the testifier? Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony. Are there other supporters? Welcome.

CRIS PETERSEN: Hello, Chairman Moser and Transportation Committee. My name is Cris Petersen, C-r-i-s P-e-t-e-r-s-e-n. I'm Max's mom. I'm also an autism advocate. I serve the state of Nebraska in several different appointed and volunteer roles. I worked with Senator Kate Bolz on her last bill to pass the handicapped parking permit legislation, to have neurological disorders added to handicapped parking permits. Some of you maybe remember me from that. And my little Maxwell, he goes to Christ Lincoln schools. He's in third grade. He's 9. He's amazing in every way. He reads at a sixth grade level. He is incredible, and he's extremely verbal. He loves all things. And he also likes to dart in front of traffic and get garbage. And he gets agitated and screams sometimes. And he is just on the spectrum. And the spectrum is wide. And so, when I was looking at this bill, I, you know, pulled up all of the license plates and I took a look. And here, I found 32 license plates that are specialty plates. And of those specialty plates, I thought, how many of those plates tell a first responder or a police officer or a fireman that there is a child under the age of 18-years-old that could be an at-risk kid? And there's only 2. And that means 6.25% of the license plates that are specialty plates tell a first responder that there is an at-risk kid, and that would be just the pediatric cancer one and the Down's syndrome one. And then when I look at the CDC and I look at the Census Bureau, the CDC says that 1 in 3 kids have autism in the country. And the Census Bureau for the state of Nebraska says that 478,000 children are under the age of 18. So when we look at those numbers, there's 13,000 kids with autism in the state of Nebraska. So we know that. So when we have those numbers, we know

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that if we have an opportunity to get these plates, then we know that we have an opportunity to alert first responders and we have an opportunity to let police officers know, like in 28 other states that I have listed here, when they approach a child, that that child might not respond or they might resist or they might run away. They may be nonverbal. They may be unaware of danger, that-- they may be upset or angry or withdraw. They may start hitting their parent, or they may be pushing away when they approach them. And so, it's not just a license plate, but it is an opportunity to say to the police officers, to the first responders, when they're coming up to a vehicle, hey, my child is going to need a little extra care when you approach my vehicle. And also, an-- child with autism can drive, but they're going to need a little support. So when you're approaching the car of a 16-year-old who's driving and they might have autism, turn off those sirens because you're going to give them some sensory overload. And that's going to agitate the situation a little bit. So use a little care when you're approaching that situation, because it's giving everybody a chance for some success when using that situation. It's not just an opportunity to support the autism community, but it's giving an opportunity to just set everybody up for some success. So I appreciate your time and I'm open to any questions.

MOSER: Questions? Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you for your testimony. It almost seems to me, like with the other testifier and yourself, you're, you're almost looking more for a registry of autistic people in the state, so that if they were to get pulled over, the police could ask-- you run the, the card number, and, and it could come up and say, there, there potentially could be somebody with autism on board. I guess I kind of see the specialty plate as maybe somebody can't afford an autism plate, you know, because that's a, that's a big load, you know, having an autistic kid in the family. So I-- do you have any comments on that?

CRIS PETERSEN: You make a great point. So I have a really special situation where I have a 9-year-old, like I said, who's amazing. I also have a 30-year-old daughter. And my daughter has my son sometimes, right? So she would absolutely have an autism plate. And his grandma, she's got Max a lot. So she would have a plate. So, you know, the registry wouldn't be necessarily an effective thing for Max

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because he goes with grandma, he goes with his sister. So when he's in the car, you know, and somebody comes up, they just know there might be a child who's got autism in this vehicle. And they know-- OK. This is, this is a great opportunity to just-- let's approach this in a, in a situation or let's be a little bit more kind than honking the horn if they take a minute to turn the corner. Let's, let's not be so aggressive if they take 2 minutes to turn the corner, you know? Let's treat this with a little more kindness.

BRANDT: So your experience with law enforcement, have you had that problem with law enforcement being aggressive toward--

CRIS PETERSEN: I'm just talking about the, the common Joe who might be behind me--

BRANDT: Oh, OK.

CRIS PETERSEN: --at a light.

BRANDT: All right. I--

CRIS PETERSEN: If they see the autism plate, they might take a second to not, to not honk at me.

BRANDT: You--.

CRIS PETERSEN: No, law enforcement has been lovely to us.

BRANDT: OK. I appreciate that explanation. Thank you.

CRIS PETERSEN: Yeah.

MOSER: Other questions? Seeing none, thank you so much for your testimony.

CRIS PETERSEN: Thank you so much.

MOSER: We had 3 letters of support, and 2 letters neutral. Next testifier, come on up.

WESTON KENDALL: Good afternoon. My name is Weston Kendall, W-e-s-t-o-n K-e-n-d-a-l-l. I'm joined here with my wife, Erin. And like many, I can Google statistics, but that's not going to show the complexity and what the families with autism go through every day. My

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wife and I, we have an 11-year-old. He's 5'6'', 120 pounds. From an outsider looking in, he looks like a normal kid. We actually go to grocery stores, it's not uncommon for him to be overstimulated and misbehaving. We routinely get the looks of judgment. We've actually been approached and verbally told, on a couple of occasions, your child's a bad kid. He's not a bad kid. And, you know, for those that know him, he's nonverbal. He doesn't understand right from wrong behavior, the appropriate time, and he functions as a-- more like a 3-year-old. You know, we do have to bathe him-- everything. Prepare meals. He, he does not understand danger. And to Senator Brandt, your point about law enforcement and the license plate, I'm actually a former law enforcement officer, and seeing that plate provides you that information. And, and that information-- no traffic stop is routine. It could be a hostile chaos situation, so knowing what I'm approaching is just that much more valuable, not only just for the autistic child, but as ours, when there's chaos going, he feels the emotions. He starts to act up. So now you're trying to give me directions as a law enforcement officer, I'm not necessarily listening to you because I always have to control the safety of our child. But it goes beyond that. And it goes beyond the, the revenue that it can generate for services in the state that are much needed. As parents, we live this every single day, and sometimes it's very easy to get, kind of like a tunnel vision. And you feel you're the only one doing this. You're, you're fighting it alone. Everywhere you go, you get judged. So you feel very alone. Driving through a parking lot, if I saw another family getting into a vehicle with the license plate, that might open up a conversation. Maybe now I can network with this person and, and kind of just really feeling-- like a simple reminder, we're not in this alone. There are others. And finally, you know, 3 years ago, I met my wife, and I met Owen. And before then, I'm ashamed to admit it, I was naive. I was uneducated in autism. And now, I, I think a license plate brings awareness. And, and awareness brings acceptance. The more that people learn about this and can approach those families and get to know the individuals, the better for everybody. And I think this is a great opportunity for a lot of families. So I appreciate your time, and open to questions.

MOSER: OK. Questions for the testifier? Seeing none, thank you so much for your testimony.

WESTON KENDALL: Thank you.

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MOSER: Other supporters who want to testify?

GERALDINE DOBOS: Good afternoon, Senators.

MOSER: Welcome.

GERALDINE DOBOS: Thank you. My name is Geraldine Dobos, D-o-b-o-s, and I'm here with the Autism Family Network. I'm also a parent of 3 adult children on the autism spectrum. Excuse me. It's really hard to speak dispassionately about something that you're immersed in deeply. And with an ever-growing neurodiverse population, I think that it can't be underscored more-- it can't be underscored enough how much awareness is important. I'm asking for your support for the passage of LB1129, so that families with children diagnosed with autism receive the critical early intervention, and it's provided through funding of the sale of these license plates. We discovered that our-- a diagnosis of autism is a lifelong diagnosis. It's especially challenging for children who have not received early intervention and for their families. My children were diagnosed in their late teens and 20s. And as a result, their support needs became greater than what our family members-- hired school teacher-- tutors, and speech and occupational therapists could provide. So it's very important for that early treatment. It just can't be over emphasized. The services and supports that they did receive, such as speech and occupational therapies and mental health therapies, were paid out-of-pocket. And in our-- in their young adult years, they attended out-of-state programs, which were also paid entirely out-of-pocket. No insurance. No waivers. The intensive and extensive support needed at that age is more expensive, and unavailable in the state of Nebraska. It is out of the financial reach for many families. And when our family committed to these types of services, we became quickly aware that it might cost us our retirement and possibly, our home. When our children returned to Nebraska, we became their program, because most supports end at age 21. So there's a very brief window where we can help our family members. So with the passage of LB1121 [SIC], it is one necessary step to support Nebraska children and families in their lifelong autism journey. And by the way, all 3 of my children drive, so they would probably use those license plates. One of them has a little bit of a problem with emotional regulation and executive functioning. So being approached by an officer might cause them a little more concern than it would most people. So it would be

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very helpful. Thank you so very much for hearing me, and for your support. Do you have any questions?

MOSER: Questions for the testifier? Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Thank you. Chairman Moser. Thank you for your testimony. Even if this gets approved this year, you're probably 1 or 2 years away from the plate. They-- then they'll have to design the plate, and then it'll be issued. I'm kind of looking over here and getting a head nod-- having-- going through this on something of my own. But disabled people have a, a deal they hang from the rearview mirror that enables them to park in, in special parking spots. Is, is there an effort on the part of the autism community to have a, I'm just gonna make this up, just a sticker for the back window or an identifier, so that an officer or another family would know that, that there is an autistic individual driving or on board?

GERALDINE DOBOS: Well, I think it's more about the idea of funding, as well. Would that, would that provide any funding for this waiver that we're looking at?

BRANDT: No. No, no, no. I'm just, I'm just looking for-- I'm gathering from the testimony that you're looking for a form of identification. And I, I would be very surprised if every autistic individual in the state bought an autistic license plate. It would be great for us if they did, but, you know, there's an added cost to that. So.

GERALDINE DOBOS: Correct. I would be a little concerned about something hanging from the rearview mirror, because it's just more stimulation or more--

BRANDT: Sure.

GERALDINE DOBOS: --distraction for a person to deal with. I think that could be more of a problem than a help.

BRANDT: Well, I guess when you go down the road and you look at the back of all these minivans, they've got everything but grandma's name on the back of the minivan. I mean, they've got how many kids and the dog and all this other stuff back there-- what school, and, and, and I just-- it's just an idea at this point. But, yeah. I do think that the plates probably are a decent idea. Thank you.

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GERALDINE DOBOS: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: Thank you for your testimony.

GERALDINE DOBOS: Thank you.

***SASHA REEKS:** My name is Sasha Reeks, I'm more commonly known by my last name only. I am an individual with Autism and I have struggled with what it means to look like other people but not be like other people my entire life. Many times people will tell me I have no disability and I have to keep from screaming at them how many times I have been in a system or institution because of my disability. I am 35 now and I have learned a lot through my experiences. I am lucky enough to be able to verbalize my experiences but I have compared having autism to being an alien on this planet. Like someone from mars that looks like an earthling living among us. I might be able to speak but many times I can't fully communicate what is inside or what I have experienced, however I can tell you that I have had a lot of help. Much of that has come from people in my personal life that have reached out to organizations like schools, law enforcement agencies, and nonprofit organizations to educate them on autism awareness or just about me personally. 25-30 years ago my family members had to go from school to school, police station to police station, hospital to doctors office to explain how autism impacted the students they were teaching or young people they were detaining and patients they were treating. Many of them had never even heard of the disability. A license plate may seem like something that is of little importance compared to other things you decide on but it is something we all look at and see every day when we get out of our homes and go to work or school or out to visit friends or family. It is something that gets people to ask questions. These people might not otherwise know anything about autism. A blue collar worker could know nothing about the bills you pass but they see a license place every day and they ask what does it mean? That is not meaningless. I know some will not be fans that the money raised is going into an autism waver. I would ask that you reconsider redirecting it to a nonprofit whose sole focus is autism. However if that is what needs to happen for the plate to be made then do it. The awareness is more important. This is not the first time that an autism license plate has come across this legislative body. It is something many people in this community want. Placing access to it on the DMV website and allowing for an autistic individual to design it would show Nebraskas commitment to the

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disability community, and support to autism awareness, a group that has been fighting to be recognized for a long time because we are a spectrum some of us are obvious but many of us can blend in making our disability invisible. No disability should be invisible. Help us!

***SHANNON CORYELL:** I have a son who has autism. I would love to see more autism awareness in Nebraska. Especially since this population is growing. I would get these plates.

MOSER: Are there more supporters? Is there anyone here to speak in opposition? Seeing none, is anyone here to speak in the neutral? OK. Thank you. Generally, we don't have staff do closing, so that'll close our hearing on LB1129. Senator Holdcroft.

HOLDCROFT: OK. Good afternoon, Chairman Moser and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. For the record, my name is Senator Rick Holdcroft, spelled R-i-c-k H-o-l-d-c-r-o-f-t, and I represent Legislative District 36, which is west and south Sarpy County. I am here today to discuss LB965, which, among other things, cleans up and harmonizes language in state statute regarding license plates for military veterans in our state. It also adds the United States Space Force to the list of military branches recognized by the Department of Motor Vehicles. This bill will create 5 new license plate designs, printed prototype examples of which the page has handed out. The sixth sample retains the existing design for the Purple Heart recipient license plate. The first 2 plates are generic in nature, and may be requested by veterans in good standing and who are registered with the Department of Veterans Affairs. There is a plate that indicates that the plateholder is a veteran, and there is also an option to place the International Symbol of Access, or ISA symbol, commonly known as the wheelchair symbol, on this plate. In order to qualify for the ISA symbol, the plate holder must go through the standard process with their physician to qualify for a handicapped license plate. The handicap must be certified by the physician as permanent in nature. The next 2 plates clear up any ambiguity regarding license plates for disabled veterans. Currently, the abbreviation DAV appears on these plates, albeit with periods in between. DAV is the acronym for a national veterans service organization, Disabled American Veterans. The new license plate spells out "disabled veteran" to clearly dissociate the plate from this group. There is also the option to add the aforementioned ISA symbol. With advertisement from the Nebraska Department of Veterans

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Affairs, LB965 would amend state statute to indicate that any veteran with at least 10% or higher disability related to military service would qualify for these plates. The old DAV plates will be replaced as registrations are renewed throughout 2025. Lastly, this bill would allow the ISA symbol to be added to qualifying plateholders of the Purple Heart license plate. Existing plateholders not requesting the handicapped symbol could retain the plates that have already been issued to them. There are no fees beyond registration fees and taxes for the Disabled Veteran and Purple Heart plates. The plateholders for the generic military plates pay either a \$5 plate fee or a \$40 fee for vanity plates. Chairman Moser and Chairman-- and members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, thank you for your consideration of LB965. I believe this bill is a significant way that we can honor members of our armed forces. I would appreciate a yes vote to advance the legislation. And I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

MOSER: Questions for Senator Holdcroft? Well, I guess they're going to let you off easily.

HOLDCROFT: I'll be here for the close.

MOSER: OK. Thank you. Other supporters for LB965? Welcome.

AMANDA VAZQUEZ: Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you, Senator Moser and committee members, for the opportunity to speak today. For the record, my name is Amanda Vasquez, spelled A-m-a-n-d-a V-a-z-q-u-e-z. I am the government relations director for Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter. And I'm here to express our support for LB965. This bill would provide veterans with more options for a license plate that represents their service, and goes even further by giving these veterans who also qualify for accessible parking the option to have both types of plates in one. Under current law, veterans who qualify for a license plate with the international symbol of accessibility, or ISA, permitting them to park in designated spaces must choose between a veteran license plate or the plate with the ISA designation. This bill would provide the option for veterans to proudly display their service on their license plate, while simultaneously displaying the ISA symbol, allowing them to legally park in the spaces designated for them. Right now, veterans who need accessible parking must choose between these 2 types of plates. Most of the veterans that we serve choose a license plate

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with the ISA designation, because having access to accessible parking is the first obstacle they must overcome simply to exit their vehicle. This means that most of these veterans likely will not choose a veteran plate, even if they would want one. A veteran should have the choice to proudly display their service on a license plate without jeopardizing their access to accessible parking. So we are hopeful this bill will pass, giving our veterans better options for license plates that meet their needs and their desire to show pride in their service. This bill would also change the designation for a veteran with a disability, as rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, from DAV to Disabled Veteran. This change would clear up the assumption that any veteran with the current DAV license plate is also a member of the DAV organization. The new disabled veteran designation makes a clear distinction between the individual as a veteran and one's membership within the DAV organization. It is my hope that this bill will pass, providing clarity and greater options for Nebraska veterans who are living with a disability. Thank you.

MOSER: Thank you. Questions for the testifier? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony.

AMANDA VAZQUEZ: Thank you.

MOSER: Anyone else to speak in support?

JOHN HILGERT: Good afternoon, Chairman Moser, members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. I am John Hilgert, J-o-h-n H-i-l-g-e-r-t, director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs, and I'm here to testify in favor of LB965. I want to thank Senator Holdcroft and his staff for the extensive commitment during the interim to produce this complex, but not complicated bill. LB965 includes those military members and veterans of the United States Space Force, adds a general veteran plate, and allows for the issuance of internationally accepted wheelchair symbol to be used on existing Honor plates for those veterans that are permanently disabled. This allows for a greater number of military veterans to be honored and those who are disabled with additional recognition. Again, thank you for your work on this bill, Senator Holdcroft and I will attempt to answer any questions that you might have.

MOSER: Questions? Yes, Senator Bostelman.

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BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Chairman Moser. Thank you, Director. Question I have, you know, we ran-- trying to come down to identify-- this isn't service-related disability. This is just a disabled, because we tried to work before--

JOHN HILGERT: Absolutely.

BOSTELMAN: --on trying to pinpoint back to service-related, because there's, there's a myriad of ways a person [INAUDIBLE].

JOHN HILGERT: Yeah. It's, it's a-- it's, it's, it's an evolution, Senator. And you're correct. And, and the early work done on that had a-- had that-- tried-- what, what I think was reached, and I tried to allude to it as the extensive work that was done in the interim, is that what was settled upon was the definition in Nebraska Statute, that's generally accepted for the ISA symbol. So we used that-- I believe the proposition is to using that definition and simply applying that on a veterans plate. With the-- and also, this would be a permanent condition that the veteran would have, thus differentiating it from the placard to the plate.

BOSTELMAN: OK. Thank you.

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you, Senator.

MOSER: Other questions? OK. Thank you for your testimony.

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you.

MOSER: Are there other supporters that would like to testify?

GREG HOLLOWAY: Good, good afternoon.

MOSER: Welcome back.

GREG HOLLOWAY: I'm Greg Holloway, G-r-e-g H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y. And I'm here representing the Ne-- the Nebraska Veterans Council, which I am the chair. We have discussed this in length. And I-- at first, the Paralyzed Veterans of America were kind of opposed to the handicapped stickers, but once we figured it out that it's going to be run right and only those that are eligible for that sticker is going to be seen coming around and they're OK with it. The only other thing was the [INAUDIBLE] Purple Hearts doesn't want to lose their present license

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plate. So if there's 2, 2 Purple Heart license plates, one that has to be used for the handicapped placard, so be it. So-- but we don't want to lose the Purple Heart plate we have. I, myself, the recipient of 2 purple Hearts, and I like my plate and-- the way it is, but if we need a different one for-- just for handicapped, we're OK with that, too. So Nebraska Veterans Council, which is made up of 8 nationally-recognized veterans organizations and the County Veterans Service Officers location-- or Association, are in agreements that this is an OK bill.

MOSER: All right.

GREG HOLLOWAY: Any questions?

MOSER: Questions for the testifier?

GREG HOLLOWAY: All right. Thank you, again--

MOSER: Thank you so much.

GREG HOLLOWAY: --for looking after us.

MOSER: Thank you. Are there more supporters for LB965? We had 3 letters of support, and no letters of opposition or neutral position. Anyone to speak against LB965? Seeing none, is anyone here to testify in the neutral on LB965? Senator Holdcroft, you're recognized to close.

HOLDCROFT: Thank you very much, Chairman Moser. I just will be brief. So I take you back to my first days as a, as a new senator. You know, you come in and you'd like to do a, a no kidding bill that you, you-- you'd like. It's a slam dunk, you know. And so I did, as you might recall from the last session, brought forward a bill that would allow veterans who already had the DAV, the old DAV plate, to, to be able to park in handicapped spots, with no additional symbology or, or whatever. And I actually got quite a bit of pushback from the veterans. And rightfully so. A lot of the disabled veterans are-- they're not, they're not disabled, mobility-wise. They may have had a loss of hearing or they may have high blood pressure. But they really didn't feel right about, you know, using-- parking in handicapped spots if they didn't auth-- they weren't authorized for it. So we worked during the interim. I want to thank Director Hilgert for, for his support on this and also, the director of DMV. And we, we got

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them all in one room. We, we hammered it out. And I think what we've put together is a, is a very good bill. So I know it takes a long time to get-- sometimes it takes a long time to get license plates through the Unicameral, but I think we're off to a pretty good start. And with that, I'll answer any further questions.

MOSER: Senator Brandt.

BRANDT: Well, thank you, chairman Moser. Is this-- these first 4 plates, is that a facsimile or they will actually be a flag, red, white and blue?

HOLDCROFT: They'll be red, white and blue.

BRANDT: OK. So these would be different than the Navy and the Army-- or you would have that Navy-Army symbol on these plates if you're a veteran of Marine Corps.

HOLDCROFT: They would be, be different. The ones that have the Seals on them are a different design.

BRANDT: So this is in addition to the existing ones?

HOLDCROFT: Yes.

BRANDT: OK. Thank you for clarifying that.

MOSER: Other comments, questions? Senator Bostelman.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you. Chairman Moser. Am I reading this bill right? Space Command? I thought you were a Navy guy.

HOLDCROFT: I am, but, but I'm joint. So, you know, the Commander-In-Chief has established this Space Force, so we-- we're going to support it with a license plate.

BOSTELMAN: I do appreciate that. You're intention with this-- because we do have veterans plates already.

HOLDCROFT: Yeah.

BOSTELMAN: Just a standard plate, and then the one that we said before, with the different-- approve-- approved symbols of the, of

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the forces that we have. So this would be in addition to, instead of maybe adding to those plates?

HOLDCROFT: This would be currently, in addition to.

BOSTELMAN: Having-- it-- was there part of the discussion to maybe add the, the disabled veteran?

HOLDCROFT: Well, the-- I think the-- we did discuss that and it was just too much to put on one plate, with the symbol.

BOSTELMAN: I know that was-- I think this was brought up once before, especially with, with, with the symbol of the wheelchair symbolize a-- whatever it is. That was a--

HOLDCROFT: ISA.

BOSTELMAN: --that was a concern before, but you've worked that portion out.

HOLDCROFT: Yes.

BOSTELMAN: OK. Thank you.

MOSER: Other questions, comments? All right, Senator, thank you so much.

HOLDCROFT: Thank you, Chair Moser.

MOSER: So that's going to conclude our hearing today for Transportation Telecommunications. Thank you for attending. We'll have a Executive Session immediately following. What's that? Yeah. We'll take a 5-minute break, get the room cleared.

[BREAK]