

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

KELLY: Good morning. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the first day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, First Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Arch. Please rise.

ARCH: Let us pray. Father God, as we begin a new legislative session, we stand before you today with great hope for the good work that we-- that can be accomplished by the senators and staff in this room over the next several months. But we also confess that we feel a sense of inadequacy for the task before us. While the potential is great, the issues are complex and difficult. So we pray that you will give us all that is needed to accomplish your will. First, we pray for wisdom to know what is right and best in your eyes. In James 1:5 you promise that if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask a God who gives generously to all without reproach and it will be given to him. We lack wisdom and ask that you would generously provide us with your wisdom in our deliberations in decision making. Second, we pray for courage to do what is right and best. We know that we, we will face difficult decisions where we will be tempted to back away from the choices before us. You have promised us in Isaiah 41:10 to fear not, for I am with you. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. May we find in you the courage needed to act on what we believe to be right. So, Father, we stand before you in all humility, asking that you would provide us with the wisdom to know what is right and best and the courage to do it. That at the end of this session we will look back and see that you have answered our prayer. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

KELLY: Thank you. Senator Arch. We will now have the presentation of colors from the Nebraska State Patrol color guard.

Speaker 3: Most. Well.

Unidentified: There are.

Speaker 3: Very, very. Or.

KELLY: I recognize Senator Andersen for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANDERSEN: Mr. President, my sons, Joe and Jack Andersen will assist. 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.

KELLY: Please be seated. Pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Sect. 10 of the Constitution of Nebraska, the One Hundred Ninth

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Floor Debate January 8, 2025

Legislature, First Session of the Legislature of Nebraska, assembled in the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber of the State Capitol at the hour of 10:00 a.m. On Wednesday, January 8th, 2025, is now called to order. Members, please check in. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President. Present are Senators. Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, McKinney, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, and Wordekemper.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I recognize Senator Arch for a motion.

ARCH: I move to appoint-- I move to appoint Mr. Brandon Metzler as temporary Clerk of the Legislature, and Mr. Scott Black as temporary sergeant at arms.

KELLY: Everything is a voice vote. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. Motion is adopted. Senator Sanders, you are recognized for a motion.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that we proceed to the election of the five persons to serve as the Committee on Credentials who will forthwith report to the Legislature on the credentials of those claiming to be elected to the Legislature in the general election, November, 2024. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Sanders. You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. I recognize Senator Quick for a motion.

QUICK: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to elect the following five members of the Legislature to serve on the, on the Committee on Credentials: Senator Conrad, Senator Clements, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, Senator Moser, and Senator Riepe. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Quick. You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Will those five members please retire to the back of the Chamber and escort the Chief Justice?

Unidentified: Thank you. And. And.

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Floor Debate January 8, 2025

KELLY: While the Chief Justice is being escorted, Senator DeKay, you're recognized for a motion.

DeKAY: I move to approve the Committee on Credentials report as certified and presented by the Secretary of State.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted.

Speaker 3: Yeah. Here's a bit later. I think that we owe. Okay.

Unidentified: This part. And the.

KELLY: I recognize the Sergeant at Arms.

SCOTT BLACK: Mr. President, your committee escorting the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, the Honorable Jeffrey Funke.

Speaker 3: Recommended by any. You have kids?

JEFFREY FUNKE: Good morning and thank you for allowing me to be here today to administer the oath of office to our new and reelected state legislators. Each of you that are here for the oath of office, I'd ask that you please raise your right hand. Do each of you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Nebraska and will faithfully discharge the duties of Nebraska state legislators according to the best of your ability? If so, please answer either I so swear, or I so affirm. Thank you. Congratulations.

KELLY: Will the es-- committee please escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber?

Unidentified: This is school.

Speaker 3: So.

Speaker 5: You know. We guys.

Speaker 3: It's happening. Yeah. Yeah.

Unidentified: You.

Speaker 5: And.

Speaker 3: I don't know how he learned that the first day. I figured you guys were talking about. Just think about. So the big thing is

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Floor Debate January 8, 2025

that hard work. We're going. That's actually very. Now here. It's like that's what you like. Yeah. Yeah. Congratulations. You that gonna. That version. After all. You know, I just kind of. How the wife.

Speaker 5: I feel special now.

Speaker 3: I took a job.

Unidentified: With my daughter That. Hi. Nice to meet you. Your wife. Nice.

Speaker 3: Yes. Think you're right. Okay. Right now.

KELLY: Members, please find your seats.

Speaker 3: Earlier. Yeah. Is that, for goodness sake.

KELLY: I recognize Senator Hallstrom for a motion.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the rules has now in our possession be adopted until such time as the permanent rules are adopted pursuant to Rule 2, Sect. 1, provided that the temporary rule shall not continue until after the 12th legislative day.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. All those in favor-- you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. They are adopted. I recognize Senator Hansen for a motion.

HANSEN: Thank you, Mr.-- Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the following officers recommended by the Executive Board be elected to serve for the 109th Legislature: Clerk of the Legislature, Brandon Metzler; Assistant Clerk of the Legislature, Mike Hybl; and Sergeant at Arms, Scott Black. Thank you.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. To-- Senator Ibach, you're recognized for a motion.

IBACH: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the Speaker of the Legislature.

KELLY: All those in favor of that motion say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We'll now accept nominations for Speaker of the Legislature. Speaker Arch, you're recognized to speak.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. It's good to see many of you back in the Chamber. And a sincere welcome to our new

members who have just been sworn in, congratulations. We're about to embark on an experience like no other. I often talk to people outside and they say, what's it like? And I say, you just-- hard to explain. It's an experience like no other. One that will be highly challenging, sometimes frustrating, sometimes exhausting. But your role here as a member of this unique Unicameral Legislature is a very important one. We're all very privileged to have the rare opportunity to serve the people of Nebraska as a member of this Legislature. And I can guarantee you you will also find this experience very awe-inspiring and rewarding. That's been my experience in my six years here, and it certainly has been my experience the past two years as serving as your Speaker. Challenging, sometimes frustrating, sometimes exhausting. But it has truly been an honor. And I ask that you again allow me the privilege to continue serving as your Speaker for this 108th Legislature. 109th Legislature. Time flies. Two years ago, when I sought this position, I gave my perspective of the role of Speaker, and that is to create a culture that allows for productive debate and decision making, which is essential in the legislative process. I committed to fostering an environment in which all members would have the chance to develop relationships, to build trust, to provide for healthy communication, and to establish a foundation for respect for this important and very special institution. I'll be the first to admit there were challenges along the way, but I did stay true to my promise to listen, to understand, and to be open to conversations with any member of the body. Under my leadership, the 108th Legislature adopted procedures to assure a productive debate without stifling anyone's voice. And we brought more transparency to the process allowing for greater public participation. If I am once again offered the honor to serve as your Speaker, I promise I will continue to be fair and respectful of every member's opinions and do my best to cultivate an environment that supports solution driven debate and allows us to properly represent the citizens of this great state. I would ask that you support my nomination. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Arch. Are there any further nominations for Speaker of the Legislature? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern, you're recognized to speak.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Arch.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Speaker Arch. I recognize Senator Dover for a motion.

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Floor Debate January 8, 2025

DOVER: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that a committee of five be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislative Chamber for the purpose of administering an oath of office to the officers of the Legislature. Senator DeBoer, Senator Dungan, Senator Hansen, Senator Holdcroft, Senator Hunt.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Dover. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Will those senators please go to the rear and escort the Supreme Court Chief Justice? I recognize the Sergeant at Arms.

SCOTT BLACK: Mr. President, your committee escorting the Secretary of the State, the Honorable Robert Evnen. My [INAUDIBLE] will introduce the Chief Justice, Jeffrey Funke.

KELLY: I recognize Chief Justice Funke to, to swear in the new leaders of the Legislature.

JEFFREY FUNKE: You all may, you all may be seated. And we'll start with the Speaker of the Legislature, Mr. Arch. Mr. Arch, would you please raise your right hand? Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Nebraska and will faithfully discharge the duties of Speaker of the Legislature according to the best of your ability? If so, please answer I so swear or I so affirm. All right. Thank you. Congratulations. Next oath will be for the Clerk of the Legislature, Mr. Metzler. I'd ask that you please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Nebraska and will faithfully discharge the duties of Clerk of the Legislature to according to the best of your abilities? If so, please answer I so swear or I so affirm. All right. Thank you. Congratulations. The next oath is for the Assistant Clerk of the Legislature, Mr. Hybl. I would ask that you please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Nebraska, and will faithfully discharge the duties of Assistant Clerk of the Legislature according to the best of your ability. If so, please answer I so swear or I so affirm. All right. Thank you. Congratulations. Next oath, that is for the Sergeant at Arms. Good morning, Mr. Black. I ask that you please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Nebraska and will faithfully discharge the duties of Sergeant at Arms according to

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Floor Debate January 8, 2025

the best of your ability? If so, please answer I so swear, or I so affirm. Thank you. Congratulations.

KELLY: Thank you, Chief Justice. And I'll ask the committee to escort the Chief justice out of the Chamber. Members, please ask your family to leave the floor at this time, we're going to begin the chair elections as soon as the other five members are back from the escort committee. Senators, please find your seats. Mr. Clerk for an item.

CLERK: Mr. President. New LR, LR1 introduced by Senator Arch, recognizing, honoring and thanking former President Carter for his service to the United States, America and the people of the world. That will be laid over. That's all I have this time.

KELLY: And thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Jacob-- Jacobson, you're recognized for a motion.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the chairperson of the Committee on Committees.

KELLY: Members, You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Now accept nominations for the chairperson for the Committee on Committees. Senator Armendariz, you're recognized to speak.

ARMENDARIZ: Thank you, Mr. President. Welcome to all of our new senators, and welcome back to all of my colleagues. I'd like to nominate myself for the position of chairperson of Committee on Committees. I will conduct thorough, fair and efficient meetings. My decisions, directions and foundation will be conducted on logic on which I am proud to have built my reputation. I appreciate and have been a strong contributor to the Appropriations Committee thus far and hope to continue with those contributions. I believe my existing experience, along with my commitment to public service, make me well-suited to add this additional responsibility to further contribute to the state's needs. I would appreciate and ask for your vote. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Armendariz. Are there any other nominations for chair of the Committee on Committees? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern for a motion.

VON GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Armendariz.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Armendariz. Senator Wordekemper, you're recognized for a motion.

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the remaining 12 members of the Committee on Committees, and that we authorize the members residing within each of the three districts as enumerated in Rule 3, Sect.2, to nominate four members to be elected by the legislative body to serve on the Committee on Committees.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Wordekemper. Hearing the motion-- you have heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Will the three caucuses please meet and bring forth your candidates? The nominees have been brought forward. Mr. Clerk, please read the nominees.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Nominees from the First District Caucus are as follows Senator Bosn. Senator Moser, Senator Sanders and Senator Bostar. Nominees from the Second District Caucus for the Committee on Committees are as follows Senator Hunt, Senator John Cavanaugh, Senator Spivey and Senator Fredrickson. Candidates for-- excuse me, nominees from the third District Caucus are Senator Murman, Senator Brandt, Senator Ibach and Senator, Senator Jacobson.

KELLY: Senator Rountree, you're recognized for a motion.

ROUNTREE: Mr. President, I move the approval of the nominees to the Committee on Committees.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is approved. We'll move to the election of chair of the Exec Board. Senator Fredrickson, you are recognized for a motion.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. I move today to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board and the Legislative Council.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We will now accept nominations for chair of the Exec Board. I recognize Senator Ben Hansen.

HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, colleagues. I would like to nominate myself for Chairperson of the Executive Board. With

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Floor Debate January 8, 2025

my six years in the Legislature, I have come to appreciate and understand the processes, intricacies and inner workings of the Legislature. Being the chair of both the Business and Labor, and Health and Human Services Committees has taught me many things about leadership, cooperation, decision making, and the Legislature as a working institution. It's these same characteristics and knowledge I plan on bringing to the Executive Board to guide a diverse group of senators to make sure the Legislature operates in a smooth and effective manner. I would appreciate your support as Chair of the Executive, Executive Committee and look forward to working with the legislative body to make sure we can concentrate on doing the people's business and making lives better for all Nebraskans. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hanson. Are there other nominations for chair of the Exec board? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern, you're recognized for a motion.

VON GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that nominations be closed and a u-- a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Hansen.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Hansen. I recognize Senator Clouse for a motion.

CLOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed with the election of the vice chairman, chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We're now accepting nominations for vice chair, Executive Committee. Senator Ibach, you're recognized to speak.

IBACH: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, I rise today to ask for your vote to serve as vice chair of the Legislature's Executive Committee. As we know, the Executive Board is tasked with carrying out the intent and the activities of the Legislature. As vice chair, I will pledge to fulfill this responsibility and work with chair, the chair and the board members to ensure that the integrity of the institution is protected. For the past two years, I've served as vice chair for three committees: Agriculture, Business and Labor, and the Nebraska Retirement Systems. In addition to serving as vice chair of these committees, I also served on the Judiciary Committee, the Rules

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

Committee, the Building and Maintenance Committee, and the Legislature's Planning Committee. These experiences have provided me with a true perspective of how important and how unique our nonpartisan unicameral legislature is. As vice chair, I intend to view each and every matter that is presented to the Executive Board and to the Legislature through the lens that will ensure a fair and equitable resolution to the issues at hand. Thank you, and I appreciate your support and your vote. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Ibach. Are there additional nominations? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern, you're recognized for a motion.

VON GILLERN: Thank you. Mr. President, I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation, be cast for Senator Ibach.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Ibach. I recognize Senator Kauth for a motion.

KAUTH: I move to proceed to the election of the other six members of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council as outlined in 50-41.01.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, please read the nominees.

CLERK: Mr. President, nominees from the First District Caucus for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council are Senators Ballard and Bostar. Nominees from the Second District Caucus for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council are Senators Fredrickson and McKinney. Finally, the Third District Caucus has nominated Senator Dorn and Senator Jacobson for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

KELLY: Are there any additional nominees? Senator Spivey, you're recognized for a motion.

SPIVEY: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the approval of the nominees to the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Strommen, you're recognized to speak.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

STROMMEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the Standing and Select Committee Chairpersons in accordance with Rule 3, Section 8A.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator DeKay, you're recognized to speak.

DeKAY: Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: And we are proceeding to nominations. Senator DeKay, you're recognized to speak.

DeKAY: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to extend a warm welcome to my colleagues, especially to the newest members of the Legislature who join us here today. I rise this morning to humbly submit my name to be a candidate for the chair of the Agriculture Committee. I am a fourth generation farmer/rancher in Northwest Knox County, where I work with my brother, overseeing management of our livestock and land. I have a personal experience with many aspects of agriculture, including managing a cow-calf operation, forage crops and rural crops, as well as working with the Department of Agriculture. Agriculture is my livelihood and I have a great respect for our hardworking Nebraska farmers and ranchers who constantly work to keep us fed and moving. Agriculture is the lifeblood of Nebraska's economy. Indeed, about one in four jobs are tied to agriculture in this state. Our country and many places in the world will continue to look at Nebraska for their beef, pork, poultry, dairy, corn, and so much more that we would be here for quite a while if I took the time to try to list them all here today. I believe it is our part, it's the job of the Legislature to create policies that will help continue to expand our state's leadership in agriculture. In addition to being a farmer and rancher, prior to my time in the Legislature I served as the state director president of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association. I also served six years on the Nebraska Public Power District Board of Directors, where I first chaired the nuclear committee and eventually went on to serve as chair of the full board. In the Legislature, I served in two sessions as vice chair of Transportation, Telecommunications, as well as the State Tribal Relations Committee, and was on the Judiciary Committee. I have extensive experience listening to people on many sides of an issue. And I spent this past biennium gaining knowledge of committee procedures and the legislative process, chairing hearings and working with committee staff, bill sponsors, and agencies. Given the background I have, I believe I am more than prepared to serve as chair of the Agriculture Committee. If elected as chair of the Ag

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

Committee. I pledge to conduct this committee in a manner that is respectful to every Senator who brings legislation forward, as well as listen to those who speak in support of and who speak in opposition to proposed legislation. I believe chairmanship of the Agriculture Committee is an important position for our state, and I would greatly appreciate your support. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator DeKay. Are there any additional nominations for Chair of the Agriculture Committee? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern.

von GILLERN: Thank you. Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator DeKay.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator DeKay. I recognize Senator Clements for a motion. Are there any nominations for the Appropriation Committee? I recognize Senator Clements.

CLEMENTS: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm Rob Clements. I represent District 2. I stand to nominate myself for chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I'm a graduate of the University of Nebraska with a major in mathematics, minors in economics and actuarial science. I've spent eight years, the last eight years on the Appropriations Committee working on the state's budget. In 40 years as a banker, I worked with financial budgets and cash flows every day. That's been a valuable help to me on the Appropriations Committee work. I try to be a good listener. I will operate the committee with fairness. I'd be honored to serve as chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I thank you, colleagues, and thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Clements. Are there additional nominations for chair of the Appropriations Committee? Seeing none, I recognize Senator von Gillern for a motion.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Clements.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Clements. We're now moving to Banking, Commerce, and Insurance Committee. We're acc-- we're accepting nominations for chair of that committee. Senator Jacobson, you're recognized to speak.

JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to place my name in nomination to chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. I think many of you know my background. I'm a, I'm a banker. I'm just going into my 45th year of banking where I've served either as a lending officer or in management roles. Over that time frame, I was involved in chartering two banks, worked in banks of all different sizes. So I feel like I have a very good understanding of both national charters and state charters and how banking operates. Also, I've had the opportunity to continue to serve on the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka, which is an \$80 billion wholesale bank that does business with banks, insurance companies, and credit unions. As the vice chair of the committee over the last biennium, I had the opportunity to work extensively and closely with the insurance industry and with the credit union industry to better understand their issues. I believe the experience that I've had, both technically in the banking world and also on the committee really creates an opportunity for me to be well-suited to serve as the chair of the committee. I would humbly wish that you would provide a, a vote for me to serve as the committee chair. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Jacobson. Are there any other nominations? Seeing none, I recognize Senator von Gillern.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Jacobson.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Granulation. Senator Jacobson. Moving to the Business and Labor committee. Are there any nominations? Senator Murman, your light is on. You're recognized to speak. Senator Kauth, you're recognized to speak.

KAUTH: Close. We look a lot alike. Thank you. We're all getting used to first day. I'm Senator Kauth, I would like to nominate myself as chair of Business and Labor. I have over 20 years experience working with small and midsize businesses and nonprofits, and I have a strong understanding of business needs and processes, as well as understanding the role of labor unions and the Commission on Industrial Relations dealing with labor disputes. The role of a chair is to keep the process moving. Timely and accurate information is critical coming out of these committees. I'm going to make sure that the votes are taken and give committee members time to discuss the bills and make changes as the committee needs. I want to ensure that all of those from the second house, who we serve, who would like to

speak, are given a full opportunity to make their voices heard. We're going to have a few bills in Business and Labor that were ballot initiatives. They're going to come to us for some fine tuning. We need to make sure that we honor the intent of those bills and get through the process successfully. I ask for your vote for Business and Labor.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Kauth. Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, I rise to place my name in nomination for a chair of Business and Labor Committee. But first, I wanted to welcome all the new folks. It's an exciting day, and it's good to meet all of you. And welcome back all of our returning colleagues. In my four years here, I've served on the Natural Resources Committee, the General Affairs Committee, the Agriculture Committee, and the Urban Affairs Committee. In those-- in my capacity on those committees, I have worked as a partner with my committee chairs to make sure that the products that come out of those committees is ready for the floor. And if you look back at the record of the last four years, the bills that have been ready for prime time that have not needed a lot of work when they come out of committee, have come out of the committees that I've served on because I worked as a partner with my chairs to find the problems, to make constructive criticisms, and to improve those bills. That is the role of the committees. It's to make sure that bills are ready for the floor and that they're ready to be debated. And it is to respect the individuals in that committee, to respect the people who come testify, to respect the senators who bring those bills. But you provide a service for the Legislature as a whole. And we have a lot of important work to do on this floor. And we need to make sure that the things that come to the floor are ready to be debated and to be moved forward. And so I have a strong record. If you talk to the chairs that I've worked, if you talk to anybody who served on a committee with me, they can tell you that I've always been a productive partner. And so I strive to be a chair who's going to do that work and make sure that the things, when they come to the floor, are ready for the Legislature to debate as a whole. We are going to have some really important issues come before the Business and Labor Committee this next year. The two ballot initiatives that have been passed over the past four years that have the jurisdiction of the Business and Labor Committee. There are folks who have some concerns about those ballot initiatives, and they do need some technical updates and implementation. I think it's very important that the committee be respectful of the will of the voters, but also make sure that we are taking into consideration those very real concerns. And so I'm a person who is going to be able to look at

both sides of that, work across those, bridge those divides. And that is a very important thing we need in this committee chair. So I'm asking for your vote to make sure that we have somebody who is going to do those things and makes the Legislature work more effectively for everybody else, someone who can be a leader, and mentor other people to be ready to do these things. So I've demonstrated that time and again on the floor. I've demonstrated it again in committees. And so I'm asking for your vote. Thank you, colleagues.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Are there other nominations for Chair of Business and Labor Committee? Seeing none, nominations are now closed. Senators, in front of you are white pieces of paper. Please cast your ballot and I will ask and nominate Senators Holdcroft, Lippincott, and DeBoer to serve as tellers. Senator Kauth has been elected chair of Business and Labor. Congratulations. We'll proceed to election of chair of the Education Committee and open the floor for nominations. Senator Murman, you're recognized to speak.

MURMAN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. And again, congratulations to all of the newly elected senators. And thank you very much for the other senators for coming back. I rise today to ask for your support for my reelection for the chair of the Education Committee. During my last two years as chair. I have worked to foster a team that values respectfully working together, finding compromise, and always working hard to deliver success for our students, educators and schools. As chair, we've made progress in taking on property taxes by increasing statewide support through the creation of foundation aid funding every student to the tune of \$1,500, doubling the state's reimbursement of special education funding, and I have served on the Revenue Committee, where I've championed education issues such as reducing property taxes by taking up the cost of community colleges, and the Education Future Fund, a billion dollar investment in our kids. As chair of the Committee, took on the challenges of the teacher shortage by creating grants for new teachers, teacher certification and student teaching. We supported interstate reciprocity, and removed barriers to obtaining teacher certification. As chair, we've also taken on our state's brain drain by strengthening our state's career scholarship program, by providing high achieving students pursuing high demand jobs in STEM and other fields with scholarships and a connection to an internship or apprenticeship, with the goal of keeping top talent right here in the Nebraska workforce. As chair, the committee has also taken steps to strengthen student outcomes. We've created an early reading program, created grants to identify dyslexia early, and passed the Door to College Scholarship Act, helping youth being released from treatment centers find a pathway to a career. Finally, during my time

as chair, we've strengthened school safety measures, improved parental transparency, and increased state support for special education. In the next two years, I hope to continue that work. There is still work to be done in support of our students, teachers and schools. I aim to strengthen state support for our schools, to honor our state's constitutional responsibility of providing education. I also have a goal to increase state support for special education. I aim to ensure every Nebraska child, regardless of disability, is afforded the same opportunity as their peers, a high quality education. I will work together with all members of the body, the Revenue Committee, and the governor to find a better path to making sure schools are well funded while reducing the state's overreliance on property taxes. Although the TEEOSA formula is far from perfect, it does determine the needs of school districts reasonably well. However, it falls short in determining the district's resources. The formula has been much too reliant on property taxes, originally farmland and now home and businesses, business owners, an issue I will continue to work together on. In short, I have the advantage of the progress made in my six years of experience in the Education Committee, especially as chair for the last two years, and my time with the Revenue Committee. The Education and Revenue Committees work hand-in-hand together and I have had the privilege to serve on both. If reelected, my promise to each and every one of you is this. I am committed to working together, to listening and giving all Senators who come to introduce legislation a fair opportunity and the respect they deserve, free from any bias. If you share these goals, I humbly ask for your vote. With that, thank you for your consideration and I yield back.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Murman. Senator Hughes, you're recognized to speak.

HUGHES: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning and welcome to our newly sworn in colleagues. I rise today to seek the Education chair. When I decided to run for Legislature. One of the main reasons was that I could help with education policy. I first started really paying attention to the Legislature because of my time on the Seward School Board. During that tenure, I directly saw how this body of 49 people impacted what schools were required to do. Sometimes the statutes made sense and sometimes, though maybe well-intended, did not. Once elected, I did all I could to let people know my preference for committee, for a committee was education. Number one, no question. That did not happen, and I got on Agriculture and General Affairs. Now, did I learn a lot on these committees? Absolutely. And I fully understand that as a freshman senator, you learn where you land, and you get what you get, and you don't throw a fit. Just because you're

on a certain committee does not stop anyone from still pursuing legislation related to a certain committee. So during my first two years, I pursued my passion. I brought a bill to give more flexibility to schools on their suicide prevention training. I brought an excise tax on vaping products. While not directly related to education, I learned about the vaping issue with our youth when I was on school board. I brought a bill to exempt Class 3 smaller schools from not being able to suspend K-2 kids, as schools this size often do not have the resources immediately available that our bigger schools do. I brought two interim studies, one on superintendent pay, and one on examining the Community Eligibility program, which provides school lunches and breakfasts to all kids, and how that affects TEEOSA, our school funding mechanism. The biggest piece of legislation was for this past summer's special session regarding property taxes. I worked with a team of senators on LB9, which married everything I heard about when I was campaigning, lowering property taxes, and then using the levers in TEEOSA to help force more state funding to our schools. For those of you that are new to-- LB9 was called Lower the Levy Cap, which was a ten year plan to lower the top levy cap, currently \$1.05. We initially dropped it to \$.65 the first year, and then every two years lowered it another \$.10. Unfortunately, this bill did not go anywhere, but a new team and I are working on a smaller version of this for this session. In addition to legislation and interim studies, I held TEEOSA 101 for my fellow freshman class so they could have a little better understanding of how we fund our schools. We also have completed the same class for the newly elected senators this round, and I am happy that 13 out of the 17 were able to complete it. I received many positive comments about that class, and folks that attended it felt it was worthwhile. All last year I was considering running for Education chair. I have no mal-intent for Senator Murman. My passion is education and I feel called to do this. So as rumors got around that I was considering this, I was told that if I run, I'd better have 25 votes before I send out my letter. I was also told that it was unprecedented that a current Republican should run against an incumbent Republican chair. That is not true. It has happened before. But as I pondered whether I should run or not, I thought, this is garbage. I'm going to put my name in. We are all adults here and two or more people can and should be able to run for a chair, and whoever wins, wins. Someone running for chair should be looked at by this body as a job interview. It should be decided by who is best suited for the job, what that person's credentials are, what their interests are, and what their past performance has shown, period. Have we become a union environment where only years of service matter for a position? I think not. So I made the decision that November weekend that even though the

political norms were against me, I'm doing this anyway. I have to live with myself and my choices, and this is what I'm passionate about, and so I'm going to pursue it. From speaking with my colleagues, I am hearing loud and clear, and I agree, that our students are our future and we do need to make sure that we are providing them the best education possible. For K through 12 education, we need to make sure they are learning the basics, reading, writing and math, and as they get to the higher grades, they are prepared for that next step, whether it be the workforce or a 2 or 4 year degree or beyond. We, of course, still need to work on the balance of state and local taxes paying for our schools in a responsible way. We also owe our schools stability, stability in funding, and stability in support as the schools face the same workforce challenges that all industries do, staffing, housing, insurance costs, etc. In addition, we need to make sure we have good, consistent measurements in place so we know where we are with our schools and where our students are at to identify where they need help. The Legislature gives a lot of taxpayer money to higher ed, and we need to make sure they are adapting to the times and doing productive things to make certain that those who graduate with an associate's or four year degree are prepared for the workforce. And the last thing we need for this next generation is to be saddled with a mountain of school debt and not prepared for the workforce. It is our responsibility to our kids to provide them with the strong foundation that they will need to be successful, productive citizens. The future of our state relies on this. So, colleagues, I am asking each and every one of you for this vote for Education chair. I assure you that I will be fair in scheduling bills. I will listen to all sides of an issue. And most important-- but most importantly, a bill will have been worked before it comes out of education committee, meaning that all stakes-- stakeholders will have been brought to the table to make any adjustments and clean it up before it hits the legislative floor. I also will work hard to ensure that any education committee priority bills are my priority as well, and those will be clearly communicated to you all. Once this vote is over, and if I am not Education chair, I remain 100% committed to the educate-- to education, and ask to be on the Education Committee where I will be a diligent, hardworking member of that committee. Thank you all for your consideration.

KELLY: Thank you. Senator Hughes. Are there additional nominations for chair of the Education Committee? Seeing none, nominations will close. Senators, please cast your ballot, and I'll ask Senators Hallstrom, McKinney, and Dorn to serve as tellers. Senator Murman has been elected chair of education. Congratulations, Senator Murman. We will

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

now proceed to nominations for Chair of the General Affairs Committee. Senator Holdcroft, you're recognized to speak.

HOLDCROFT: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, my first official act in the 109th Legislature was to spill coffee all over my nominating speech. So if you hear anything strange, we'll blame it on the coffee. Good morning, senators. Welcome to the 109th Legislature, both to my returning colleagues and to those who are new to this body. I rise to nominate myself for the chairmanship of the General Affairs Committee. I have served on the committee for two years and hope to lead it with the same tenacity, commitment, and integrity of my predecessor, outgoing state Senator John Lowe. While General Affairs is only a one day committee, it is by no means an insignificant or boring committee. I anticipate robust discussions and lively debate as we work to make sure that the primary subject matter of this committee, areas such as alcohol, tobacco, gambling, and probably medical marijuana are dealt with fairly-- fair, fairly, efficiently, and to the best of our abilities in the most beneficial way for our great state. I proudly served in the United States Navy for 28 years, and with every day, today is a great Navy Day. I would appreciate your consideration for me for the chairmanship of the General Affairs Committee. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Holdcroft. Are there any other nominations? Seeing no nominations, I recognize Senator von Gillern.

VON GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Holdcroft.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Holdcroft. We'll now proceed to the chair of Govern-- selection, election of Government, Military and Veterans Affairs, and open it for nominations. Senator Sanders, you're recognized to speak.

SANDERS: Good morning, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I moved to nominate myself. I am Senator Rita Sanders, representing Legislative District 45, which comp-- which encompasses much of the Sarpy County community and Offutt Air Force Base. During my years in the Legislature, I have served on the Pacific Conflict Committee, Homeland Security Committee, Nuclear Hydrogen Working Group Committee, Education Committee, and Vice Chair of the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee. I would be honored to have your, your yes vote for Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee

chairwoman. Serving as the mayor of Bellevue for eight years, and previously as vice chair of the committee, I have cultivated strong relationships with the military and the government community. With USSTRATCOM and Offutt Air Force Base located in the heart of my district, I have worked closely with my community in addressing their needs and ensuring our community, state, and nation thrives. As chairwoman of the Government, Military, and Veterans Affairs Committee, I aim to work with my colleagues on every bill brought to the committee, strengthening our military community while ensuring the government serves all Nebraskans with integrity and transparency. I ask for your vote. Thank you for your time and consideration. And thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Sanders. Are there other nominations? Seeing none. I recognize Senator von Gillern for a motion.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Sanders.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Sanders. We'll now proceed to nominations for chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. Senator Cavanaugh, you're rec-- Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognize to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues, and welcome to new colleagues. I rise to nominate myself for the Chair of Health and Human Services with a caveat. So process is important, and this is just another lesson in process. At the end of my speech, I am going to actually withdraw my nomination. Because this is a motion in front of us, I'm not allowed to ask questions of those that would run for this position. So instead, I am going to put my questions forward and then withdraw my nomination. So this is just one fun step in learning the rules of this place. And it was something I didn't know. It was a rule that I had to figure out this morning. So my name is Machaela Cavanaugh, and I have served on the Health and Human Services Committee for six years. I have had the honor of serving with Senator Sara Howard as the chair, Speaker Arch as the chair, and now our Exec Board chair, Senator Ben Hansen. It has been a labor of love for all of us that are there, and I very much have appreciated that honor and opportunity. The questions that I want to put forward to anyone who would nominate themselves for this position have to do with government oversight. Health and Human Services is one of our largest agencies. It is also our messiest agency. Well, probably Corrections might have,

might have something to say about that as well. But we have seen in the six years that I've been here, a lot of crises come up, and a lot of those have come to light because of the work of the committee and the oversight of the committee. And so I, I want to make sure that whoever we elect for this position is taking that work seriously and considering how they're going to approach that work in the past. I have been very honored by the collaboration that both Speaker Arch and Senator Hansen have engaged with me in the oversight on that committee, and I think we have made Nebraska better for it. So that's why I wanted to put this forward to the candidates that will come forward today. So I have-- I'm going to, I'm going to be less of a Boomer than I normally am, and I'm going to read from my phone because I have some notes. Normally, I'm a huge Boomer. Nebraska Medicaid is implementing changes for Medicaid home and community based service providers via provider bulletin. Examples include a recent requirement that all providers obtain national provider identification numbers and implement new electronic visit, visit verification procedures. In implementing drastic changes via provider bulletin, the state is skirting its own rulemaking process, which includes public comment period among other steps. So we are seeing that we no longer have that public rules and regulations process when they do this through a bulletin. And that means that not only do we as the Legislature not see what the public thinks about the rules and regulations, also the administration itself is not hearing from the public and those impacted by these changes as to whether or not these changes are appropriate. And, and the idea is that when rules and regulations are put forward by the agency, then the public and those impacted come and they, they testify, and changes can then oftentimes be made, because as you will learn in this Legislature, what we intend to do and what actually happens with the legislation we pass is not always in alignment, and changes do need to be made, which is part of our whole public process and transparency. So I would like to put that forward to anyone that would like to be the Chair of Health and Human Services. I hope to hear, of course, it is up to them whether or not they want to speak to it, but I would love to hear how you will handle this situation and other situations moving forward relating to government transparency and oversight for the Department of Health and Human Services. And with that, Mr. Chair, President, I withdraw my nomination. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. The nomination is withdrawn. Are there additional nominations for Health and Human Services? I see Senator Lippencott, you're recognized to speak.

LIPPINCOTT: I nominate Brian Hardin for the chairman position of the Health and Human Services Committee. Brian's a good listener. He's patient, non-judgmental. He possesses superb situational awareness, a necessity for long committee hearings, we know that. He's balanced and does well at multitasking. Brian Hardin is successful in business, very successful. He understands how things work. He can differentiate between hurtful and helpful government regulations. Brian does not put his finger in the air to bend it toward the trends of the day, but has bone deep convictions based on principle. Brian cares for people. He's ministered to many for decades to those with no ability to repay. He truly has a charitable spirit about him. He is perfectly suited to lead the Health and Human Services Committee.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Lippincott. Are there additional nominations? Senator Riepe, you're recognized to speak.

RIEPE: Thank you, Mr. President, and welcome to the many new faces that are here in the visitors, as well as in the gallery, and probably a number of people that maybe have tuned in on our local televisions. I will want to address Senator Cavanaugh's question. I will do that either in my comments or I will do that at the conclusion. I did have the good fortune of working with Senator Cavanaugh in the Health and Human Services Committee, and she's always a contributor and she's always very curious and informed about every issue that comes before that committee. With that, the Health and Human Services Committee plays a central role in Nebraska's state government, given it spends one third of the state's budget, in excess of \$5.3 billion each year. Today I am asking for your vote to chair the HHS committee. My request is driven on having served on the committee all of my six years in the Legislature. Two, as chairman of the HHS Committee-- two, while chairman of the Business and Labor Committee, as well as two, while a member of the Executive Board. In my six years, I have never missed one full day in the session. I did miss a half a day for my brother-in-law's funeral, but I was back in the Chamber for that afternoon to introduce a bill. In those same six years, I never missed one committee hearing in any of my three assigned committees, or any of my meetings with the Executive Board. My point is, I like-- I take my responsibility very seriously. My personal story is that of growing up on a grain and livestock farm, and attending a one room school through the eighth grade. At 17, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy and began a career in health care as a hospital corpsman. Following an honorable discharge, I attended college on the GI Bill, and then returned to Nebraska, where I served for 40 years in senior administrative roles at three Omaha hospitals, Lutheran, Bergan Mercy, and Children's. My commitment priorities should you elect me are, one, oversight of any

proposed changes in the 2025 and 2026 DHHS budget. Number two would be Medicaid reimbursement to services commensurate with inflation. Three, my third objective would be workforce development and reform, starting with scope of practice, which I intend to bring a bill forward to this group to look at 407, review it, it's been something like 14 years. We need to take a look at that. And we need to address the health care needs and inequities, especially in rural Nebraska. My fourth objective is the day-to-day delivery of constituent services. Fifth, and I will have some legislation regarding this as well, is oversight of major rules and regulations. We need to take away as many funded, or unfunded mandates as possible, and we need to try to make rules more easily understood and quite hopefully fewer of them. I also want to go after fraud within the Medicare, and it's always there, and we need to look at ineligible enrollees in the interest of being able to provide services to those that are in-- most in need. As lawmakers in '25-26, you and I will face new environment, environmental given a new president and potential cuts in Medicaid reimbursement, and actions against the Affordable Care Act. As a side note, should the Affordable Care Act be gutted without a replacement, 7,363-- 737,000 Nebraskans will face higher premiums. That will be an issue that will come back to this legislative body, and probably through the HHS committee. We will be challenged by policy. Equitable implementation and cost are big challenges. Vaccines, new technology, pharmaceutical products. We will face expectations and legislative request to further expand Medicaid to address new obesity treatments, sickle cell anemia, cancer vaccines, and other 21st century treatments. We must continue to explore answers to health care delivery in rural and remote communities, along with urban discrepancies, at cost that does not bankrupt the state. We have serious challenges facing our rural nursing homes, critical access hospitals and rural hospitals larger than 25 beds, but still have financial challenges, particularly exacerbated by Medicare Advantage. We also have to look at emergency transport systems. My sense is we need to look at mobile intensive care units to make sure that we take full advantage of that one first hour of critical care. We must explore new delivery models, and that will come back to scope of practice. Recently, State Auditor Foley discovered fraud in DHHS Home Care. I applaud Auditor Foley's work, and question why this issue was not identified by the four, soon to be six DHHS internal auditors. We need to get clarity on that. 2026 will be an oversight challenge for DHHS, given its impact of the state budget and its essential service to many we serve in foster care, in the developmentally disabled programs, mental health programs, and as well, the 3,000 children in Nebraska on the waiting list to see a dentist. The challenge is big and I thank you for your attention. And

before I close out, I would like to respond to Senator Machaela Cavanaugh's question. Nebraska and the Legislature and the governor are two separate but equal bodies. We have an obligation, not just a right, but an obligation, to provide oversight. I do not feel that it is the unilateral authority of the DHHS Department to make significant, and I consider this change to be significant, without the oversight and the input of the Department of Health and Human Services and with the Department of Health and Human Services representing all of you representing your local districts. So I think we need to be more attentive to the oversight for DHHS. I think we have to look at the number of employees that we have there. We will try to work with the governor, but we are a separate but equal branches of government. With that, I thank you for your attention and I ask for your vote.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Are there additional nominations for chair of the Health and Human Services? Seeing none, we'll move to the vote. Senators, please cast your ballot. Senators Fredrickson, Storer, and Dover, would you please come forward to serve as tellers for the vote? Senator Fredrickson. Senator Hardin, you'll be allowed to either accept or reject the nomination, at which point the body will vote again.

HARDIN: May I have a do over?

KELLY: And Senator Hardin has accepted the nomination. Senator, Senator Hardin, you're recognized to speak.

HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. President. I served with Senator Hansen as vice chair of HHS for the last two years, and watched and learned how the process was well led. Thank you, Ben. I also served on Urban Affairs, General Affairs, and Retirement Committees. My desire is to continue in that tradition of intentional openness in what can be a complex and at times intense and sensitive environment. Chair duties are stewardship duties. We typically have to steward the often unique opportunity to squeeze a semi load of information into a thimble. Some of these scenarios in HHS can literally be over life and death matters. And so it's imperative that we extract as much relevant information from our testifiers before that sand falls out of the hourglass. To all of the new senators, regardless of the committees to which you're assigned, get used to muttering to yourself, sheesh, I didn't know that. And that's the kind of environment that effective chairs foster. Our role is to shepherd authentic interaction, both in the informational phase of hearings and the decision making phase of Exec sessions. Just as importantly is everything in between. The conversations under the balcony, in the hallways, on the phone. The

dots often get connected for all of us in the interpersonal world. HHS is facing this set of challenges now. We're facing the most urgent medical desert in the state in modern times. Thank you, Covid. While simultaneously facing downward pressure on spending. The artificial injection of ARPA dollars is gone. Back to reality. As an example, we're missing 5,400 registered nurses in Nebraska as of one week ago. And there's no spreadsheet that can calculate how to put them all back. The further west you go, the more profound the medical desert becomes. Virtually every category of medical care is underserved. We have one psychiatrist in all of western Nebraska, and we also have the most significant mental health care need in the history of the state across all 93 counties. We have a need to provide safe and effective care for more people with less resources to do it. One way is to broaden the scope of what medical professionals can do. That means scope of practice. That means we need our 407 review committee to be stronger than it's ever been. Unfortunately, the worst kept secret in HHS circles is that this vital committee has been weaker than at any time since the 1980s. We need them to balance the safety and turf wars like never before, and we need all of the relevant health and medically related boards to understand the context of the times in which we find ourselves. We find ourselves in a period of trauma recovery, much like following a world war. Following 2020-2022, we're actually in more debt as a country than if we had actually fought another world war. 2025 is not business as usual. We also need to look at expanding mobile care options to serve more people across more miles and more quickly. I have good news. When the world faced an unknown problem in what became known as Covid 19, it turned to Nebraska. UNMC led the way. And during the pandemic, the lowest unemployment rate in the history of the United States was found in Nebraska. If there is an ethic and history that can create the way forward from a supply and demand medical crisis in a state, it's the medical personnel across this state. I'd rather be us than them. And we, the Legislature and the Department of Health and Human Services, will help them expand by spending smart, and investing like our lives depend on it, because they do. Senator Cavanaugh's question about needing to address so many things where we have bottlenecks going on in our department, as Senator Riepe pointed out, a third of our state budget is wrapped up in HHS. And yet a lot of the data surrounding that does get bottlenecked inside the department. Unfortunately, that mirrors what goes on nationally, because nationally, so much of what we have data for gets bottlenecked at CMS. And it's more than that, because it's that data that helps us plot a meaningful way forward. And so we definitely need to continue to press on the department and work with them to streamline access not only to data but to problem

solving. It's one thing to be heard inside of a committee. It's another thing to actually execute on that information in a meaningful way so that the outcomes actually help people. And that's what we have to continue to focus on. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Cardin. Nominations are now closed for the selection of the Chair of Health and Human Services. The first vote that was not completed will be disregarded. Members, please cast your ballots and we'll again ask Senators Fredrickson Store and Dover to serve as tellers. Senator Hardin has been elected chair of Health and Human Services. Congratulations, Senator Hardin. We will proceed to the election of the chair of the Judiciary Committee. The floor is open for nominations. Senator Bosn, you're recognized to speak.

BOSN: Thank you, Mr. President. I am nominating myself as chair for the Judiciary Committee. I want to tell you a little bit about myself and welcome all of the new members to the Legislature and tell everyone good afternoon. I have sat on the Judiciary Committee since joining the Legislature in 2023. I have a law degree. I graduated from Creighton University Law School and became a licensed attorney in 2009. As a prosecutor, I handled cases involving juvenile law violations, truancy matters, child abuse and neglect, domestic and sexual assaults, narcotics, as well as other felonies. I have professional experience working with law enforcement, vic-- victim advocacy groups, the Department of Health and Human Services, probation, Corrections and the courts. During my time in the Legislature, I have remained open to new ideas and compromise, and I have worked hard to demonstrate a willingness to work with all of my colleagues advocating for justice and public safety. I've shown my commitment to the Judiciary Committee on issues, putting in the work to learn as much as possible about the issues and to work with my colleagues on the committee to come up with the best solutions. In the interim, I have-- interims, I have attended dozens of parole hearings, toured almost all of the correctional facilities, attended treatment, drug court graduations, and watched firsthand the positive impact that those graduations have had in our community. I've visited the transitional living houses both in Lincoln and in Omaha. I've worked with the work release programs, the educational opportunity programs, including passing bills last session with Senator McKinney on those issues. I've worked on juvenile treatment programs, and I've also worked with the child advocacy centers, both in Lincoln and in Omaha. In 2023, I was asked to participate in the Sentencing Reform Task Force, and I've been an active participant in those meetings. I was appointed to sit on the Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts, and have been an active participant in those meetings as well.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

I believe my experiences in these areas will help me to be a strong leader, committed to working together to have a positive impact on all Nebraskans. I am committed to justice and public safety, and those will be my top priorities if I am fortunate enough to become the chair of your Judiciary Committee. My professional experience and background will be a benefit to the Legislature and all Nebraskans. I would be grateful for your support, and I humbly ask for your vote. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you. Senator Bosn, are there additional nominations for Judiciary? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern.

von GILLERN: Thank you. Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Bosn.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion carries. Congratulations, Senator Bosn. We'll proceed to nominations for the chair of the Natural Resources Committee. Senator Brandt, you're recognized to speak.

BRANDT: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning-- good morning? Heck, it's afternoon. Good afternoon, colleagues and Nebraskans. Congratulations to all newly sworn in senators, and welcome to the Nebraska Legislature. I'm looking forward to working together as we take on the important issues facing our state. Today, I rise to formally announce my candidacy for Chair of the Natural Resources Committee. It has been an incredible privilege to serve the people of Nebraska in this body, and I'm honored to seek your support for this leadership role as we begin a new chapter of our work together. In my years serving on the Natural Resources Committee, I have been deeply committed to the vital issues within the committee's purview. Whether it's building a reliable and affordable energy future, managing water resources, promoting wildlife conservation, or ensuring sustainable land use, the work of the Natural Resources Committee touches every Nebraska in meaningful ways. As Chair, I'm committed to fostering an open, inclusive, and collaborative environment within the committee. I believe strongly that every voice should be heard and respected as we tackle the significant challenges ahead. I'll end by thanking you for your consideration and ask for your vote for Chair of the Natural Resources Committee.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Brandt, are there additional nominations for Chair of Natural Resources? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern, you're recognized for motion.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

VON GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Brandt.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Brandt. We'll move forward to selection of the chair of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee, and accepting nominations. Senator Conrad, you're recognize to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon, colleagues. I rise to nominate myself for the position of the chair of the Retirement Systems Committee. This is a position that I did not originally plan to seek, but was encouraged by many of my colleagues to do so due to the fact that I have multiple years of experience on the committee, I have been an active and enthusiastic member of the committee, and due to the nature of the fact that the issues before the retirement committee are often highly technical and complex. So ensuring that we have a seamless transition of leadership on our Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee and in the other key positions that work on retirement issues in Nebraska is critically important. So while this is my 11th year in the Legislature, this is a brand new experience for me serving-- being a part of a chair's race. And I want to tell you that it has been an incredible honor and incredibly enriching to reach out to each of you during the course of this process, to talk about the issues, to talk about the experiences, to answer your questions. And no matter how the votes end up on the board here today, I feel so fortunate and like I've already won. Because I've learned something about the issues that you're bringing to the Legislature, your family, or what compelled you to seek a path in public service, and I'm very deeply grateful for that. That kind of relationship building is a key requisite ingredient to ensuring good policy for Nebraskans. Thankfully, our Retirement Systems Committee and the work of our other stakeholders has ensured sound, prudent, and conservative management of our state retirement systems. We don't play games with our retirement systems. We do it the Nebraska way, in a nonpartisan, nonpolitical, thoughtful way so that we can strike the right balance between competing interests, ensuring dignity and that we keep our promises to those on the front lines of our judicial system, our public safety, our classrooms, and in public service, while also ensuring good stewardship and value for the Nebraska taxpayers. We've tackled major issues together in the last biennium, thanks to Senator MacDonnell's great leadership. And so we don't have, I know, famous last words, knock on wood, a lot of major issues before the committee in the short term, but we do have important work for oversight, management, stewardship, and particularly to ensure a seamless

transition continues for the administration of the Omaha teachers program. I want to publicly thank then Director Murante for his incredible leadership in making that process happen. And I'll close by saying, as the adult daughter of two parents who committed their lives to public service, as a schoolteacher and as a deputy sheriff, I know how hard those public employees work to make a positive difference in our state. And behind each of the \$20 billion in assets that retirement systems manage, and behind the 155,000 Nebraskans that we serve as members and retirees in our programs and services, we always have to make sure that we're getting a good value for the taxpayer, but we also have to remember the people behind those numbers. And I am committed to ensuring that those called to public service should have their promises kept and should be able to live a life in retirement with dignity. I have always tried to bring a thoughtful, professional, consensus seeking style and attitude to our work together in the Legislature, and pledge to continue that moving forward. I think the only member I didn't have a chance to reach out to was my good friend, Senator Ballard. I think-- maybe I shouldn't have assumed, but I think I knew which way his, his vote was going to go. But I appreciate that he threw his hat in the ring. And I am deeply, deeply committed to believing that I think the committee will be in good hands no matter the outcome of this leadership race. I respectfully ask for your consideration, and I thank you for your time.

KELLY: Thank you. Senator Conrad, other nominations. Senator Ballard, you're recognized to speak.

BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon, colleagues. And I would also like to welcome everyone to the 109th Legislature. This is a great opportunity to serve our friends, families and neighbors, and as we work together to move Nebraska forward. Today, I humbly stand before you seeking the chairman of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. Since entering this body, my approach has always been to cultivate relationships, build a spirit of collaboration as we work together to find solutions to issues facing our state. With this approach, we have made progress on many issues such as property tax relief, improving access to education, and supporting families and small businesses while maintaining a talented workforce. If elected chair, I will bring that same spirit of collaboration to the Retirement Systems Committee by working with you all with an open mind to address the different aspects associated with the state retirement system. Next, I would like to take the time, like Senator Conrad, to thank past chairs of the Retirement Committee, especially the outgoing chair, my friend and colleague, Senator Mike McDonnell. Through their leadership, Nebraska has set high standards of excellence for our

state retirement plan, with most of our plans being 80 to 100% funded, which is some of the best in the country. As chair, I would maintain the standard through strong oversight fiscal responsibility. I've been working with retirement plans within the private sector for the last several years and have strong experience weighing the cost and benefits when analyzing plans. Through my experience, I understand how much families rely on a sustainable retirement plan that offers a sense of peace during times of financial or economic uncertainty. I would treat state's public employees' plans the same level of trust and care, and ensure that Nebraska families who have worked hard and invested their retirement plans count on the committee that oversees for long-term sustainable funding for future plans. Also, with the ever changing market, the Legislature has to work closely with the Nebraska Employees Retirement System, the Nebraska Investment Council to manage the billions of dollars that Nebraska has across numerous plans. I can lead this effort by bringing the collaborative approach that I've developed through my time in the Legislature, and my experience managing multiple budgets and acting, acting fiscally responsible to ensure the longevity of businesses. With this background, I plan to uphold these levels of funding by keeping this dry eye on the fiscal health of each plan to maintain them for the future. This chairmanship is incredibly important, and one that I take very seriously to the benefit of all Nebraskans. I would be extremely humbled and honored, and I ask for your vote for this chairmanship and have the opportunity to build relationships and work tirelessly through the Retirement Systems Committee. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Ballard. Are there other nominations? Seeing none, we'll proceed to a vote for the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. I'll ask Senators Raybould, Strommen, and Rountree to come forward as tellers. Senators, there was no majority on the first vote. Please return to your seats and we will take a second vote. And again, Senators Raybould, Strommen, and Rountree to serve as tellers on this second vote. Senator Ballard has been elected chair of the Retirement Systems Committee. Congratulations, Senator Ballard. We-- we will now proceed to selection of-- the election of the committee chair for Revenue. The floor is open. Senator Dungan, you're recognized to speak.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Mr. President, and good afternoon, colleagues. I know people are probably getting a little bit tired and ready to go to lunch, so I'll try to make this quick. I want to start by echoing the sentiments from a lot of my colleagues congratulating the new senators, welcoming the old senators back. I encourage you to take this all in. I know today is getting a little long, but this is a

really amazing process and I'm happy we can all be here. I also want to take a second to thank our families who are all here today. And I specifically want to thank my folks who are sitting up in the balcony right now. I just wanted to make sure I said thank you for sticking around this long. It really means a lot to have your support. We all know that without family, this wouldn't be possible. So thank you so much to everybody who came out today. Colleagues, I rise today to ask for your support for the chair of the Revenue Committee. I don't have to tell any of you the importance of tax policy here in Nebraska, whether it's property tax, income tax or sales tax, each and every person in the state of Nebraska is affected by the way that we raise revenue in this state. Taxation, in fact, is one of the most integral parts of our government. We can all agree that we owe it to our constituents to ensure that they have things like quality roads and safe bridges, easy access to first responders no matter where you live in the state, and quality public education for every single child, no matter where you come from or how much money you have. These and many other things are what we pay taxes for. The question for us to answer as a Revenue Committee and for us as a body is how those taxes should be collected. Colleagues, I've served on the Revenue Committee for the last two years, and in that time I've devoted my efforts to studying all of the issues before us and diving in headfirst to every single issue that's been presented to our committee. I've always tried to listen to perspectives from across the entire political spectrum and to strike a balance between compromising when it's possible, but also sticking to my guns when I know it's right. I've tried to foster conversation and congeniality among colleagues, and also find common ground, no matter how far apart we stand on an issue. And these are qual-- collea-- these are qualities that I would do my best to uphold as chair of the Revenue Committee. I've not been perfect, nor do I claim to know everything. But I think that some of the most important elements of leadership are being able to admit when you're wrong, grow alongside those that you're working with, and be willing to listen to experts when they give you information. I know that in my time on the Revenue Committee for the last two years, there have been a few times where I've been the lone vote of opposition on key issues before the Revenue Committee. I would say that oftentimes that opposition has been indicative of whether or not an issue can actually pass the finish line once it reaches the floor. As chair, I believe that it's our job in the committee to address those issues prior to floor debate. And I work-- will work to reach consensus to issues so that the body can trust that the policies that we've been putting forth have been properly vetted. I'm not going to bore all of you with my specific details of how I feel about individual tax policies, but I

will say that I think it's vital to have guiding principles when looking at how we collect revenue as a whole. I believe in data and making decisions based on the information provided to us instead of legislating by anecdote. I believe in long term planning and taking into consideration the fiscal health of our state, not just for years but decades to come. And I believe in equity. That fidelity to fairness is key when we're talking about who our tax policies help and who they hurt. I promise that I will always try to apply those guiding principles in looking at each and every bill that comes before the committee. And I would deeply appreciate your support as chair of the Revenue Committee. Thank you, colleagues.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Dungan. Senator von Gillern, you're recognized.

VON GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. Fellow colleagues, Nebraskans, friends and family. I stand today to be-- to nominate myself for the chairmanship of the Revenue Committee. As many of you know, I served as the vice chair for the past two years and had the opportunity under Senator Linehan's leadership to have a front row seat to the important work of the committee. I'm grateful to her for allowing me to participate in the actual work of the legislation, including sometimes challenging conversations and doing my best to break down complicated matters, debunk misconceptions or misdirections, and encourage others to work towards a beneficial outcome. In that role as vice chair, I helped to shepherd important tax legislation that has reduced the state income tax rate, reduced property tax burden, and advanced numerous tax credits that have benefited Nebraskans from all walks of life. I have extensive experience in operations and management of large groups and complicated matters. I employed as many as 100 people in my time in the construction industry, and participated in numerous nonprofit and volunteer boards, leading many of those groups. I've had success in managing diverse thoughts and opinions towards mutually agreeable outcomes. As the chair of the Revenue Committee, I'll use the ROI or return on investment test. Matters before the Revenue Committee, by definition, have the potential to change the tax code and impact everyday Nebraska citizens and businesses in different ways. Each change to the tax code must, in my opinion, represent a tangible or an intrinsic return on investment. In short, the lives of Nebraskans must be improved by whatever action we advance. Whether we agree on a topic or not, I hope I've always acted with decorum and respect, and at least listened to those who have an opinion that varies from my own. That will always be my goal. I'm a learner and have learned a lot, but have much more to learn here. I humbly ask for your favorable vote for the Chair of the Revenue Committee, and commit

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

to each of you to give it my full effort to do great things for the citizens of our state. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator von Gillern, are there any other nominations for Revenue? Seeing none, Senators, you may cast your ballot, and for this vote. We'll ask Senators Spivey, McKeon, and Quick to please serve as the tellers. Senator von Gillern has been elected chair of Revenue. Congratulations, Senator. Proceeding to the election of the chair of Transportation and Telecommunications. The floor is open for nominations. Senator Moser, you're recognized to speak.

MOSER: Good morning, colleagues, and good morning, Nebraskans. Thank you, Mr. President. I rise today to nominate myself to be reelected as chairman of Transportation and Telecommunications. As a team, the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee has crafted and gotten passed many impactful pieces of legislation during this last biennium. Looking forward, I work-- will work diligently to ensure that we have success with legislation during the current session. My experience includes being chair of TNT for the last two years. I was vice chair for four years. Before that. I served as 12 years of Mayor of Columbus, and we dealt with many of the issues that TNT considers. I have a good background in electronics, and I was also six years as vice chair of Natural Resources. It would be an honor to earn your vote for chairman, and I would thank you very much for your consideration.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Moser. Are there other nominations for Transportation and Communications? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern for a motion.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. Sorry, I got caught up in the congratulations line over here. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Moser.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Moser. We'll now proceed to election of the Chair of the Urban Affairs Committee. Senator McKinney, you recognize to speak.

McKINNEY: Good afternoon, colleagues. I am nominating myself for reelection to chair the Urban Affairs Committee. Over the past two years as chair, I've gained invaluable experience collaborating with members of this body and engaging with Nebraskans across the state. Together, we have enacted meaningful legislation on housing, economic

recovery, poverty reduction. For instance, in the previous session, LB840 brought important reform to local housing agencies, promoting transparency and accountability. This legislation also expanded the Middle Income Workforce Housing Act, empowering development organizations to address housing needs in critical areas statewide. My goal remains steadfast, to improve the lives of Nebraskan residents through impactful, thoughtful policy. As Chair, I'm committed to not only introducing legislation, but also seeing, seeing through to, to implementation, ensuring our policies have a lasting and positive impact. Looking ahead, the Urban Affairs Committee, alongside others, will face the critical task of addressing the shortage of affordable and workforce housing in both rural and urban communities. I am confident that my experience and dedication to working collaboraty [SIC] with all stakeholders will be instrumental in finding effective community centered solutions across Nebraska. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to continue work this coming session and I would appreciate your support. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator McKinney. Are there further nominations for Urban Affairs? Seeing none, Senator von Gillern for a motion.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator McKinney.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion carries and is adopted. Senator McKinney, congratulations. Members, The next election will be for Chair of the Rules Committee. The floor's open for nominations. Senator DeBoer, you're recognized to speak.

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon now, colleagues. Senior colleagues, it's the beginning of the end. And for those of the rest of you who are cheering that fact that we will be gone in two years, I will tell you this. It will go in the blink of an eye. It is the longest days of your life and the shortest years. And in these next two years, we will have good times and we will have bad times. You will be frustrated, you will experience great joy, and we'll make some laws. But I think that how we make those laws is almost as important as what those laws are, because laws can be changed. But what cannot change, what you will remember 20 years from now, is how we interacted with each other in this body. And that's why I believe that the rules are so important to this institution. And that is why I believe that the long term health of this institution is the most important thing that we can caretake. So I'm running for the chair of

the Rules Committee because I believe that this body should always have transparent, fair, and easy to understand rules. Now, our rules are not easy to understand. So I hope to be, regardless of how you vote, regardless of whether or not I'm elected, I hope to be a resource for all of you, especially those of you who are new, on the rules, because you all know that I'm a nerd and therefore I have spent my time with the rule book. And to the extent that I can, I hope always to be able to help you all out as someone you can talk to. Even if I don't like the thing you're doing, I will 100% help you to do it the way the rules ask you to do it. So that is my promise just as a member of the body, the last four years as vice chair of the Rules Committee, I have tried to hold myself out in that manner to the body, and I hope that I have achieved that. In my six years here, I hope that I have earned a reputation of someone who sometimes fails, but tries to do her best to be fair, open, honest, and have some integrity. So there's a few rule changes I noted over the last year, two years as we were in different points in debate, I would say, ah, here's something that's not clear. I will bring this rule change. I have a couple of ideas for that, but I think as a general premise, we're running OK. We made some big changes last year and I hope to continue in that vein going forward. If any of you would like to do something different with the rules, and you would like a devious brain to help you figure out how to make sure that it actually works and not-- can-- cannot be gotten around, I will help you with that as well. And that is, of course, regardless of the outcome of this vote. So yeah, since I'm between you and lunch, I'll conclude it there and say that I would appreciate all of your vote for chair of the Rules Committee, and I think I'll be turning this over to Senator Lippincott next. So my good friend, Senator Lippincott.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator DeBoer. Other nominations? Senator Lippincott, you're recognized to speak.

LIPPINCOTT: Well, thank you. I'd like to nominate myself for chairman of the Rules Committee, and I'd like to start off by just saying we had Christmas just a few weeks ago, and at home I received a very nice Christmas greeting from Wendy DeBoer, and with a very nice handwritten note in the card. And I thought, golly gee whiz, isn't it great to live in Nebraska nice? And one thing I can say about Wendy, you know, we all know about the love chapter in scripture and it talks about how love is patient, love is kind. And that is her. And I really appreciate it. I've gone to her many times and received her counsel, and I'm very thankful for that. So she's an outstanding person and I really respect her. Every organization has rules to conduct its business. The objective is to achieve that business with optimum

efficiency. In the military, we would say that is our mission objective, and we would always start off every flight and highlight what our mission objective is. Within our legislative body, we desire to hear from all sides of issues brought before us. We aim to bring about the best solution to problems confronting us in Nebraska's Senate. Our Legislature generally mirrors that of the US Senate. It's interesting. Yesterday I was walking around the Capitol, knocking on doors, asking people for their consideration for votes, and I stopped up at John Arch's office. And he pointed out that the senates in all these different states have different rules for filibuster and all these different things. And we have our own unique stamp. And I thought this was very interesting. Filibuster's not always been around. In the U.S. Senate, it started in 1917, back during the time of the First World War. So it was birthed in 1917. It was first used in 1919 to end debate for the Treaty of Versailles to end World War One. It was important. Over the next 51 years, the filibuster was used 49 times in the US Senate. That's less than once a year. Well, then in 1970 what they did is they changed the rules. And the reason I'm saying this, it's important to know rules and that rules oftentimes evolve and change. And it's very important that we change in order to have-- meet mission objective, which is to do things efficiently. \$13,000 a day to run this Legislature. In 1970, then, the U.S. Senate, they set aside the filibuster, which prior, once filibuster was taking place, all work stopped except for the business at hand with the filibuster. So in 1970, they said, let's set aside the filibuster, we'll conduct other business, come back to that. Great. That sounds wonderful. Up to that time, 25% of all bills were passed in the U.S. Senate. OK, that's reasonable. But by the year 2005, because the filibuster began to be used more, that got cut in half and only 12.5% of bills got passed. And five years later, in 2010, only 2.8% of bills got passed. So I say all that to say mission objective is to run things efficiently. And sometimes we have to change rules in order to bring that about. I was just talking with Senator Conrad a few minutes ago, and I shared with Speaker Arch yesterday something that's kind of humiliating. My first year in the Legislature, I had a housekeeping bill, it's regarding car registrations, and the bill did get passed, but it was in a Christmas tree bill. So there was 20 or 30 bills in that bill that had my housekeeping bill in it. And it passed. Danielle came up and she slapped me on the back, and she's "Congratulations, Senator, your very first bill." And I went, huh? My point here is that sometimes we become-- the rules can become so complex that we don't really understand them and it does not meet mission objective to run things efficiently. Now, everything with, with government has to have an acronym, so I've got an acronym. TRUST, T-R-U-S-T. T, Transparency

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

and accountability. Important. Respect for all voices, that's important. Understanding, bringing clarity to our work rules. Important. Streamline the process to reduce gridlock while safeguarding integrity. And finally, teamwork and consensus to reflect those present. So I very much would appreciate your vote. Wendy also is a wonderful candidate for this position. So I appreciate her. And thank you very much, sir. Appreciate your time.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Lippincott. Are there any additional nominations for the Rules Committee chair? Seeing none, Senators, please cast your ballot. And for tellers, would Senators Hunt, Clouse, and Lonowski please come forward? Senator Lippincott has been elected chair of the Rules Committee. Congratulations, Senator Lippincott. Members will proceed to selection of the chair of the Enrollment and Review Committee. Senator Ballard, you are recognized to speak.

BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. President. It is my honor and privilege to nominate Senator Guereca for the Chair of Enrollment and Review.

KELLY: Senator von Gillern for a motion.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Guereca.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator. Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Guereca. Senator Murman, you're recognized for a motion. Senator Storer, you're recognized for motion.

STORER: Mr. President, I move that a committee of three be appointed to escort the Secretary of State to the Chamber to deliver the election returns of the general election of November 2024. Senator Brandt, Senator Dorn, Senator Raybould.

KELLY: Members. You've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All tho-- all those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Will, those three senators, Brandt, Dorn, and Raybould, please proceed to the rear of the Chamber and escort the Secretary of State. I recognize the Sergeant at Arms.

SCOTT BLACK: Mr. President, your committee escorting the Secretary of State, the Honorable Robert Evnen.

KELLY: I recognize the Secretary of State, Mr. Robert Evnen.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

ROBERT EVNEN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Clerk. As the Secretary of State of Nebraska, it is now my honor and privilege to hereby deliver to you the abstracts of the 2024 general election from the 93 counties in Nebraska for canvass by the members of the 109th Nebraska Legislature.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And would the committee please escort the Secretary of State from the Chamber?

Unidentified: Don't. And then is there any you should.

KELLY: I recognize Senator Murman for a motion.

MURMAN: Mr. President, I move to approve the report of the Secretary of State and the candidates stated therein be declared duly elected.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. Speaker Arch for an announcement.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. Just so we're, we're going to be doing some housekeeping announcements now and for get ready for the next few days here. The 2025 session calendar will be the revised tentative calendar I shared a couple of weeks ago. You're welcome. The permanent calendar will be placed on the website and handed out to you tomorrow. Tomorrow, I will also provide you with a memo outlining the schedule for the next few days of session, and the key dates of the session, such as the public hearing date schedule and priority bill deadlines. The Legislature will be in session tomorrow, January 9th for bill introduction in the morning, and then in the afternoon we will be conducting inaugural ceremonies for state constitutional officers. So we will convene at 10 a.m. both tomorrow and Friday. And thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Speaker Arch. Senator Hanen, you're recognized for a message.

HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. As Speaker Arch just announced, the Legislature will be meeting tomorrow. As many of you know, last week, President Biden issued an executive order making Thursday, January 9th, a holiday for federal employees as part of the national day of mourning for former President Jimmy Carter. Nebraska revised statute 84-1001, and the Legislature's personnel policies provide that when-- whenever the president gives federal employees paid time off, the same benefit shall be granted to state employees. Therefore, in accordance with the executive order, legislative employees will receive Thursday,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate January 8, 2025

January 9th, as paid holiday leave. Any legislative employees who work tomorrow will receive compensatory time for hours worked since it is, is in essence-- will be a holiday. Certainly, all the integral divisions of the Legislature will be fully staffed tomorrow. This includes the Clerk's Office, the Revisor's Office, the Fiscal Office, and the Legislative Accounting and Budget Office. It will be up to each individual senator to decide whether to require your personnel and committee staff to work, although I would fully suggest you treat this as a regular workday with the benefit of your staff earning compensatory time to be taken on a non session day. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Mr. Clerk for a motion. Senator Sorrentino, you're recognized for a motion.

SORRENTINO: Mr. President, I move to arrange to hold the inaugural ceremonies for the newly elected state officials on Thursday, January 9th, 2025, at 1:30 p.m..

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted, Mr. Clerk, for items.

CLERK: Mr. President, just one item. The Committee on Committees, chaired by Senator Armendariz, would-- 2:00 will be the hearing, or the meeting for the Committee on Committees, Room 1525. 2:00, Committee on Committees Meeting. Finally, Mr. President, a priority motion, Senator Bostar would move to adjourn the body until Thursday, January 9th, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

KELLY: Members, you've heard the motion to adjourn. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The Legislature is adjourned.