KELLY: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the Fifty-Fifth Day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Storer. Please rise.

STORER: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, please join me in an attitude of prayer. Dear Lord, we just stop and want to be very intentional about recognizing the significance of today, Maundy Thursday, and Holy Week, and just acknowledging that it was today that you gave your disciples the direction of breaking bread, and what was coming for your broken body and your shed blood for the redemption of our sins. And Dear Lord, many times, we are all typically either in a Friday season of our life, a Saturday season, or a Sunday season. And Friday was-- felt hopeless, and grief consumed people. Saturday felt silent and was the waiting period. But dear Lord, I just ask that you give us all encouragement to know and remember that Sunday's coming. And so, for those that are feeling tired, for those are feeling hopeless, for those that feel like God has forgotten them and is silent, Dear Lord, please, encourage their hearts to know that Sunday's coming. And I just pray for your presence here today, dear Lord, that you would infiltrate this room with the Holy Spirit, and that you would give us all grace and mercy in our speech and in our actions, and that you would also provide us with strength. Dear Lord, your word says, come to me, all who are weary, and I will give you strength. So, we ask for your strength, and we ask that you be glorified in all that we say and do. In Jesus' name, amen.

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

DeBOER: Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance, colleagues. 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: I call to order the Fifty-Fifth Day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Senators, please record your presence. Roll call. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: There's a quorum present, Mr. President.

KELLY: Are there any corrections for the Journal?

CLERK: I have no corrections this morning, sir.

KELLY: Messages, reports, or announcements?

CLERK: There are, Mr. President. A report of registered lobbyists for April 1, 2026 will be found in today's Journal. Additionally, agency reports electronically filed with the Legislature can be found on the Nebraska Legislature's website. That's all I have at this time.

KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Speaker Arch, you're recognized for a message.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. As announced earlier this week, today is the last day of General File debate for bills we hope to pass this year. It is my intention we'll work through the lunch hour, as is the custom for our last day of the work week. However, as shared with you on Monday, today could be, will be, a later adjournment time than our customary 2-3 p.m. adjournment. We'll adjourn when we've completed today's agenda. My goal is that adjournment can be around four or five today, but that'll be up to the body. Also, I want to let members know that LR298CA on today's agenda will be a four-hour bill for purposes of cloture. Basically, I think the bill is an up or down vote; you either support the measure or do not. I believe arguments for the resolution and against the resolution can be sufficiently made within a four-hour debate window if cloture is necessary. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Speaker Arch. Senator Glen Meyer would like to recognize the Doctor of the Day, Dr. Dave Hoelting of Pender. Please stand and be recognized by the Nebraska Legislature. Senator DeBoer has some visiting relatives from California. Steve Schadendorf, Atefeh Schadendorf, and Cameron Schadendorf, all from California. Please stand and be recognized. Final Reading. Senators, please take your seat. Senators Conrad, Armendariz, Bostar-- all unexcused senators are present. We'll proceed to Final Reading, Mr. Clerk. The first bill is LB829 with an emergency clause. The first vote is to dispense with the at-large reading. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 42 ayes, 0 nays to dispense with the at-large reading, Mr. President.

KELLY: The at-large reading is dispensed with. Please read the title.

CLERK: [Read title of LB829]

KELLY: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is, shall LB829 pass with the emergency clause? All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Ballard, Bosn, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hallstrom, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKinney, Meyer, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: none. Not voting: Senators Armendariz, Bostar, Conrad, and Hansen. Vote is 45 ayes, 0 nays, 4 excused, not voting, Mr. President.

KELLY: LB829 passes with the emergency clause. The next bill is LB904. The first vote is to dispense with the at-large reading. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 43 ayes, 0 nays to dispense with the at-large reading, Mr. President.

KELLY: The at-large reading is dispensed with. Please read the title.

CLERK: [Read title of LB904]

KELLY: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is, shall LB904 pass? All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Ballard, Bosn, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hallstrom, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKinney, Meyer, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: none. Not voting: Senators Armendariz, Bostar, Conrad, and Hansen. Vote is 45 ayes, 0 nays, 4 excused, not voting, Mr. President.

KELLY: LB904 passes. The next bill is LB1253 with the emergency clause.

CLERK: [Read LB1253 on Final Reading]

KELLY: All provisions of law relative to procedure have been complied with, the question is, shall LB1253 pass with the emergency clause? All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Ballard, Bosn, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Guereca, Hallstrom, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKinney, Meyer, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: none. Not voting: Senators Armendariz, Bostar, and Hansen. Vote is 46 ayes, 0 nays, 3 excused, not voting, Mr. President.

KELLY: LB1253 passes with the emergency clause. While the Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do hereby sign LB829 with the emergency clause, LB904, and LB1253 with the emergency clause. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB952. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA1916 with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator, I have nothing further.

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

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB1256 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. LB1256 is advanced to E&R Engrossing. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB952. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA608 with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

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

GUERECA: Mr. President, Mr. President, I move LB952 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. LB952 is advanced for E&R Engrossing. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB998. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA654 with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

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

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB998 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. LB998 is advanced.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB737. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA366 with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator Rountree would move to amend with AM2986.

KELLY: Senator Rountree, you're recognized to open.

ROUNTREE: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues, and good morning to those that are watching online this morning. LB737 is a simple bill requiring the HHS Committee and the Urban Affairs Committee to hold an annual hearing on the progress of the Olmstead plan. This amendment was requested by the Department of Health and Human Services to clarify that they would not need to submit a full review of the Olmstead plan, which the Department does on a three-year cycle. The hearing is instead aimed to collect information from the department and community stakeholders about what steps have been taken and what more needs to be done to meet the goals of full community integration for the disabled community. They will be at the hearing, they'll contribute, but they'll have their mandatory report still on a three-year cycle. I ask that you vote green on the amendment and on LB737. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Rountree. Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak.

HALLSTROM: Senator Rountree, just for the body's benefit, could you please give us a brief explanation of what the Olmstead plan is exactly? Thank you.

KELLY: Senator Rountree, you're recognized to speak.

ROUNTREE: Thank you so much, Mr. President, and thank you, Senator Hallstrom. For the body, the Olmstead plan is a plan that has been enacted by Congress. It deals with the disabled community. Every state has an Olmstead plan, and there's about seven, eight, nine points to that plan dealing with education, dealing with homelessness, dealing with all parts of the disabled community. Ours that we're dealing with here is the housing portion. So, this plan that we have now that we're asking on this bill, LB737, is to have a hearing, and all of this wraps up together to see how we're doing on housing information. Looking at the disabled housing that's available for the community has been stated in other bills. We want to find out how much housing we have, how we are moving on towards that plan, and how the things that are in the Health and Human Services department along with our Urban Affairs are moving forward to ensure that our disabled community is able to stay in their homes and be integrated into their community. So, that's something that's mandatory. And there is a report that's given to the state on maybe a five-year basis; the next one, I think, is in 2031, but this is to get us in the interim period so that

we can ensure that we do have a good report at that time. So, thank you so much.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Senator Rountree, and Senator Cavanaugh was just telling me about a podcast that she listened to that went into depth and detail on the Olmstead plan, so I'd submit it to everybody's viewing. Thank you.

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

MURMAN: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. I've got kind of mixed feelings about the Olmstead plan, to be honest with you. There's, there's good things about it, and some things that aren't always so good. For instance, those that are most disabled, sometimes, it's better that they spend more time in-- maybe in a, a-- well, a workplace or a place that gives them support, and it, and it could even be their own home. But with the Olmstead plan, a certain percentage of the time, disabled people need to be out in the community. And in general, that's good, but sometimes, it's better-- you know, they have more equipment that they need, maybe, in their home base, not necessarily their home, but their provider. So, so I, I think the strict adherence to, to Olmstead isn't always the best. One example I can use is the-- what they used to-- well, this, this is an old term, and I know it's not a good term, but insane asylums, when-- like the, the Hastings Regional Center, Norfolk Regional Center and those places were closed down, people that need a lot of supports and, and maybe in a, in a stricter setting are, are now, now out in the community always. And sometimes, they get a lot better support in a-- some kind of a facility. So, I just got-- have mixed feelings. I, I think as long as Olmstead is not a, a strict adherence to a certain plan, as long the places are available, like I've talked about, you know, maybe, maybe something like a regional center. And, and that's-- by the way, a more good way to say it rather than insane asylum. But something like a regional center where people that are having mental health issues can be better housed and, and their needs can be better taken care of. But, but going back to the people that are extremely disabled, if they have to be out in the community, say, 40 percent of the time, in Nebraska, a lot of times it's, it's rainy, it's windy, it's cold, it's too hot. And especially in rural areas, they may not have a lot places to go, so they end up spending a lot of time just being transported. And it's, it's just difficult to work around some of those restrictions sometimes. A lot of the disabled people have to be changed, toileted, and that's difficult to do out in

the community. And, and if they're in wheelchair, you know, need assistance getting around, it, it does take more help, so more employees to do that. And the places that are available to help them have a difficult time getting enough employees anyway, so it just makes everything more difficult. So, I just wanted to highlight those situations. I'm not against what Senator Rountree is proposing, but just like to emphasize that there, there are some difficulties, especially when you have to, to, like I said, adhere to a strict rule. As long as Olmstead takes into consideration individuals' wants and needs, I think it's a good thing. But when it could override those individual wants and needs of, needs of the family, sometimes, it's not so good. But I just wanted to highlight that. So, thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Murman. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Rountree, you're recognized to close on the amendment, and waive. Senators, the question is the adoption of AM2986. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 35 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the amendment, Mr. President.

KELLY: AM2986 is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

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

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB737 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. LB737 is advanced for E&R Engrossing. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB1108. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA767 with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

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

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB1108 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. LB1108 is advanced for E&R Engrossing. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB1216. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

KELLY: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move that the E&R amendments to LB11-- or, LB1216 be adopted.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. The E&R amendments are adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Kauth, I have a floor amendment with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

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

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB1216 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

KELLY: Senators, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say nay. LB1216 is advanced to E&R Engrossing. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB986. There are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA642 with a note that you'd withdraw.

KELLY: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator Meyer would move to amend with AM2959.

KELLY: Senator Glen Meyer, you're recognized to open.

G. MEYER: Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate Senator Bostar bringing this bill. I think it's an important topic, something we need to discuss. In my amendment, I had outlined a number of suggestions, changes, things that we could implement to make it fleshed-out a little bit more, a little bit-- a little more meat on the bones, if you will. In discussions with Speaker Arch and with, with Senator Bostar, I understand that the executive committee had a great deal of discussion in executive committee prior to advancing this bill. I have an appreciation for that. I had a discussion with Senator Bostar yesterday, and we, we had a very good understanding. In the process of taking a good look at this bill, the Accountability and Disclosure Commission had made some suggestions, liked the bill very much. And so, as we move along, I did file a, a floor amendment to address just, just a few minor, minor opportunities to improve the bill that they suggested. So, in the interest of brevity, that's what I have with regard to AM2959.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Meyer. Senator Bostar, you're recognized to speak.

BOSTAR: Thank you, Mr. President. I had really good conversations with Senator Meyer about his thoughts and concerns about this bill, and-- well, I think it's actually broader than just this bill, but ensuring accountability with how we use funds appropriately and how that works, and what our statutory role is, NADC's role. And so, I, I-- I've had those good conversations. I think for this bill, the underlying bill, we had, we had discussions in committee, fairly extensive, about what the right approach was. So I think, at this time, the, the underlying bill is in good shape and we should try that out, but I appreciate Senator Meyer and his diligence, and look forward to working with him more going forward. Thank you.

KELLY: Mr. Clerk, for an amendment.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Meyer would move to amend with FA1151.

KELLY: Senator Glen Meyer, you're recognized to open on your amendment.

G. MEYER: Thank you, Mr. President. As I previously alluded to, the Accountability and Disclosure Commission had reached out and

liked the premise of the bill, was, was supportive; had suggested just a couple minor but substantial changes in Section 3: line, line 29, before the word "security," add the words "in the case of a candidate committee;" Section 4, line 5, before the word "committee," add the word "candidate;" and Section 4, line 16, also before the word "committee," add the word "candidate." This was a clarification for specificity. Otherwise, it's pretty much wide open with regard to who could utilize the opportunity to initiate the use of funds. I, I think it's, it's a good bill. I think the premise is good. I think there's some providence of why this bill should have consideration and advance, and going forward. With that, I appreciate the balance-- yield the balance of my time. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Meyer. Senator "Benhance" [SIC] would like to recognize a physician of the day, Dr. Amber Beckenhauer of Blair. Please stand and be recognized by the Nebraska Legislature. Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. I, I appreciate Senator Meyer's intent here with this, but I've, I've just got some substantive questions that I think we all ought to take a look at, if we're looking at this. We've had some high-profile issues in other states; think of Minnesota, the tragedy that happened up there with regard to legislators. And some of the technical questions I've got, one would be-- maybe it's clear on its face. There's something that says we have to provide the value of the security assets purchased in U.S. dollars. I hope value is the same as purchase price. I suspect that's the case. That's a rather technical issue. We have to provide the name and address of the person from whom the security assets were purchased. There could be some confidentiality issues there, if it's not purchased from a going concerned business. But more specifically, the bill says, or the amendment says that you can only do so in response to a threat expected to last more than 72 hours, and that your committee treasurer has to document the threat in some level of detail. I'm concerned that the committee treasurer might not be able to get that put together for 72 hours or even more, the way things go. And I'm not sure that, you know, if we look at the Minnesota situation, I, I don't think the fact that there was a threat-- the threat was immediate, it was imminent. Had they expended the monies in advance and put surveillance equipment and some of the protective measures that Senator Meyer wants to put in place-- which I commend him for, but I question whether we as legislators, looking for our safety and well-being and concern,

want to have to wait until somebody threatens us specifically and our committee treasurer gets something on file before we can expend funds from the campaign treasury to protect ourselves. There's also a limitation of $10,000; I don't know whether that's appropriate or not if it costs more than that to put the proper level of security and protection in place. I'm not sure why we'd be concerned. I know that there's a, an element of this that we don't be-- want to be spending money for things that aren't related to the protection, but those are just questions that I'd raise, and I hope that if nothing is done today, we continue to explore this issue. I think it's worthy of consideration, but I think those items should be, should be addressed and taken care of as we move forward. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. Senator Glen Meyer, you're recognized to speak.

G. MEYER: Thank you, Mr. President. I want to thank Senator Hallstrom for his support, or lack of support. He's nodding yes. I'll assume that was support. I realize that, you know, we need to-- we need a good deal more specificity in the bill, and there should be an opportunity to address that. And in the interest of time, I, I think it's important that we have a conversation. I think it's important that we, once again, put some meat on the bones of this particular bill. I don't know that it's, it's sufficiently fleshed out in order to advance. In fact, I'm not going to support-- I certainly will support my floor amendment, I will support my, my amendment. I, I am, I am a "no" on advancing, because if we don't have the opportunity to, to flesh it out, I, I think it's just way too broad. In, in, in that, in that, in that vein, I think it would be best that I withdraw both my floor amendment and my, and my filed amendment, FA1151 and AM2959, so. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: So ordered. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Hunt would move to amend with AM2868.

KELLY: Senator Hunt, you're recognized to open.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. So, what AM2868 does-- and I've been kind of buzzing around the floor working this this morning quickly. And I tried to speak to Senator Bostar, but he wasn't on the floor at the time when I started working, and then I started working with Senator Sanders. And now he's here, and

then stuff was going on with the other amendment, so it's all moving parts right now. But very good faith, very, very serious. So, what this amendment does is it adds my bill-- and I'm pulling it up right now. It adds my bill, LB74-- colleagues, if you want to pull that up on your gadget. LB74 is a bill that I introduced last year, and have introduced year after year after year here to allow campaign funds to be used for child travel, for expenses for the officeholder's minor child-- so, it has to be the officeholder's child and a minor-- related to the duties of the officeholder. Currently in statute, it says that you can use campaign funds for travel for the officeholder and staff for duties related to the work of the office, but it doesn't include minor children. So, what this amendment does is it just adds that. It also adds a line saying, "child care services incurred by an officeholder when the officeholder is involved in activities related to the duties of the officeholder." So, that's a helpful thing, too. I'll tell you, personally, you know, I'm-- I think that fundraising for daycare is not a realistic thing. Like, that's not how, if this amendment is adopted, how that's going to work and actually be used. How it could be used is if I'm at a conference and I have a minor child, if I have 7-year-old child, maybe there's, like, a daycare at the hotel that I can use while I'm giving a talk or on a panel, and then that's something I can take advantage of. That's a very, very common thing. And then, because the child care is related to my duties as an officeholder when I'm actually in the process of carrying out my duties as a state senator, then I can use my campaign funds to pay the hourly fee or whatever it is for that daycare at the hotel, or something like that. That is a probable and realistic way that this amendment could be put into effect in reality. As far as the child travel, you know, it's always kind of blown my mind that I could pay for my entire staff to come to a Council of State Governments conference with me in Honolulu, but if I have a 7-year-old kid who needs to come with me because I'm a single parent, I can't use the funds for, for her as well. So, I think that this amendment is meaningful and important because it opens the door for more candidates to be able to see elected office as something that's possible for them. You know, we, we incur a lot of expenses here, and the money we make doesn't even begin to cover them. And so, I think if we are willing to say that campaign funds can be used for security services and systems, I think that letting officeholders buy a plane ticket for their little kids so they can accompany them to a conference that they have to go to, I think that's also a reasonable expense. I've been working with Senator Sanders, who is the chairwoman of Government, Military and Veterans Affairs. That's the committee

through which LB7-- LB74 came. And we want to have an exec on it, like, right now, and we're waiting for Dick Clark to come, so maybe we can do that. But it's also true, colleagues, that a bill doesn't have to be out of committee in order to be amended to a bill. It's kind of a best practice. I know the Speaker has said that that's the way he wants things done. But I, I think that we could exec on this bill and get it out, or we could vote on this amendment. And I would like to hear what my colleagues think. I'm going to continue to walk around and talk to folks and see if we can get this attached, and I will yield the rest of my time so I can get back to doing that. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hunt. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of AM2868. Wow, it's like my-- I can't even read the board anymore. I, I got in the queue, actually, to, to help give a little bit more time for Senator Hunt to, to kind of get this worked out, but Senator Meyer withdrew his amendments, so we went straight to Senator Hunt's amendment. But I'm, I'm happy to just take a little bit of time right now so that she can continue to work on this. I will say that if, if this had existed for the last eight years, it would have been a huge help to me. I have traveled for various conferences and things like that, and never taken my children. But my oldest is old enough that I could take them with me to something, and it would alleviate a little bit of stress on my household when I'm out of town. So, it would have been nice to be able to, to do that. Also, my kids are really, really interested in my work, and I think they would have I enjoyed seeing something happening at a conference. I do remember Senator Hunt bringing Ash to Nashville, which was our-- the NCSL conference our first year, and, and Ash was much younger then. So, there was a session that Senator Hunt wanted to go to, and so I took Ash, and we went to the exhibitor's hall or whatever, and walked around and, like, got different things. And now that I'm talking about it, I remember us sitting in rocking chairs that they had, like, in the hotel or something. I don't know. So I, I-- and that was on Senator Hunt's dime, and that doesn't seem fair because obviously, she had to have her with her, and that was an expense. But of course, I loved any time Ash was around, because she's lovely. But yeah, having this-- you know, there's not any financial incentive to doing this job at all. It's really a financial disincentive. But it would be nice if we did more things to help reduce barriers for younger Nebraskans to run for office, Nebraskans that have young

families to run office. You know, Senator Dungan's-- by the time he's termed-out here, he's going to have a 4-year-old, and he's going to, you know, hopefully want to take him with him places. So, it is important to think about the future and, and what the Legislature can look like in the future. When I-- my first year, I had a newborn, Senator Wayne had a newborn, Senator Hilgers had a newborn, Senator Vargas' wife had a baby while we were here. I don't know if that was the first year or the second year. I think it was the second year. And Senator Lindstrom had young children, and, and-- nope, she didn't have kids then. Senator Hunt obviously had a kid. So, my freshman year was, like-- there was a lot of parenting going on. There's still a lot of parenting going on. But we had a lot of littles. There was a lot of littles happening at that time. So, I think that this is an important thing to bring forward, and I appreciate Senator Hunt's advocacy around working parents in the Legislature. And if she needs more time to continue to work this out, I will get back in the queue. But I'm going to check in with her now that my time is just about up. So, thank you, Mr. President.

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

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, I rise in support of AM2868 and LB986. And I figured-- since I think folks are working off the floor, taking time, I thought I might take my opportunity to talk about the fact that today is Maundy Thursday. I talked to Pastor Rountree about this earlier this week, and he asked me if I was going to give the same speech that I gave last year on Maundy Thursday. And I said, well, you know, I'll wait and see if the Spirit moves me. And so, I suppose being provided an opening and an opportunity to talk is the Spirit speaking to me that I have an opportunity to talk about this. So-- and I do think it is relevant on this conversation, because we're talking about the sacrifices that come with service. So, all of us serve this place, and there are other elected officials who serve, and that is a sacrifice. Senator Bostar's bill allows people to afford themselves some measure of safety and protection as a result of their service. Senator Hunt's amendment allows folks to have a little bit more of their family involvement in the service. And so, this is a great sacrifice that we all make to be here because it is a service, but we can make it a little bit easier on families and people to serve in that way. So, Maundy Thursday-- this is Holy Week, of course, which is the, you know, the, the week leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus, and then the resurrection of

Jesus on Sunday. And I started fixating on Maundy Thursday many years ago because I went to a Maundy Thursday service with the washing of the feet, and I thought to myself "this is awkward." I had my feet washed, and I didn't enjoy it. And so, then I have thought about it for a long time. And as I thought about it, I thought, you know, we have Holy Friday, which is the crucifixion, which is a big event, and then we have the, the resurrection, which is of course a big event. But Maundy Thursday is the day where there's the Last Supper, which-- a lot of people think about paintings, obviously, about the Last Supper. The mass service is a recreation of the Last Supper and-- but there are all these other events on Maundy Thursday that are so consequential and big that people-- they make culture-- they make it into cultural references. So, the denial by Peter three times, the betrayal with a kiss by Judas, and the washing of the feet is one. And then, of course, there's this part-- I was reading the Bible last night, believe it or not, and stumbled on-- I believe it is the-- it's in the book of Luke, where Jesus is praying in the garden, and he says-- the garden at Gethsemane, or the Mount Olives, and he said to God, who he's praying to, that [INAUDIBLE] I would ask this cup be passed from my-- from me, but I-- your will be done. So, you know, asking to not have to make the sacrifice that he was about to make. But then there's this other part after that where he comes back out, and the, the disciples are asleep. And they say, Lord, the, the body-- the soul is willing, but the body is weak. And I think that's another great cultural reference that people use. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak. And so it's another-- there's so many great things about this, but the one greatest thing is that, the sacrifice of the washing of the feet. And this is the thing, which is about the servant, about being a servant, being a leader and a servant. And it's that Jesus says, what I'm doing here, you do not understand now, but you will understand later. And then Peter says, you'll never wash my feet-- or, you'll never wash my feet, and Jesus answered him, unless I wash your feet, you'll have no inheritance with me. And so, then Jesus says, do you realize what I've done for you? You call me teacher, master, and rightly so. But I've washed your feet, and wash-- now you shall wash one another's feet. So, I'm going to run out of time, but get to the point. What he's saying is that he-- as a true leader, he is supplicating himself to the people he leads as a servant. And that is our obligation here, always, is to be the leaders for the state of Nebraska in this place, but to also be sub-- subservient, or to serve; to be willing to get on your knees and serve, and wash the feet of the people that we seek to serve. And so, the ends-- the reason it's called Maundy Thursday, it is the new commandment, which is to

love thy neighbor as they love thyself. So, I'm out of time, but--

KELLY: That's your time.

J. CAVANAUGH: --that's the point. Thank you.

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

DeBOER: Thank you, Mr. President. So, I've been thinking about this bill since General File, and thinking about the kind of arguments that folks were making against having this ability to get, for example, a security system, or the child care piece. And I think we need to remember that these are not taxpayer dollars; these are donated private dollars that are given to people's campaigns, and that there is a regulatory system where all of those dollars are published, and how they're spent and who gives them to you. It's a very transparent system in Nebraska, and anyone can go and see-- including, by the way, someone who maybe wants to run against you-- can go and see and how you've, how you've spent your money. We should also remember that allowable uses now are things like buying dinner for yourself, doing things for your constituents. There's a variety of uses already available. And I think for me, I am comfortable saying that if a public servant needs to get a Ring camera or do something else for their security, or provide child care, or in some way support their children so that they can do their job, I'm comfortable with that because I trust the voters to be able to look at a report of how they spent-- how, you know, a public official or someone who's running for office has spent their money and say, OK, I disagree with how they spent the money that I gave them; that means I'm not going to give them any more money. So, there's already a system in place to prevent any kind of abuse of campaign fund spending, because anybody, including the person who wants to sort of call you out, can look at how you spent your money and can point it out to all of the voters, can point it out to the public, can point it out to whoever they want to and say, look, she spent this on security for her house. And then, they can decide whether or not they think that that was a reasonable use. My expectation is that public officials will absolutely err on the side of caution rather than abuse of those uses of their own privately-donated dollars because they would like to be able to still fundraise, because they would like to elected to office, or re-elected to office. So, the system is already built in with the checks and balances to

prevent anyone from abusing the system. So, you know, I'm OK with allowing more uses because I understand that there is a transparency to those uses, that these are not tax dollars; these are private donations to someone's campaign account. And I think that if you are privately donating to someone, you have, probably, the wherewithal to figure out how your funds are being spent, or you just trust a person that you donate those dollars to to spend them in a way that you're comfortable with. And if you don't, you don't donate to them, you don't vote for them, you don't elect them. So, while I think there has to be maybe some guardrails on how those dollars are spent, this is not the kind of line that I think we need to take, where we say, you know, do they need it for their own protection, for security? Do they need it for-- in order to do the job with small children? Because we want to encourage people who have young children to participate in the democratic process just as much as everyone else, because they have a different perspective. And there's a lot of people out in the world with young children who need to be represented; whose, whose struggles, whose, whose interests need to be represented in the body. So, I support Senator Hunt's amendment, just as I have supported it before, and I support Senator Bostar's bill, because I think these are things that are sort of policed against abuse in other ways. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator DeBoer. Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. I may ask Senator Hunt a question here in a moment. I'm looking at the bill, and it seems to have two component parts. One has to do with meals, travel, and lodging for immediate family members, and the other one having to do with child care services. I would tend to agree with the comments that Senator Machaela Cavanaugh made about perhaps providing some benefits through the provision of child care services from our campaign funds to incentivize younger people, much younger than me, obviously, to serve in this capacity. But one of the things that struck me as odd, and I had just briefly visited with Senator Hunt about whether or not the interpretation, as I understand it, of the NADC-- DS-- or NADC is appropriate. If you look at the current statute, it clearly says that if you're conducting activities related to your office that you can use expenditures from your campaign funds for meals, travel, and lodging not only for yourself, but for your children. The next subsection of the law says you can incur or utilize campaign funds for expenditures for conference fees, meals, lodging, and travel, the same as the immediate subsection

above that, for yourself and for your staff and members of your immediate family is the, is the missing component from that subpart, but the subparagraph right above it says meals, "traving" and-- travel and lodging, which would include, in my opinion, plane fare, travel expenses, reimbursement for mileage. That applies to members of your family when you're doing duties related to your office. The only thing that seems to be missing on the face of the statute are conference fees. And as a primary issue, I'm not sure that we have to pay conference fees for our children, even though they're accompanying us, as we would want them to. So I would, I guess, disagree with the NADC opinion, but I'd ask Senator Hunt if she could maybe go into a little bit more detail about that opinion. I'd prefer not to have to change the law, but in saying so, I'd prefer that those expenses ought to be utilized for your family members when you're going to conferences, except for the conference fees, perhaps. And I think current law clearly allows that. Senator Hunt, please.

KELLY: Senator Hunt, would you yield?

HUNT: Yes, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. I appreciate you coming over and chatting with me about that. I completely agree with you. Senator Hallstrom, we agree 100 percent. Everything you said to me, I feel exactly the same way. And I'm holding, you know, the, the guidelines here from the NADC. And when I first ran for office in 2019, I talked to the NADC about these expenses. And on January 31, 2020, they gave me an advisory opinion saying that a bill like LB74, which is an AM2868, was needed in order for campaign funds to be used for the travel of my minor child. It didn't make sense to me either, but I am very-- as we all are-- very sensitive about being accused of, you know, misuse of campaign funds. And so, I did not use any campaign funds for the travel of my child because the NADC told me that it was not aligned with their rules in this advisory opinion. So, we're still looking for a copy of that opinion. The NADC is out behind the glass helping me find a copy that opinion, because they mailed a paper copy to me, which I don't have. So, I need a digital copy of that to share with you. But according to the NADC, this bill is needed in order to allow minor children to-- for officeholders to use campaign funds for the travel of minor children.

HALLSTROM: OK, thank--

HUNT: But I agree with you. I, I think that's not what the letter of the guidance says, but that is what they told me, and so we must change the law.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Senator Hunt.

KELLY: Thank you, Senators. Senator Guereca, you're recognized to speak.

GUERECA: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I was kind of honing in on the sort of same sections of law that Senator Hallstrom was looking at, and I think where the NADC wants the, the, the change is that, in the section relating to meals, lodging, and travel for an officeholder is related to his or her candidacy, and for members of the immediate family of the officeholders when involved in the activities related to his or her candidacy. So, then the subsequent section refers to the allowance for the duties of the officeholder-- or actually, for duties of his or her public office. And I, I tend to agree with Senator Hunt, Senator Hallstrom, it, it should be an allowable offense [SIC]. This is a pretty minor change. Again, it's, it's weird that if you're a candidate, you could pay for the travel of your immediate family, but if it's for the duties as an officeholder, you can't. So, I've won my election, I'm an officeholder. But am I also a candidate? I have not declared for re-election, but would I be considered a candidate? If you have a term-limited Senator, they haven't announced for office, but they could. Would they be considered a candidate? So, I think this is a pretty minor change. Again, if you're a candidate, this would be allowable travel, but once you're an officeholder, somehow it isn't. It's a minor tweak. Let's fix it. Let's move on. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

KAUTH: Thank you, Mr. President. So, I come at this from a couple ways. So, I'm sympathetic as a parent myself to the needs of making sure your kids are taken care of and wanting to bring them with you everywhere you go. But this, this bill is-- LB74 is essentially what the Senator Hunt's amendment is. It came out of Government; the primary bill, LB986, came out exec. So, we're looking at two different committees here, and LB74 didn't even come out of committee. So, it's something that has been tried for many years. And again, I'm sympathetic to it, but I think when we talk about serving as a sacrifice, that does mean it is

a sacrifice. There are a lot of things that go into making that decision to sacrifice. Having donor money be used for child care, I don't think is appropriate. I think we start opening ourselves up to a lot of cases or potential for abuse. People who travel for business, they don't get to charge their company to bring their child with them; they would have to do that on their own. This just seems to be opening a Pandora's box of abuse for people who are running or people who serving in the Legislature, or wherever they're serving, to say, hey, you know, I'm here all day, so I'm going to use my campaign funds for child care permanently. Again, this is a sacrifice. This is something that we have to think through, that we have to make sure our families are ready for, that we have to make sure everyone is on board with. I think this just opens it up too much. I really, really think that if we want to get more people-- and I agree, we need to make it so that it is easier to run for office, but I think the way to do that is to raise salaries. Make it so that it-- you can look at it and say, yep, I could raise my family on that, or I could pay for my own child care on that, rather than recruiting or soliciting money from people so that you can run for office or make donations. I mean, what happens if you are depending on your campaign fund to pay for your child care and someone who is a donor comes to you and says, hey, listen, I really need this bill passed? The potential to be used by the lobbyists, by the companies and businesses that donate money to say, hey, listen, you really should work on this, I need your vote on this. You're putting yourself in an incredibly vulnerable position by now all of a sudden saying, well, my child care is paid for by my campaign funds, or I'm taking this trip and my kid gets to come with me, but it's paid for by campaign funds. This is just-- this is a bridge too far. And again, if we're going to encourage more people to run for office and get more people involved, which I fully support, then we need to look at making the salaries that are paid-- I mean, we make $12,000 a year, which, if you looked at the minimum wage on that, we're probably, I don't know, $3.35 an hour because we put in a lot of time on this. Make it so that it is a higher-paying job, then I think you'll open it up to more people. But I think this is just far too risky, and it's going to lead to abuse of donor funds. It's also going to lead to potential conflicts between the, the officeholder and whoever it is who is supporting their child being in child care. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

STORER: Thank you, Mr. President. Lost track of time. First, I would just like to-- I don't know, I'll probably be back on the mic later in the day a few times, but wish everyone an upcoming happy Easter. This is, this is a special time, for obvious reasons, for those of us with, with our faith, but it also brings back really great memories on the ranch and raising my children and, you know, have-- being-- coming from an agricultural background, lots of bunnies, and let's see, one year, I think my mom gave all the grandkids-- one year, they got goats; one year, they got ducks. So, all kinds of-- all kinds of fun memories. When you're the parent, sometimes you're not so excited about getting animals when you have little children to take care of. But to speak to-- to speak to Senator Bostar's bill, and just contemplating Senator Hunt's amendment, I think this really is valuable discussion to have, because this world certainly has changed. We've seen a lot, a lot more of the need-- I would say a need for security. That's very unfortunate, but it's a reality that when you are in the-- in public service or in the public eye, unfortunately, it seems like this country has become much more divisive. I could talk a long time about, you know, maybe why. Social media, I think, has created a lot of that. It becomes a lot easier to start hurling insults from behind a keyboard, but that generates lots of emotion and can spread good and bad information far more quickly. All of those things to say that I do think there is a heightened need for security for our public officials. So, I appreciate Senator Bostar's thoughtfulness in this. And Senator Hunt has added yet another thoughtful element to how, how those funds should be allowed to be used, because to some of the comments that have already been discussed, yeah, there is a reality to the fact that we have-- especially here in Nebraska, even with term limits, I think we've seen more people rise up to run for office who-- at a younger age. It, it has certainly had an effect on that, and it is simply common sense that if you're under 40, you're more likely to have small children. So, I appreciate, I appreciate Senator Hunt putting this up for, for discussion. Not 100 percent sure where I'm at, so I am listening to some of the conversation, but I do think it is worthy of good debate, as well as the underlying bill, LB986. So, I'm going to keep listening. Again, thank you, Senator Hunt, for the amendment. And Happy Easter.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Storer. Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. And just kind of reiterate looking at the provisions of statute that Senator Hunt has

opened up, they currently talk about expenditures that are appropriate from campaign funds. And there is a slight nuance, slight difference; perhaps this is the basis of the NADC opinion. One relates to when involved in activities related to the officer's candidacy, the other one involved in activities related to the duties of the officeholder. In the one case, it talks about meals, travel, and lodging, which are for the officeholder and members of their immediate family, which would include children. The other one talks more about travel once you're in office and related to the duties of office; includes those same expenses, meals, travel, and lodging. Also conference fees, and you can not only do it for yourself currently, but for staff, as Senator Hunt pointed out in her opening remarks. I think it's a logical extension, if there is a distinction with a difference in that statutory provision, that if once you're in office, you're traveling, to be able to have your children accompany you. Senator Clouse and I were talking off, off-mic. Heaven knows that we're separated from our family and our children way too often from this job. It's worth it, but nonetheless, there's sacrifices that are, that are made, particularly by younger folks. And I think, if the opinion is correct, that it's an appropriate change to make to ensure that you can not only use funds for expenditures for your immediate family members when you're a candidate for meals, travel, and lodging, but also, once you're elected, to do so for the same purposes, and to be able to have your children accompany you. So, I think, you know, whether that happens today-- I certainly don't want to take Senator Bostar's bill down, but I think it's worthy of full and fair discussion on this bill today, and I would certainly recommend that we do that. I have listened to some of the comments about the child care, and, and there's probably some, some legitimate arguments that are being made. But a bare minimum, if not today, in the near future, we ought to take care of the travel expenses for children by officeholders when they're going to NCSL, CSG, or any of those types of activities. So, to the extent that we can get that done-- and, and I don't want to dissuade Senator Hunt from going for the whole enchilada that's in her bill, but certainly, I think that has extreme merit. And quite frankly, I think we probably find-- and maybe Senator Hunt has the, the data as to whether or not a majority or quite a few states have these very same provisions. 40, 40 states, I'm being told from across the way, have this type of provision, and Senator Hunt can probably clarify whether that applies both to child care expenditures and travel, meal, and, and lodging and conference fees. But I think if 40 states have done this, it's certainly not a quantum leap to consider doing that in either one or both of the, the

instances. And again, I certainly don't want to, to hold up Senator Bostar's bill, but if there's a way to get this done today or into the future, Senator Hunt may be gone, but perhaps we can pick up and carry the ball for her going forward. Thank you.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom. Senator Clouse, you're recognized to speak.

CLOUSE: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, I'm going to share a little bit different viewpoint on this than most, and it has to do with your personal story. And every person in here, every elected official has their story, their why. My story involves losing my only child at-- when he was 10 years old. And after that point, I committed myself to public service and said, you know, this is important. So many people gave to us when we were fighting his illness and went through all those types of things that I felt it was important to give back. Giving back means a lot of sacrifice. It means doing things that really aren't pleasing to everyone; it means spending a lot of time on the road, away from family, those types of things. So, over the years, as I've had the privilege of working with a lot young community leaders, what I've always told them, put family first. There'll be time in your life when your kids are grown up or they're old enough to take care of themself that you can get involved at whatever level of public service you want to. But at that age, that's first and foremost. And take your time with those kids, don't ever lose sight of that's your responsibility, and you'll never get those years and that time back. So, I've always said don't get into public service until you're ready and know that your family can do a lot of things on their own, because you need to spend time with them. And the other issues, I think, has been talked about at length here, and I won't go into that. But that's always the advice that, that I gave to the younger generation that were really wanting to get into, into the political realm or the community service: family first. Don't ignore it, take, take advantage, and love the time that you have with those while you can. Thank you. I'll yield the rest of my time.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Clouse. Senator Spivey, you're recognized to speak.

SPIVEY: Good morning, colleagues and Nebraskans, and thanks for folks joining in the debate today. I just wanted to rise and, and give a couple of thoughts. I didn't, I didn't know if I was

going to add to the debate, and wanted just to give a little bit of my purview, given just some of the remarks. But before I do that, I wanted to wish my oldest a happy birthday. So, his birthday is actually tomorrow, and he was really hoping to not go to school today and come to the Legislature, and I told him no. He was disappointed that we were in recess tomorrow. For some reason, he really loves it here. But he will be 12, and again, he is the one that made me a mom, and is one of the best parts of me. And so happy birthday, Naasir. As it relates to LB986 and AM2868, I appreciate Senator Hunt bringing this measure, and all the work over the years in her tenure bringing up this issue and talking about the opportunity that we really have to ensure that parents can actively participate in their job and in the "electoriate" and political process. I have two kids, and as I think about being a true working mom-- so, I am not retired like some folks in the body. This salary is not enough, and so I still work full-time, my partner works full-time. We ran a business, so sometimes we had competing schedules, and you just, you know, are trying to make ends meet and take care of your family. And so, there are times when I am the sole caregiver for my kids, and that I do have a work event-- which, this is our job that we signed up for. And so, being able to access quality, safe child care so that I know my kids are taken care of, and then I can focus on my work. My kids are 12 and 3, and so as I mentioned before-- I can't remember what bill we were debating, maybe LB304-- it was a really bad storm. I think it was super cold, like negative 20. And so, Omaha Public Schools closed. And so, my oldest, he's 12, he was able to stay at home. A little nervous about it, but he's pretty mature. And connected with him all day, and make sure he had what he needed, but I needed child care for my 3-year-old. Because of the weather conditions and OPS being closed, my childcare provider is closed, and he is not of school age, he cannot take care of himself, and so he came to work with me. Because we are multi-dimensional people, I should be able to do my work, take care of my kid, or, or have space that allows for both. At my employer, where I'm the executive director and founder, we actually allow for staff to take their kids to conferences. We usually are attending conferences where child care is provided, but we do provide that support for them to travel with their parent, because we-- again, we know that sometimes folks are the sole caregiver, or even in two-parent households or blended families, schedules do not work, and that usually falls on the mom to be able to figure out what is needed for the care and support of their kids when there are conflicts. And so, as an employer, we do offer that, we would cover the cost of the travel. If that conference did not provide child

care, we would provide it. Even in some of our initiatives, when we are asking folks to engage with us, we also provide child care. So, I think thinking about how to use private funds donated to me as a candidate and elected official to ensure my success is absolutely appropriate, because we know that, again, we hold different experiences that would call for use of these types of funds. It is clearly outlined, or could be outlined in eligible expenses. And so, if a private donor had issue with the eligible expenses, then they probably just shouldn't, shouldn't donate. But they are trusting that candidate and then elected official to use the funds in a way that allows for their success, and I do believe that this type of measure would ensure that moms, parents, working folks are able to not choose between having to focus on their role that we know is a sacrifice but doesn't always have to be in these kinds of instances, and will use the funds in a way that is aligned and appropriate, and again, allows for their success. So, I support the underlying AM2868, and I think it's a great addition to LB986. Thank you, Mr. President.

KELLY: Thank you, Senator Spivey. Senator Sanders, you're recognized to speak.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in support of LB986, and now, I will speak on LB74, which is AM2868. It was last heard in Government Committee. We did not advance this bill, and it remains in committee. The reason the Government Committee has not execed on this bill is that some of the member of the committee believe this blurs the lines between appropriate uses of campaign funds and conferring a benefit of officeholders in a way that is improper. Campaign funds should be used for campaign-related expenses; they should not be a conduit for donors to give money to candidates and officeholders for their household expenses. Transparency is not the only problem. I am sure that some donors would be perfectly fine with buying things for people in positions of authority. The question is whether or not constituents-- the granting of-- constitutes the granting of personal benefits to elected officials. Ultimately, I think each of us should vote our conscience on AM2868. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Sanders. Senator Hunt, you're recognized to close.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. OK, colleagues, I've consulted with Scott, Scott Danigole at the NADC, and they sent me a

letter on January 31, 2020 that was an advisory opinion saying that-- well, it was an opinion saying that a bill like one encompassed in AM2868, which is LB74, would be needed in order for the travel of minor children to be appropriate use of campaign funds. In the analysis of that opinion-- so, OK. So, before that, there was another advisory opinion, which is Advisory Opinion 133, and that's what I'm holding right now. And it pertains to a request from a former state senator about travel for his wife, but it also discusses a broader question about family and children and things like that. And in the analysis for that opinion, the NADC states: the NADC Act does not encompass travel for family members incidentally. So, if our spouses decide to attend, or our children, we have to pick up the costs out of personal funds, and I think that is proper. So, in the analysis for that advisory opinion, the commission found that the state senators have to pick up the costs for their child's travel out of personal funds. I agree with what Senator Clouse said about family first. And when we are elected officials, we have to put our families first, and that's why I have brought my child with me every opportunity I've ever gotten to travel with me for my work as a state senator. That's the way, in my family, how we put family first. In these eight years, my child has gotten to travel all over the country. She's had a lesson in civics education in a genus unlike any other of her classmates because of my duties as an officeholder. And I introduced these bills because campaign finance laws in Nebraska were not written in anticipation of single parents or low-income parents ever in public service. Elected officials work hard to earn the contributions they use to travel for work, their campaign funds, and they shouldn't be prevented from doing that just because they have little kids. It makes no sense to me that I could use my campaign funds to take the entire Legislature out for drinks tonight, but I couldn't take my kid to a conference that I'm required to attend. And of course, the passage of this bill will cost nothing to taxpayers, and it would be reportable to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. So, that's why I also don't accept arguments like Senator Kauth's that this would lead to abuse or fraud or waste, because all of this reporting would be accountable. I'll also add that it's not in the best interests of an elected official generally to use campaign funds to pay for travel costs or for child care or anything like that because, you know, that could be hundreds of dollars, it could be thousands of dollars. And that's all money that comes out of the pot for things like literature, yard signs, canvassing, mail. But it would help them do the job that they're elected to do, so I don't think that there's a realistic threat of, you know, somebody raising a million dollars and

using it all to pay for child care. That's not realistic, and that's not the intention of the amendment. These-- this amendment makes it easier for single and low-income parents to do public service, it's completely relevant to LB986 in terms of appropriate use of campaign funds, and it's a, a policy that I've been working on since 2019 because it's something that affected my life personally. And I've heard from candidates across the political spectrum ever since about why policy like this would be so helpful and important to them. I've appreciated the questions of colleagues like Senator Bostar, Senator Hallstrom to clarify the need for this amendment in order for funds to be permissibly used in this way, and I'm, I'm eager for an up or down vote on this policy. Conservative colleagues in the body, if this amendment is not successful, I urge one of you to take up this bill next year. I've often thought, if somebody like Senator Slama introduced this, it would have been the law 100 years ago. Right? You all know that I'm right. And I urge you, in this case, colleagues, not to let your bias about the introducer color your vote on this bill. It's a good policy, it only applies to minor children, and it's not going to be abused because it's going to be completely accountable to the Accountability and Disclosure Commission, which is run by some of the best staff that we have in this state. I urge your green vote on AM2868 and LB986. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Hunt. Colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of AM2868. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. There has been request to place house under call. The question is the house-- shall the house go under call? All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 31 ayes, 0 nays to place the house under call.

DORN: The house is under call. Senators, please record your presence. Those unexcused senators outside the Chamber, please return to the Chamber and record your presence. All unauthorized personnel, please leave the floor. The house is under call. Senator Hansen, please return to the, to the floor. The house is under call. All members are present and accounted for. The adoption of AM2868, and there has been a request for a roll call. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Senator Andersen voting no. Senator Arch. Senator Arch not voting. Senator Armendariz voting no. Senator Ballard not voting. Senator Bosn not voting. Senator Bostar voting yes.

Senator Brandt voting yes. Senator John Cavanaugh voting yes. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh voting yes. Senator Clements voting no. Senator Clouse voting no. Senator Conrad not voting. Senate DeBoer voting yes. Senator DeKay voting no. Senator Dorn voting no. Senator Dover not voting. Senator Dungan voting yes. Senator Fredrickson voting yes. Senator Guereca voting yes. Senator Hallstrom voting yes. Senator Hansen voting no. Senator Hardin not voting. Senator Holdcroft voting no. Senator Hughes not voting. Senator Hunt voting yes. Senator Ibach voting no. Senator Jacobson voting no. Senator Juarez voting yes. Senator Kauth voting no. Senator Lippincott voting no. Senator Lonowski voting no. Senator McKinney voting yes. Senator Fred Meyer voting no. Senator Glen Meyer voting no. Senator Moser voting no. Senator Murman voting no. Senator Prokop voting yes. Senator Quick voting yes. Senator Raybould voting yes. Senator Riepe not voting. Senator Rountree voting yes. Senator Sanders not voting. Senator Sorrentino voting no. Senator Spivey voting yes. Senator Storer voting yes. Senator Storm voting no. Senator Strommen not voting. Senator von Gillern voting no. Senator Wordekemper not voting. Vote is 18 ayes, 20 nays on the adoption of the amendment.

DORN: AM2868 is not adopted. Raise the call. Mr. Clerk, for amendments.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Hunt would move to amend with FA1154.

DORN: Senator Hunt, you're recognized to open.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. This is another bite at the apple. I'll-- I'm going to withdraw this amendment, but I wanted to first explain what it is. This is a floor amendment, so it's something that we drafted quickly, and the Clerk's office helped me draft quickly. I went up and described to them what I wanted. I said, if the motion fails, if my amendment fails, I want to draft the exact same amendment, but without the child care portion. So, what this floor amendment says is conference fees, meals, lodging, and travel by the officeholder, the officeholder's minor children, which is the new matter, and the officeholder's staff when the officeholder or staff is involved in activities related to the duties of the officeholder. So, what this floor amendment would do is just say the travel, not the child care. That would alleviate Senator Kauth's problems with the bill, since she doesn't want to support the child care. But from the vote on the previous measure, I'm going to withdraw

this amendment and move on with the vote on LB986. Once again, I-- I'm grateful to continue working with the NADC to perhaps issue a new advisory opinion so that maybe there can be kind of just more of a regulatory change to allow this to happen instead of a law, which I'm always in favor of. But again, colleagues, if this is not successful, this will persist and continue to be a problem for elected officials. It's not a matter of, of family first, or family values. When I hear you say that, Senator Clouse, what I'm hearing you say is that women do not belong in public service, women belong in the home with their children. And once the children are out and the child-rearing is done, then you are allowed to run for office because that's family first to you. Family first to me is setting an example for my child by rising to a position of leadership in a way that she's been able to grow up with and see in her home, and I'm very proud of that. So, colleagues, I urge you to continue this fight next year. I think this is something for a conservative to move across the goalpost, which has happened to me many times before here, and that would be a win for everybody. So, Mr. President, I'll withdraw this amendment. Thank you.

DORN: So ordered. Senator Bosn would like to recognize 50 ninth-grade students from Standing Bear High School in Lincoln located in the north balcony. Please rise and be recognized by your Nebraska State Legislature.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Guereca, there is nothing further on the bill.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB986 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

DORN: Colleagues, you heard the motion. All in favor, say aye. All opposed, say nay. Motion is approved. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB888. There are no-- there are no E&R amendments. Senator Kauth, I have FA528 with a note that you'd withdraw.

DORN: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move that LB888 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, say nay. Motion is approved. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB1048. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

DORN: Mr. Guereca-- Senator Guereca, excuse me, for a motion.

GUERECA: Getting a demotion here. Mr. President, I move that the E&R amendments to LB1048 be adopted.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, say nay. Motion is approved.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Andersen would move to amend with AM3075.

DORN: Senator Andersen, you're recognized to open.

ANDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Today, I rise to introduce AM3075 to LB1048, which is derived from my LB997. LB997 was brought to me at the request of the State Auditor to ensure proper oversight of emergency contracts. I appreciate the speak-- I appreciate Speaker Arch for allowing me to make this amendment to his bill. When sole-- when sourcing emergency contracts, the current statute only requires approval from the agency director and notification of the contract to Department of Administrative Services. A copy of the contract and the justification for the emergency is also required to be sent to DAS. However, DAS has no authority to decline contracts; they simply maintain the record. The law expects agencies will execute sole-source emergency contracts properly, fairly, and only in extreme circumstances. The competitive bidding process is a foundational component of some government operations. It ensures not only open and fair competition, but it's designed to ensure the best product for the best price. It is the obligation of the government officials to be good stewards of taxpayer funds; side-stepping that process can erode public trust, and runs opposed to the Nebraska Auditor's statutory requirement to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency, and performance of the

state's programs. AM3075 seeks to provide greater transparency and accountability by including the State Auditor in the contract notification process. To be clear, this is the original language of LB997 with no amendments. I thank the Speaker Arch for allowing me to attach this amendment to his bill. I thank you for your time, and ask for your green vote on AM3075.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Andersen. Returning to the queue, Senator John Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, I rise in support of Senator Andersen's amendment. I was there for the hearing on this bill. It was very enlightening and interesting. As I think we all know, there's definitely a need for some additional guardrails around no-bid contracts in this state. I assume everybody here-- well, I guess I shouldn't assume, but there has been some good media coverage. The Nebraska Examiner did some investigative reporting about some particular no-bid contracts in the state of Nebraska, and the Auditor's specific looking into that no-bid contract where the Governor gave a $2.5 million contract, no-bid contract, and gave as the justification the bill that this Legislature had passed with a timeline on it. And then, of course, the Auditor, in that investigation, found that the justification for that was that the report had to be done by July 1 of 2025, and-- or maybe it was June 30 of 2025. And then, the Auditor, in his due diligence, asked for that report, which had not been, been performed by that date, and then was given a report that was generated after-the-fact but backdated to June 30. As-- if you read the news again, there is an ongoing investigation into that no-bid contract and that post-hoc justification for it. What this bill would do would allow-- would require that for any no-bid contract, the Auditor is on notice ahead of time that the no-bid contract is, is being issued, and so the Auditor can, I think, keep tabs on it. He doesn't have the ability to deny the contract or do anything to that nature, but would be able to keep on top of it earlier, which I think would allow to ensure, as Senator Andersen said, this-- the, the open contracting process is a cornerstone. It ensures that we are getting the best price, but it also ensures that there is no favoritism being exercised by the folks who have the ability to issue a contract. And so, having this being done a little bit more in the open, I think, is really important. And in this instance, that has been the precipitating event for everybody talking about no-bid contracts. What happened was the-- well, you can read the-- you can read the Examiner articles for yourself, because they've done such a good job. But there was a contract issued on this pretext, or we'll--

I guess we can say justification. I'm not sure which. But that the Legislature passed this bill with this timeline, there-- we did ask at the hearing on this whether there were other ways they could have expedited the bidding process, and there are other mechanisms for expediting the bidding process. And of course, again, the justification that was given to us was that this report needed to be done and it wasn't possible to get the report done in that time frame. And so-- and then, of course, the report wasn't done. So, the reason for the no-bid contract was not even achieved. So, this is not going to solve that problem, it's not going to prevent things like that from happening, but it will ensure that the Auditor knows about no-bid contracts before they get to a year down the line, and then they have to go back and look at things all over again. So, I encourage your green vote on AM3075 and LB1048. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator John Cavanaugh. Senator Storer, you're recognized to speak.

STORER: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm not usually at this mic, so it feels different. I just had a few questions for Senator Andersen. This is certainly of particular interest, serving as a county commissioner. And we always were very cognizant, I guess, of that threshold with no-bid contracts. And so, again, of somewhat a particular interest to me. Senator-- would Senator Andersen yield to a question?

DORN: Senator Andersen, will you yield to a question?

ANDERSEN: Of course.

STORER: Thank you, Senator Andersen. The only piece I'm trying to understand-- I think transparency and good oversight is very important. Just can you please explain to me a little bit how, how this will accomplish that, or what specific-- what we're specifically gaining by adding the Auditor to the list in, in the amendment?

ANDERSEN: Sure, and thanks for the question. Really, this adds another set of eyes to looking at the sole-source contracting process, and ensures that the Auditor is involved so he sees what is actually-- when there is an emergency, that the emergency is fully declared, and that they are aware of the sole-source contracting so that they can monitor how the funds are expended.

STORER: Thank you, I appreciate that. Yield the rest of my time.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Storer and Senator Andersen. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Andersen, you're recognized to close. Senator Andersen waives. Colleagues, the question before the body is the passage of AM3075. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 42 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the amendment, Mr. President.

DORN: AM3075 is adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Kauth, I have FA707 with a note that you'd withdraw.

DORN: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB1048 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. All those opposed, say nay. LB-- is advanced. LB1048 advances. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB826. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move that the E&R amendments to LB826 be adopted.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed, say nay. Motion is advanced E-- to E&R.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Kauth, I have FA455 with a note that you'd withdraw.

DORN: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move LB826 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed, say nay. Motion is adopted.

CLERK: Mr. President, Select File, LB1086. First of all, Senator, there are E&R amendments.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move that the E&R amendments to LB1086 be adopted.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed, say nay. Motion carries.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Kauth, I have FA745 with a note that you'd withdraw.

DORN: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Senator, I have nothing further on the bill.

DORN: Senator Guereca, for a motion.

GUERECA: Mr. President, I move that LB1086 be advanced to E&R for engrossing.

DORN: Colleagues, you've heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed, say nay. LB1086 advances. Items for the record.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Bills read this morning on Final Reading were presented to the Governor at 9:28 a.m. Additionally, amendment to be printed from Senator Hughes to LB1050. That's all I have at this time. Concerning the agenda, Mr. President, General File, LB966 introduced by Senator Machaela Cavanaugh. It's a bill for an act relating to schools; it adopts the Hunger-Free Schools Act; restates legislative

findings and state legislative intent; eliminates provisions relating to reimbursement for school breakfast programs; provides powers and duties to the state Department of Education and the state Board of Education; repeals the original section; outright repeals Section 79-10,138 and 79-10,139 Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska. The bill was read for the first time on January 12 of this year and referred to the Education Committee; that committee placed the bill on General File.

DORN: Senator Arch would like to recognize 50 fourth-grade students from Trumble Park Elementary in Papillion. Please stand and-- in the north balcony. Please stand and be recognized by your Nebraska State Legislature. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to open.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President, colleagues. LB966 does one thing. Students who qualify for reduced meal pricing would not be required to pay anything for meals. The portion of their meal not already subsidized by the federal government would now be subsidized by the state. Every parent knows that when a child is hungry, it hinders their ability to focus and learn in the classroom. LB966 would ensure that every public and nonprofit private school student in Nebraska that already qualifies for reduced pricing has meals during the day free of charge. Childhood hunger and food insecurity are directly linked to poor academic performance, poor health, and higher rates of depression and suicide. I think we can all agree that Nebraska taxpayer dollars are well spent on programs that keep kids healthy and learning. We can do better when it comes to feeding our children in school. Investing in our children is the right thing to do. It's an opportunity to help our children and teachers without adding staff or unfunded mandates on school districts. There is a fiscal impact, which I am very cognizant of. It is not in this biennium, but it would be in the next biennium. It estimates that it would be $1.2 million in general funds to the Department of Education to reimburse schools. If this bill, colleagues, is moved to Select today, I will be bringing an amendment on Select to create a cash fund and a private-public partnership. I've spoken with the Speaker, and he will not schedule it on Select until I have secured funding for this program, so I would ask that you all join me in moving LB966 to Select File. And I would like to thank Senator Hunt for using her personal priority for this really important bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Hunt, you're-- or, excuse me, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to close.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Well, thank you, colleagues, for your time and attention, and I hope that we can move this forward and move on to the next bill.

DORN: Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of LB966. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. There has been a-- there's been a request to place the house under call. The question is, shall the house go under call? All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays to place the house under call.

DORN: The house is under call. Senators, please record your presence. Those unexcused senators outside the Chamber, please return to the Chamber and record your presence. All unauthorized personnel, please leave the floor. The house is under call. The house is under call. Senators, please record your presence, and those unexcused senators outside the Chamber, please return to the Chamber and record your presence. Senator Rountree, Senator Lonowski, Senator Brandt, Senator Ballard, and Senator Kauth, please record your presence. Please return to the Chamber. Senator Rountree, the house is under call. Please return to the Chamber. All unexcused members are present. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, there was a vote open. Would you accept call-in votes? There's been a request for a roll-call vote. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Senator Andersen voting no. Senator Arch voting yes. Senator Armendariz not voting. Senator Ballard voting yes. Senator Bosn voting yes. Senator Bostar voting yes. Senator Brandt voting yes. Senator John Cavanaugh voting yes. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh voting yes. Senator Clements voting no. Senator Clouse. Senator Clouse, I'm sorry? Voting yes. Senator Conrad voting yes. Senator DeBoer voting yes. Senator DeKay. Senator Dorn voting yes. Senator Dover voting yes. Senator Dungan voting yes. Senator Fredrickson voting yes. Senator Guereca voting yes. Senator Hallstrom voting yes. Senator Hansen not voting. Senator Hardin not voting. Senator Holdcroft voting yes. Senator Hughes voting yes. Senator Hunt voting yes. Senator Ibach not voting. Senator Jacobson voting no. Senator Juarez voting yes. Senator Kauth voting no. Senator Lippincott not voting. Senator Lonowski not voting. Senator McKinney voting

yes. Senator Fred Meyer voting yes. Senator Glen Meyer voting yes. Senator Moser voting no. Senator Murman voting no. Senator Prokop voting yes. Senator Quick voting yes. Senator Raybould voting yes. Senator Riepe voting yes. Senator Rountree voting yes. Senator Sanders voting yes. Senator Sorrentino not voting. Senator Spivey voting yes. Senator Storer not voting. Senator Storm voting no. Senator Strommen voting yes. Senator von Gillern not voting. Senator Wordekemper voting yes. Vote is 32 ayes, 7 nays on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

DORN: LB966 advances. I raise the call. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, General File, LB929 introduced by Senator Fredrickson. It's a bill for an act relating to the medical assistance program; provides requirements to the Department of Health and Human Services relating to deductions, cost sharing, and similar charges for Medicaid enrollees as prescribed; and repeals the original section. The bill was read for the first time on January 9 of this year and referred to the Health and Human Services Committee; that committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments.

DORN: Senator Fredrickson, you're recognized to open.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. I'm here today to introduce my personal priority bill, LB929, and this is a bill that puts limitations on co-pays paid by Medicaid recipients. LB929 with HHS committee amendment AM2991 simply allows the managed-- that managed care organizations can cover co-pays now required of Medicaid recipients in line with what was set forth in the budget bill Congress passed last summer. Medicaid co-pays deter individuals who need care from seeking necessary medical treatment. Co-pays are associated with financial barriers, delayed treatment, and worse health outcomes. People with Medicaid coverage, by definition, have extremely low incomes, and live at or just above the federal poverty level, making affordable-- making affording basic necessities a daily struggle, so even nominal co-pays deter people from seeking care. This bill sets limits on the cost-sharing measures that were just recently required by Congress' federal budget bill, H.R. 1, passed last summer. The co-pay requirements in H.R. 1 only apply to the Medicaid expansion group, which provides necessary coverage for low-income adults ages 19 through 64 under 138 percent of the federal poverty level. About 70,000 Nebraskans are currently enrolled in the Medicaid expansion

category. H.R. 1 requires Medicaid expansion enrollees pay co-pays of up to $35, but gives states the flexibility to decide the amount of co-pays they will ultimately require. H.R. 1's co-pay requirements are complicated. The co-pays only apply to a certain portion of the Medicaid expansion group, those with incomes between 100 and 138 percent of the federal poverty level, and to certain non-exempt services. This will make it difficult for people to know if and when they will have to pay co-pays, and will be administratively challenging to administer and collect. LB929 permits managed care organizations to cover these costs. It is my understanding that Nebraska Medicaid used to have some nominal co-pays, but voluntarily eliminated them in 2024, and that, at the time, two of the three managed care organizations elected to cover the co-pays for Medicaid enrollees so that it was not a barrier to care for individuals. This bill, with AM2991, simply allows the state's managed care organizations to cover the cost of any co-pays, similar to how they had done previously. LB929 advanced from committ-- from committee with majority support, and the committee amendment of AM2991 removes the department's opposition as well as the fiscal note. I urge the body to advance LB929 with committee amendment AM2991, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

DORN: As the Clerk stated, there are committee amendments. Senator Hardin, you're recognized to open.

HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. President. LB929 addresses cost-sharing requirements for Nebraska's Medicaid recipients; things like deductibles, co-payments, and co-insurance. As introduced, the bill would have prohibited DHHS from imposing any such charges on Medicaid recipients unless required by federal law. Where federal law did require them, the bill delayed implementation until October 1, 2028, and required that any charges be set at the lowest amount permitted, that managed care organizations be allowed to cover those costs on behalf of enrollees, and that providers be prohibited from denying care to anyone who could not pay. The committee amendment, AM2991, significantly narrows the bill. It removes most of that protective language, retaining only one provision: that managed care organizations are permitted to cover out-of-pocket costs such as deductibles or co-payments on behalf of their Medicaid enrollees to the extent allowed under federal law. In short, the amended bill is a single, straightforward clarification that managed care organizations may step in to cover cost-sharing charges for their Medicaid members when federal law allows it. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Hardin. Senator Storer, you're recognized to speak.

STORER: Thank you, Mr. President. Would Senator Fredrickson yield to some questions?

DORN: Senator Fredrickson, would you yield to a question?

FREDRICKSON: Yes, of course.

STORER: Thank you, Senator Fredrickson. It-- as always, we, we are most well-versed on the committees that we sit on, and I am not on Health and Human Services. And so, trying to understand this just a little bit better, but clearly the first thing that I go to is the fiscal note. Can you explain that-- the-- I believe it's about $4.3 million fiscal note?

FREDRICKSON: Yes, absolutely. So, the fiscal note that is currently there was a result of the original bill itself. The committee amendment, which is a white-copy amendment, eliminates that fiscal note. So, the original bill had a fiscal note of-- so, some historical context here. So, Nebraska was not charging co-payments or cost-sharing for Medicaid enrollees since 2024. H.R. 1 shifted the federal policy that allows states to do that, and so the fiscal note on the original bill was a prediction of what would be the co-payments or cost-sharing that would be charged to individuals with that, with that bill implemented. So, the white-copy amendment, what it does is it, it essentially goes back to what our previous practice was. So, managed care organizations, when we previously did have Medicaid co-payments or deductibles, would just absorb the cost of the co-payment. So sometimes, they're nominal in nature; sometimes, they're $5. H.R. 1 allows it to go up to $35, but gives the states the discretion of how much they would charge for that. But the white-copy amendment, like I said, it's permissive in nature, it's not a "shall," so, it's-- so, it would eliminate the fiscal note on that.

STORER: OK, thank you. And I guess just one additional question. So, given it's a "may," not a "shall," does-- is-- does that necessarily guarantee that at some point those costs wouldn't be incurred by the state?

FREDRICKSON: So, that is exactly why we made it a-- not a "shall." We talked about this actually in the executive session. So, we didn't want to have any adverse response. So, if the

managed care organizations, for example, were to not absorb those costs, or were to go different from what their prior practices would be, we wanted to allow them that flexibility, if that was going to increase, potentially, a General Fund expenditure, to avoid that.

STORER: OK. Thank you, Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Sure.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Storer and Senator Fredrickson. Senator Kauth, you're recognized to speak.

KAUTH: Thank you, Mr. President. So, I, I just have fundamental problems with this. When we say that someone is getting a service, but someone else, the taxpayers, are paying for the whole thing. This is removing-- a co-pay is kind of a way of saying I've got skin in the game; I, I understand that this is a, a partnership between me and the insurance company, or me and the state Medicaid. If we remove the skin in the game, are our costs going to go up if people say, hey, I don't even have a co-pay, I can just show up at the doctor whenever I want? So, I, I have real concerns with not expecting people to at least try, to at least have some sort of payment that they are making for their own health and well-being. I think when we start removing responsibilities from people, we create dependency, and I just-- I have really, really big concerns with that. And looking at this long-term-- so, a managed care organization, when-- it sounds great when they say they'll pick up the cost, but they're charging the state. So, this is, this is kind of a roundabout way of saying eventually taxpayers are going to be on the hook, because eventually, this will become something that is expected. It will be something that is very, very hard to break if we say, oh, gosh, yeah, we really should expect people to pay for even a little bit of their health care. Once you create a dependency, it becomes an entitlement, and you try to remove it or change it, and it-- it's incredibly difficult to do. And that means, at some point in time, the taxpayers will be on the hook to pay even more for someone else's health care. And I think this is, this is one of those real slippery slopes that we really need to pay attention to, when, when we remove people's ability to contribute and responsibility to contribute to their own health care. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Kauth. Senator Raybould, you're recognized to speak.

RAYBOULD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I'm looking at the fiscal note, but it also says in the fiscal note, following the passage of One Big Beautiful Bill, DHHS began planning for re-implementation of cost-sharing in Medicaid beginning on July 1, 2027. So, I'm hoping Senator Fredrickson would yield to a question.

DORN: Senator Fredrickson, would you yield to a question?

FREDRICKSON: Yes. Yes, of course.

RAYBOULD: Thank you, Senator Fredrickson. So, the way I'm reading it is that we are-- the state of Nebraska is required, because of the, the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill, that we have to have this implemented in our state by July 1 of 2027. Do I have the correct understanding of that?

FREDRICKSON: So, the-- with the passage of H.R. 1-- so, the federal law does require all states to do that by January 1, 2027. Nebraska has come out and indicated that the department intends to implement these requirements sooner than that. So, they are looking to do-- we're looking to be the first state to implement some of these requirements. I don't know if that answers your question or not, but the, the, the department is planning to implement these beforehand.

RAYBOULD: OK, so we will be participating in the cost-sharing that we used to participate in.

FREDRICKSON: Yes. So-- and what this bill would do is that-- so, we will still have co-pays or cost-sharing. I know that there was a comment made earlier when you take away a co-pay or a cost-sharing that that might disincentivize an individual. We still will have co-pays and cost-sharing as required by federal law. With this, we would just go back to what we previously did as a department, which was allow for MCOs to cover those costs, should they choose. This doesn't require the MCOs to cover them; it just allows them to cover them, should they chose to do that.

RAYBOULD: OK. And then, just to, to confirm that with the adoption of AM2991, that would remove the fiscal note completely.

FREDRICKSON: Yes.

RAYBOULD: OK. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Raybould and Senator Fredrickson. Senator Clements, you're recognized to speak.

CLEMENTS: Thank you Mr. President. I stand in opposition of AM2991, in opposition of, of LB929. Now, the committee amendment attempts to make it a little bit better, but it still opens the door and puts a "may" instead of a "shall," and it's so easy in another year just to change that "may" back to a "shall," and it's creating a precedent that I'd rather not do. I'd prefer just follow the federal guidelines. That's what we do in Medicaid, follow the federal guidelines. And we apply for waivers, if we want to do something a little bit different and more benefits, and our benefits are already pretty generous. In Medicaid, we have way more than the basic requirements. Last year, our Medicaid expenses was $1.012 billion. This first year of our budget, $1.083 million, so a $71 million increase that we're already absorbing in the 2026 fiscal year. And the-- so, the benefits that the taxpayers are paying is well over a billion dollars now, and I think asking for a modest co-pay of the federal guidelines is a reasonable thing to do, and I'd prefer that we just stick with the federal guidelines and not expand them at this time. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Clements. Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak.

HALLSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President. I just have a couple of make-up comments, and then maybe Senator Fredrickson can submit to a question, or respond to, to my comments here. When, when I look at the original bill and the language from the fiscal note, the original bill said that we're not required for the deductions for cost sharing, including deductibles, co-insurance, co-payments, similar charges unless required, unless required by federal law, and DHHS has not been implementing cost-sharing. And the federal requirement for cost-sharing, according to the fiscal note, appears to kick in on October 1, 2028. If I was reading the fiscal note and the bill correctly, we were not previously implementing cost-sharing, but we were going to jump the gun, so-to-say, a year early, and that's why we were going to have some cost savings, because we would reinstitute cost-sharing in '27 rather than waiting until '28. And the amendment says it permits a managed care organization to pay as allowed under federal law. And I, I just would ask Senator Fredrickson if he can clarify-- the original bill, and I think the federal law says that cost-sharing is required. And what is the distinction? Is it wordsmithing? What is the distinction between saying we're going to permit MCOs to pay as

allowed under federal law when I read it to say that there is a required cost-sharing? If Senator Fredrickson could please clarify that.

DORN: Senator Fredrickson, would you yield to a question?

FREDRICKSON: Yes, yes of course. So, thank you, Senator Hallstrom, for your, for your question. So, what this bill will do is it will not eliminate the cost-sharing at all. So, even if this bill passes, we still will have the cost-sharing component as required by H.R. 1. All this simply does is says that MCOs, should they choose, are allowed to pay for that cost-sharing component. So, the cost-sharing still does exist. It's just up to the MCO whether or not they would cover that.

HALLSTROM: So, it's required under federal law, but we're basically going to negate that if the MCO chooses, pursuant to the permissible nature of this bill. And if they so choose, which I take it, if I'm interpreting this correctly, would be consistent with our current DHHS position of not implementing cost-sharing, where does that money come from? Doesn't, doesn't the state have costs or expenses associated with the, the cost of the MCO running, or what, what-- where would that money come from, and would it have any impact on general funds if the MCA [SIC] does, in fact, elect to do that pursuant to the permissive nature of the, of the committee amendment?

FREDRICKSON: Yes. So, Senator Hallstrom, you, you are correct that this does reflect our current practice. And so, part of the reason we do have this as a current practice-- I met with the department, and that is the white-copy amendment AM2991. When we did have cost-sharing, or we did go to that as a department previously, they actually eliminated that out of choice because of the administrative burden that it had on the department. It was much more easy to have the MCOs have the autonomy to choose to cover that. They found that it was more efficient in terms of implementing all this. So, the-- again, the department is supportive of the white-copy amendment. It gives the MCOs that autonomy to do so, and that's, that's, that's what our current practice is. Again, when we chose as a state to implement what H.R. 1 is requiring us to implement, it ended up being a big hassle for the administration of, of the reimbursements.

HALLSTROM: So, if, if we-- if the MCA-- MCO chooses to cover those co-pays, and the fiscal note said it's about $2 million a

year state cost to do so, that would effect indirectly be a-- the amount of the cost, less the administrative savings?

FREDRICKSON: Yes, so that's a good question. So, the fiscal note was actually really interesting, and I would encourage colleagues to watch the hearing about that, because it's a bit-- it's, it's, you know, this is not a saving to the state. This is an anticipated amount of money that, should we start charging people out of pocket, that we may be bringing in as a state. So, it's not as though this is an--

DORN: Time, Senators. Thank you, Senator Hallstrom and Senator Fredrickson. Senator Hallstrom, you're recognized to speak, as you are next in the queue.

HALLSTROM: Yeah, and thank you, Senator Fredrickson. Maybe we can just finish up here real, real quickly with your, with you thoughts. And I, I guess I'm trying to determine in my mind how-- if it's a $2 million fiscal note, that's a cost to the state; whether it's a savings or a cost, that goes to the bottom line. Am I, am I missing that?

FREDRICKSON: Can I yield? Yes? OK. So, so yes. What I think-- where I think where might be a misunderstanding here is that, again, this is an-- so, in order for the state the-- so, again, a couple things. One is, the white-copy amendment eliminates the fiscal note. So, the fiscal note's on the original bill, which is no longer going to be relevant to the amended copy. We will have an updated fiscal note, but I have messages from the department themselves that say they anticipate that that will go to zero should this amendment be adopted. Now, in theory, if that original bill did pass with that fiscal note, in order for those cost savings to be realized by the state, it would require people to fall, essentially, through the cracks here, right? Like, that, that is an anticipated cost savings that say, OK, a Nebraskan who's currently covered or a Nebraska who-- a Nebraskan who currently has health care through this program is no longer receiving that. So, yes, the state might be saving money, quote-unquote, but that Nebraskan is still going to have health care needs, and they will likely be putting off their typical routine visits and showing up in the emergency later on. So, at some point, that money will be spent, whether that's through the hospital or the provider who has to absorb those costs, or if that's the state as well, if that person does go back on Medicaid and has those retroactive payments that are oftentimes a lot higher because of delayed care, or, or, or, or

care that has been put off. And so, again, when we historically did this, we went back to the MCOs covering this, because, in the long run, we saw that it was more expensive to the state for Nebraskans to put off care as opposed to being proactive with care.

HALLSTROM: OK. Thank you for the detail, Senator Fredrickson.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Hallstrom and Senator Fredrickson. Senator Hardin, you're recognized to speak.

HARDIN: Just getting up to say kind of a ditto to what Senator Fredrickson was sharing. This bill's been on a bit of a journey, so it came in, and it did originally have a $2 million fiscal note. The fact is that it's a bit complicated. I know you're shocked that something in Health and Human Services could be complicated, but it literally gets into the weeds where there are federal dollars that can apply for the MCOs if they will essentially cover these expenses. So, does that put pressure internally on it, even though we've neutralized the direct cost of the $2 million through the amendment? Yes, it does apply an internal pressure on the plan. Personally, I do agree with Senator Kauth. I think all of us in all systems apply and work better when we all have skin in the game. And so, if there is a co-pay that people can participate in, I think that results in a healthier policy for the MCO in the long run than do lower or no out-of-pocket costs. And having worked in the insurance world for a long time and with actuaries, I can promise that's how it works when you design insurance plans, because I've done a lot of that kind of thing myself. So, that's my sense of it. And so, hopefully that helps clarify some of what's going on with this bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Hardin. Senator Ballard, you're recognized to speak.

BALLARD: Thank you, Mr. President. Chairman Hardin took most of my comments, but I just want to be brief and take a moment to, to thank Senator Fredrickson for his work on this. He, he compromised, compromised LB929 down to a, to a workable solution, which is why I voted it out of committee. In some of my conversations with the MCOs, they said we, we already have the option to do this; this is just providing a little more guidance. As I spoke about yesterday with some of the work requirements with the, the passage of H.R. 1, a lot of the providers and MCOs need more guidance when talking about some of

these issues. And so, that's why I voted LB929 out of committee, and do plan to support it on the floor. And just want to thank Senator Fredrickson for his work on this. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Ballard. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Fredrickson, you're allowed-- oh, excuse me, Senator Hardin, you're recognized to close, and Senator Hardin waives. Colleagues, the question before the body is the passage of AM2991. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 8 nays on adoption of the amendment, Mr. President.

DORN: AM2991 is adopted. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Fredrickson, you're allowed to close on LB929.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, colleagues, for the adoption of the committee amendment. Like I said earlier, that will eliminate the fiscal note here. I appreciate the discussion that was had on the bill. That is also why we wanted to ensure that the language in here was permissive for the MCOs, not required. I also want to just reiterate that this is our current practice as a state, what we currently do. And part of the reason that the MCOs have made the business decision to cover those co-payments is because they themselves understand and realize that it's better for when their patients are in care, proactively going to their appointments because, again, long-term thinking, that is a-- that's a cost saving, that's business saving. When, when patients are healthy, when they are seeing their providers, they are less likely to put off treatment and ensure that they are on top of their medical issues and medical concerns. So, I appreciate the favorable consideration of the underlying bill as amended. Also want to just thank the committee for their work on this bill. As Chair Hardin had mentioned, it was-- we had some loops and roller coasters, but we, we-- I think we got to a landing place here that we can move forward with and I'll be happy with. So, I urge your favorable consideration. Thank you.

DORN: Thank you, Senator Fredrickson. Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of LB929. All those of favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 28 ayes, 9 nays on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

DORN: LB929 advances. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, next bill: General File, LB962 introduced by Senator McKinney. Senator McKinney would move to indefinitely postpone the bill pursuant to Rule 6, Section 3(f). Mr. President, it's my understanding Senator McKinney would withdraw that motion.

DORN: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, General File, LB962 introduced by Senator McKinney. It's a bill for an act relating to public health and welfare; it adopts the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act; provides an operative date; and declares an emergency. The bill was read for the first time on January 12 of this year and referred to the Judiciary Committee; that committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments.

DORN: Senator McKinney, you're recognized to open.

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning, colleagues. Today, we're discussing LB962, the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act, which is my priority bill. This bill is rooted in a simple reality: the moment a young person exits a juvenile facility, probation, supervision, or residential placement is one of the most critical windows in determining whether they stabilize or recycle back into the system. Too often, our system focuses on custody and supervision, but under-invests in transition planning. Youth leave without stable housing, without identification documents, without employment pathways, and without coordinated behavioral supports. That gap is where recidivism grows. LB962 establishes a coordinated, structured reentry model that begins planning at admission, not at the point of release. Each youth will receive an individualized transition plan that addresses housing stabilization, school reentry or educational advancement, employment planning, Medicaid continuity, and family engagement. The bill also incorporates credible messenger mentoring; individuals with lived experience who are trained to provide guidance and accountability. Research consistently shows that mentorship and structured aftercare reduces recidivism and improves workforce outcomes. Importantly, the bill leverages the

extension-- existing agency infrastructures and aligns current responsibilities across the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Juvenile Services, Office of Probation Administration, Division of Rehabilitation, and the Department of Labor. It does not require a new General Fund appropriation. Instead, agencies can absorb these changes within existing resources. At its core, LB962 recognizes that public safety is strengthened when young people existing in the system have a real plan, a place to live, a pathway to work, and a structured support during their most vulnerable transition periods. The bill also builds on the work that we advanced last year through my other priority bill, LB11-- LB48, which established a family resource and juvenile assessment center pilot program. That effort highlighted the need for stronger coordination between agencies and community partners, work that the Department of Health Human Services is actively moving forward today. Together, these efforts strengthen our system, reduce recidivism, and limit unnecessary system involvement. If we want different outcomes, we must build different systems. LB962 was voted out of the Judiciary Committee on an 8-0 vote. The amendments also address the fiscal concerns of DHHS and the Supreme Court, and I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of the bill. And I'm hans-- happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

DORN: As the Clerk has stated, there are committee amendments. Senator Bosn, you're recognized to open.

BOSN: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. AM2683 is the Judiciary Committee amendment to LB962. The amendment adopts a white-copy version of the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act. It restructures the bill to narrow the population eligible for services, and to simplify the program. In doing so, it refocuses the bill on transition planning and coordination using existing agency and staff resources. AM2683 was developed in collaboration with the courts to address concerns raised by them at the hearing, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska Department of Education. It is also my understanding that these changes will eliminate the bill's fiscal impact for the next round of debate. I want to compliment Senator McKinney on his willingness to work with the individuals who came in. I believe they actually only came in in a neutral capacity, because I think the concept was supported, but wanted to have some work around it to try to improve the fiscal note, which initially, I think, was $15 million. I believe this amendment reflects a good compromise, improving the bill and creating a more workable

framework for accomplishing the underlying goal of LB962, which is to better support youth transitioning from detention or treatment back into the community by ensuring transition planning begins at the outset of placement. The goal here is to have a warm handoff, and youth who are successful in placements that are out-of-home, setting them up to be successful when they return home. Senator McKinney has two amendments to AM2683; both are friendly amendments, as he indicated, requested by the Department of Health and Human Services to make clarifications to support effective implementation, maintain alignment across systems, and ensure the bill can be operationalized within existing resources as intended. Colleagues, I ask for your support on AM2683, as well as the next two amendments that you will see. Colleagues, I would also note for the record, this bill had no opposition testimony at the hearing, and did come out of committee 8-0. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Mr. Clerk, for a motion.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator McKinney, I have MO512 and MO513, both with notes that you'd withdraw.

DORN: So ordered.

CLERK: In that case, Mr. President, Senator McKinney would move to amend with AM3065.

DORN: Senator McKinney, you're recognized to open.

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. AM3065 is an amendment at the request of DHHS to clarify responsibility with DHHS, probation, and also limit obligations after youth leave custody and supervision, and changes language from out-of-home to congregate care to better fit the, the overall vision of the bill, and changes implementation requirements from "shalls" to "mays," which helped, you know, improve the bill and the impact fiscally. It just gives more clarity for agencies, but further narrows the scope for long-term support, and I would ask for your green vote.

DORN: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator McKinney, you're recognized to close. Senator McKinney waives. Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of AM3065. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 36 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the amendment, Mr. President.

DORN: AM3065 advances. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator McKinney would move to amend with FA1152.

DORN: Senator McKinney, you're recognized to open.

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. FA1152 is a small language change striking "upon beginning" to "at admission to." It's just a small change that the department had requested to make the language a little more clear and not wonky, and kind of confusion. So, we're striking "upon beginning" on page 3, line 1, and adding "admission to" just to further clarify the bill. Thank you.

DORN: Thank you, Mr.-- Senator McKinney. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator McKinney, you're recognized to close, and Senator McKinney waives. Colleagues, the question before the body is advancement of FA1152. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 37 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of FA1152.

DORN: FA1152 advances. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator Bosn, you're recognized to close. Senator Bosn waives. Colleagues, the question before the body is the advancement of AM-- oh, the adoption of AM2683. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 43 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the amendment, Mr. President.

DORN: AM2683 is adopted. Seeing no one else in the queue, Senator McKinney, you're recognized to close on LB962.

McKINNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, LB962 is an effort to improve the process of when youth are leaving our systems, to make sure they have better plans and better supports to make sure they don't return back to our systems. I appreciate the Department of Health and Human Services and also Juvenile Services for assisting with the amendments to improve the bill. Thank you to the Judiciary "Committitee" for voting this out, and I ask for your support and a green vote. Thank you.

DORN: Thank you, Senator McKinney. Seeing no one else in the queue, colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of LB-- the advancement of LB962. All those in favor, vote aye; all those opposed, vote nay. Mr. Clerk, record.

CLERK: 41 ayes, 0 nays on advancement of the bill, Mr. President.

DORN: LB962 is advanced. Mr. Speaker, for announcements.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. President. So, at this point in the session, I have communicated to everyone that still has priority bills on General File that would like to see them scheduled that, if there's opposition that will require 33 votes at cloture, they need to assure me that those votes are there for me to schedule, and that's obviously given the time constraints that we have. With regards to LR298CA, yesterday, Senator Brandt assured me that he had 33 votes, and today, he has informed me that he no longer has those 33 votes. So, to be fair to everyone in this situation with their priorities, we will be passing over LR298CA. With that, we've completed our agenda for the day. Thank you for the long hours this week. We accomplished much. Please rest up for the last few days of our session. Thank you, Mr. President.

DORN: Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Speaker Arch would move to adjourn the body until Tuesday, April 7 at 9:00 a.m.

DORN: Colleagues, you heard the motion. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed, say nay. The body is adjourned.