

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee February 12, 2026
Rough Draft

SANDERS: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. I am Senator Rita Sanders from Bellevue, representing the 45th Legislative District, and I serve as your chair for this committee. The purpose of the public hearing is an information-gathering endeavor in which senators on the committee are seeking information about the proposed legislation that they do not know, or do not have thought about. It allows individuals representing themselves or a group to share their unique perspective on a proposed measure. It also serves the record about the proposal for future historical and legal purposes. A key component of the process is the ability for senators to engage directly with testifiers, to ask questions and elicit clarification on information provided. The committee will take up the bills in the order posted. If you are planning to testify today, please fill out one of the green testifier sheets for each of the bills that you are testifying on. These are on the table on the back of the room. Be sure to print it clearly and fill it out completely. When it is your turn, please come forward to testify. Give the testifier sheet to the page or to the committee clerk. If you do not wish to testify but would like to indicate your position on a bill, there are also yellow sign-in sheets back on the table for each bill. These sheets will be included as an exhibit in the official hearing record. When you come up to testify, please speak clearly into the microphone, tell us your name, and spell your first and last name to ensure we get an accurate record. We will begin each bill hearing today with the introducer's opening statement, followed by proponents of the bill, then opponents, and finally by anyone speaking in a neutral capacity. We will finish with a closing statement by the introducer, if you wish to give one. We'll be using a three-minute light system for all testifiers. When you begin your testimony, the light on the table will be green. When the yellow light comes on, you have one minute remaining, and the red light indicates your time has ended and an audible alarm will sound. Questions from the committee may follow. Also, committee members may come up-- come and go during the hearing; this has nothing to do with the importance of the bill being heard, it's just part of the process, as senators may have bills to introduce in other committees. A few final items to facilitate today's hearing. If you have handouts or copies of the testimony, please bring up at least 12 copies and give them to the page. If you do not have enough copies, the page will make sufficient copies for you. Please note that thumb drives, CDs, DVDs, oversized documents, books, lists of signatures, and similar will not be accepted as exhibits for the record. Please silence or turn off your cell

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee February 12, 2026
Rough Draft

phones. You may see committee members using their electronic devices to access more information. Verbal outbursts or applause are not permitted in the hearing room; such behavior may be cause for you to be asked to leave the hearing. Finally, committee procedures for all committees state that written position comments on a bill to be included in the record must be submitted by 8:00 a.m. the day of the hearing. The only acceptable method of submission is via the legislator's [SIC] website at legislature.nebraska.gov. Written position letters will be included in the official hearing record, but only those testifying in person before the committee will be included on the committee statement. I will now have the committee members, starting with my far right, introduce themselves. That's you, Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Good afternoon, good afternoon everybody. Dunixi Guereca. I represent Legislative District 7, which is downtown and south Omaha.

LONOWSKI: Good afternoon. I'm Senator Dan Lonowski from Hastings, District 33, which is Adams County, Kearney County, and rural Phelps County.

WORDEKEMPER: Dave Wordekemper, District 15, Dodge County, western Douglas County.

F. MEYER: Senator Fred Meyer, District 41 from St. Paul, and represent five complete counties and parts of two others in central Nebraska.

HUNT: Megan Hunt, and I represent District 8 in midtown Omaha.

SANDERS: We do also have Senator Bob Andersen who's not here currently, he's in another committee. He is the Vice Chair of this committee. We have two pages with us today. They are Luke Perry from Gretna who's a freshman at UNO and majoring in history and political science, and we also have Grace Harper from Loveland, Colorado who's a junior at UNL and majoring in political science. Thank you. Thank you for your assistance today, and we'll now begin our hearing on LR293. Welcome, Senator Kauth.

KAUTH: Good afternoon, Chairwoman Sanders, and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Committee. My name is Kathleen Kauth, K-a-t-h-l-e-e-n K-a-u-t-h, and I represent LD 31, the

Millard area. Thank you for your time today. We are here to request a legislative resolution, LR293, to submit to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, and each member of the Nebraska Congressional delegation. This LR will encourage the federal government to support the Veterans National Traumatic Injury Treatment Act from 2023, which is H.R. 3649, which would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to furnish hyperbaric oxygen therapy to veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder. Hyperbaric oxygen treatment, HBOT, is FDA-approved to treat a range of serious medical conditions where increased oxygen levels can promote healing or counteract life-threatening effects. Here are a breakdown of its approved uses. Decompression sickness in divers, air or gas embolism, carbon monoxide poisoning, gas gangrene, crush injuries and compartment syndrome, severe anemia when transfusions are not possible, radiation injuries, such as after cancer treatments, chronic wounds, like diabetic foot ulcers, severe burns and frostbite, sudden "sensoneural" hearing loss, central retinal artery occlusion, necrotizing soft tissue infections, refractory osteomyelitis, comprised skin grafts and flaps, and intracranial abscesses. These treatments are typically delivered in pressurized chambers where patients breathe 100% oxygen, allowing the body to absorb and utilize oxygen more efficiently for healing. As an alternative to drugs, HBOT simulates brain wound healing, and can reverse soft tissue and neurocognitive damage. This treatment allows most patients to experience rapid recovery of cognitive and neurological functioning without surgery or drugs. Numerous studies have been published scientifically proving HBOT is a safe and effective treatment option for brain wounds. To date, HBOT is not authorized for traumatic brain injury or PTSD. The goal is to get the federal government to move on their house resolution for the pilot program with the ultimate goal of asking the FDA to approve HBOT for treatment for TBI and PTSD. We have retired Senior Master Sergeant USAF Dale Lutzen, who initially contacted me about this, will be speaking to you about HBOT and its importance to veterans, and Dr. Cooper from UNMC, who runs the UNMC hyperbaric oxygen treatment department, may also-- or, is also here to discuss the benefits. With that, I'm open for questions.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Kauth. Are there any questions from the committee? I see none.

KAUTH: Thank you. And I have to get to Revenue.

SANDERS: Yep. Thank you.

KAUTH: Thank you very much.

SANDERS: We'll now ask for-- good afternoon. Welcome.

DALE LUTZEN: Say again, ma'am?

SANDERS: I said good afternoon. Welcome.

DALE LUTZEN: Good afternoon. My name is-- good afternoon, Chairman-- Chairwoman Sanders and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name's Dale Lutzen, I live in Missouri. I'm a retired senior master sergeant in the United States Air Force--

SANDERS: Excuse me.

DALE LUTZEN: And I am an advocate for the Air Force Sergeants Association and the Treat Now Coalition.

SANDERS: Excuse me. Before you--

DALE LUTZEN: And I'm also a former Bellevue-- yes ma'am?

SANDERS: Excuse me. Before you get any further, I need you to say and spell your first and last name.

DALE LUTZEN: I'm sorry. My name's Dale Lutzen, D-a-l-e, Lutzen, L-u-t-z-e-n.

SANDERS: Thank you.

DALE LUTZEN: LR293 is important because it recognizes a reality many veterans face every day. Traumatic brain injury is a physical injury to the brain, and our current system too often treats symptoms rather than repairing the injury. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is an FDA-cleared medical therapy used to treat multiple neurological and wound-healing conditions. Although it's used for TBI and PTSD, is considered off-label, it is neither experimental nor untested. Currently, there are 28 published clinical trials demonstrating HBOT's safety and its ability to improve cognitive function, sleep, mood regulation,

and overall quality of life in patients with traumatic brain injury. As early as 1990, the U.S. military Textbook of Military Medicine recognized and recommended HBOT for brain injury and related conditions. To date, 13 states have enacted legislation authorizing or supporting the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy for veterans, reflecting growing part-- part-- bipartisan recognition of its potential value in treating traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, four states have adopted a resolution urging the United States Congress to enact and fund federal HBOT program for veterans with TBI, PTSD, signaling that this issue is no longer confined to individual states. And, as of 2026 legislative cycle, an additional 10 states have introduced HBOT-related legislation underscoring a rapidly-expanding national consensus that warrants seriously consideration at both the state and federal level. LB-- LR293 gives Nebraska the opportunity to evaluate HBOT [INAUDIBLE] through a measured, data-driven approach. I, I would like to thank-- sincerely thank the sponsor of LR293, Senator Kauth, and the members of this Legislature for advancing this resolution. Introducing a measure like this requires foresight and willingness to confront, confront difficult issues affecting our veteran community. By formally examining HBOT oxygen therapy at the state level, Nebraska is contributing to a broader national conversation about how we care for a veteran with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress. The science is mature, and the safety profile is established. LR290C [SIC] provides Nebraska with a responsible path forward. And thank you for your time and commitment to Nebraska veterans.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony. Let's see if there are any questions from the committee. Senator Wordekemper.

DALE LUTZEN: Yes, sir.

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you for being here. Is this treatment being used in the general population, regular citizens, and just not in veterans?

DALE LUTZEN: It-- OK, to treat hyper-- to treat traumatic brain injury and PTSD, it's not being used in the general population because it's not FDA approved, it's on the-- OK? But in a veteran community, like in Missouri, we have a facility that is actually treating veterans free of charge, so that's a very positive thing. So, it is being used throughout the United States to treat veterans, and, and if other people have a

traumatic brain injury, in this clinic-- like North Carolina treats anybody and everybody that has a traumatic brain injury. So yes, it's, it's being used everywhere.

WORDEKEMPER: And there's probably data that says that it's a good thing to use.

DALE LUTZEN: Correct. I have 28 clinical trials that, that says that.

WORDEKEMPER: OK. Thank you.

SANDERS: Senator Meyer.

F. MEYER: I guess I was-- wasn't paying attention. Is there a following testifier that's a doctor? OK, I'll wait and ask him the question.

DALE LUTZEN: OK. Cool.

F. MEYER: Thank you.

SANDERS: I have, I have a question.

DALE LUTZEN: Yes, ma'am.

SANDERS: Have there, have there shown any negative effects of being treated?

DALE LUTZEN: I think the only negative thing would be if you-- and the doctor could probably answer that a little better. But I noticed when I went through, if I-- my sinuses would, would get triggered. I, I would have to make sure that I've taken my sinus medication to open the airways. But other than-- I have not experienced anything negative about it.

SANDERS: Pretty minor? Thank you for your testimony.

DALE LUTZEN: Thank you.

SANDERS: I didn't see any other questions. Thank you. Any other proponents? Good afternoon. Welcome.

JEFFREY COOPER: Good afternoon. Thanks for the invitation. I wanted to talk about both the, the resolution and hyperbaric oxygen therapy for traumatic brain injury and--

SANDERS: If I can get you to--

JEFFREY COOPER: --post-traumatic stress disorder. Pardon?

SANDERS: If I can get you to say your--

JEFFREY COOPER: Yes.

SANDERS: --and spell your first and last name.

JEFFREY COOPER: Yeah. My name is Jeffrey Cooper, it's J-e-f-f-r-e-y C-o-o-p-e-r. I'm a board-certified emergency physician and one of the hyperbaric medicine directors at Nebraska Medicine and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. However, my testimony today is my professional opinion; it does not represent that of the university system or Nebraska Medicine. My opinion on this matter is that both PTSD and traumatic brain injury may benefit from hyperbaric oxygen therapy, but that this needs to be done within a research protocol as it's still an emerging and in somewhat experimental therapy. The Department of Defense sponsored four major clinical trials investigating hyperbaric oxygen for U.S. service members with persistent brain injury issues after traumatic brain injury, and despite small sample sizes, the 40-session course of hyperbaric oxygen reduced some brain injury complaints. There were a number of people, though, that regressed by one year, and due to small sample size, efficacy was not really demonstrated. Unfortunately, none of these studies were large enough to demonstrate good efficacy, and the DOD ended up turning down recommendations to continue this research for the phase three trial that would have been large-scale, randomized, and able to determine efficacy, superiority, and to monitor side-effects. There's a Dr. Efrati in Israel; he has completed remarkable research in this field, and he currently uses longer courses of hyperbaric oxygen with a higher treatment dose than the DOD studies did. And this, along with physical, occupational, and psychological therapies, he's dis-- demonstrated robust and durable improvements. I think that, given the need of so many patients with these kind of issues, that a phase three efficacy trial would be cost- and time-prohibitive. However, I, I think a multi-center, unblinded, registry-type trial would be the appropriate next step. In this

way, those that are suffering from PTSD and traumatic brain injury would receive treatment within a research protocol, and the data looking at efficacy and safety would be pooled across multiple centers. Treating those with PTSD in particular requires robust clinical services. Dr. Efrati noted that patients would actually worsen during their course of hyperbaric oxygen as painful-- painfully suppressed memories would arise; these patients need substantial psychological support during that period. It's important to remember that while this is incredibly promising, it's not without risk. It, it needs to be highly regulated and conducted by trained individuals. Two fatal hyperbaric oxygen events last year highlighted issues with inadequate regulation, supervision, training, and adherence to established safety protocols. I see I'm out of time, but I have a few more words.

SANDERS: If you have more information, Dr. Cooper, please--

JEFFREY COOPER: I'm sorry?

SANDERS: If you have more information, please continue.

JEFFREY COOPER: Yeah, I'd like to just finish it, if that-- just another paragraph or two. I belong to the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society, which accredits hyperbaric facilities. That society and myself support this Veterans National Traumatic Brain Injury Treatment Act that's referred to in this resolution, however, with these caveats: that we need to restrict eligible devices to FDA-approved chambers meeting safety standards, explicitly excluding low-pressure systems unsuitable for this kind of treatment; that we should be requiring physicians with approved training or board certification to be supervising these; that-- there's been an issue with unapproved chambers and foreign distributors evading FDA oversight, that this needs to be looked at or addressed with the-- with this national bill; and that we need to make sure that this is all done under IRB-approved, transparent, you know, peer-reviewed research protocols; and that should be collaborating with veterans, providers, and the public about safe hyperbaric practices, countering misinformation that's being pushed out to the public. Thanks.

SANDERS: Thank you, Dr. Cooper, for your testimony. I need to confirm. Is your testimony proponent, opponent, or neutral?

JEFFREY COOPER: I would say neutral, and, and that's what I put down on my green sheet, only in that I think it needs to be amended somewhat, as, as noted.

SANDERS: I'll make note of that. Thank you.

JEFFREY COOPER: Thank you.

SANDERS: See if there's any questions. Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, doctor, for being here, for your testimony. The caveats you, you highlighted, I think, made a lot of sense. To your understanding-- because this-- you know, obviously, it's, it's a federal law, and federal action needs to happen. This resolution is only encouraging the passage of, of said law. To your understanding, are the caveats that you laid out-- are they incorporated in the federal bill? Or is it something that you and your colleagues believe should be added to the federal law to strengthen it?

JEFFREY COOPER: Add it-- added to it. They are not there currently.

GUERECA: Thank you, sir.

SANDERS: See if there are any other questions. I, I do have one question.

JEFFREY COOPER: Ma'am?

SANDERS: If this is successful, would this also be something stroke patients could also-- is that considered under traumatic brain injury? [INAUDIBLE]

JEFFREY COOPER: Potentially. There needs to be more research on that. The, the research that's been done so far in stroke has not been very positive.

SANDERS: OK. I think there are no other questions. Thank you for your neutral testimony. Thank you, Dr. Cooper. Are there any other proponents on LR293? Any opponents on LR293? Any neutral testimony on LR293? See none. Position comments for the hearing record: 2 proponents, 0 opponents, and 0 neutral. And there is no one here to close, so we'll go ahead and close the hearing on

LR293. We will move forward on LB754. Senator Wordekemper, the floor is yours.

WORDEKEMPER: Good afternoon, Chairwoman Sanders, members of the Government, Military, Veteran Affairs Committee. I'm Senator Dave Wordekemper, D-a-v-e W-o-r-d-e-k-e-m-p-e-r, and I have the honor of representing Legislative District 15. Before I begin, I want to note that the pages are distributing an amendment that strikes Section 2 of the bill. With this amendment, LB754 becomes a very simple, focused piece of legislation that does one thing: it extends the maximum validity period for explosive permits from two years to three years. This change affects three types of permits issued by the Nebraska State Patrol under Section 28-1229: storage permits for explosives materials, use permits for explosive materials, and purchase permits for business enterprises. The rationale here is simple alignment with the federal law. Currently, Nebraska requires these permits to be renewed every two years, while the federal ATF requires permit holders to renew their federal permits every three years. This creates an unnecessary administrative burden where businesses must track and manage permits on different renewal schedules. By aligning our state permits with the three-year federal schedule, we accomplish several things: we reduce the administrative burden on permit holders who are already complying with federal requirements; we reduce the frequency and cost of renewals for legitimate businesses that use explosives; we streamline operations for the Nebraska State Patrol, allowing them to focus resources more effectively; and importantly, we maintain all existing safety standards and eligibility requirements. Nothing about who can get a permit or what they can do with this changes. This is purely a customer service improvement. The same background checks apply, the same training and examination requirements apply, the same safety standards apply. We simply are matching the renewal schedule to what these permit holders are already doing at the federal level. LB754 with the amendment is a common-sense update that benefits permit holders through administrative efficiency and reduced cost while assisting the Nebraska State Patrol in coordinating oversight with federal requirements, all while maintaining our existing safety standards. I want to thank the Nebraska State Patrol for bringing this issue to my attention, and for their continued work in ensuring public safety while supporting legitimate businesses that rely on explosive for their operations. I'll be happy to any-- answer any questions, but there's professionals behind me that would probably be more suited. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Wordekemper. Are there any questions for Senator Wordekemper? See none. You'll stay for closing?

WORDEKEMPER: I'll try.

SANDERS: OK. Any proponents on LB754? Good afternoon. Welcome.

CLAYTON DISHONG: Good afternoon. My name is Sergeant Clayton, C-l-a-y-t-o-n, Dishong, D-i-s-h-o-n-g, and I serve as the bomb squad commander for the Nebraska State Patrol. I'm here today to testify in support of LB754, and would like to thank Senator Wordekemper for his collaboration on this bill. Through my role, I'm responsible for the training, equipment, and operational readiness of all Nebraska State Patrol bomb technicians. I'm also charged with administering explosive permitting statewide, including the review and issuance of permits for the purchase, use, and storage of commercial explosives throughout Nebraska. Excuse me. During my tenure as bomb squad commander, I have identified an area within current Nebraska law that consistently creates challenges for industries that lawfully use explosives. This is regarding the two-year validity period for state explosive permits. The intent of LB754 is to address the explosive permit duration. Under current law, businesses that utilize explosives are required to obtain and renew state explosive permits every two years. This renewal cycle is one year shorter than the corresponding federal permits. As a result, businesses must manage two separate permitting schedules for both their operations and their individual explosive users. By extending the validity of state permits from two years to three years, businesses would be able to align their state and federal permits on the same renewal schedule, reducing unnecessary administrative burden. From the Nebraska State Patrol's perspective, each permit renewal requires personnel to send renewal notices, receive and process applications, enter records, conduct background checks, complete final reviews, and, in the case of storage permits, perform a physical inspection of the storage facilities. Extending permit validity would reduce the frequency of these tasks, saving both the state and the permit holders time and resources. For context, during an average two-year period, the Nebraska State Patrol issues approximately 493 user permits, 62 storage permits, and 24 purchase permits. Thank you for your time and consideration today. I'm happy to answer any questions.

SANDERS: Thank you, Captain [SIC] Dishong, for your testimony. See if there are any questions from the committee. Senator Guereca?

GUERECA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for being here. So, I think the, the big question in all of our minds is, is it safe, going from two to three years?

CLAYTON DISHONG: Yes. As the senator mentioned, all of the standards are the same, all the testing is the same. Nothing changes on that level. It is just making it easier for these industries to stay current on all their permits.

GUERECA: Thank you, sir.

SANDERS: Any other questions from any committee members? See none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

CLAYTON DISHONG: Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Any other proponents on LB754? Any opponents on LB754? Any testimony in the neutral on LB754? We'll go ahead and-- Senator Wordekemper, if you'd like to close. Position comments for the hearing record on LB754: there were none.

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you, Chair Sanders and committee. This is probably one of the most difficult things you'll do today, I hope. This, this is simply just a cleanup, like I said, and I'd appreciate the support on this and, and working with the State Patrol. The other agency that's in on this is the State Fire Marshals, and, and we've been in contact, and everybody's on the same page here. And, and I hope we can move this simple cleanup forward. Appreciate your time.

SANDERS: Any questions for Senator Wordekemper? See none. Have a good weekend. Thank you.

WORDEKEMPER: I can leave?

SANDERS: Almost. This closes the hearing on LB754. We'll now open the hearing on LB899. Senator Lonowski.

LONOWSKI: Good afternoon, Chairman Sanders, and members of-- Chairwoman Sanders and members of the Government Committee-- Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. Thank you

for this hearing. For the record, my name is Senator Dan Lonowski, D-a-n L-o-n-o-w-s-k-i, and I represent the 33rd Legislative District. I introduced LB899 to make changes to the Nebraska Engineers and Architects Regulation Act. This legislation was brought to me by the Board of Engineers and Architects. I believe it is important to read the board's mission, which in part reads overseeing the laws and rules which govern the practice of engineering and architecture in this state in order "to safeguard life, health, property, and to promote public welfare." The board has put much work and consideration into LB899. The board takes very seriously its mission to oversee the laws and rules governing the practice of these professions to promote the public welfare. It is the board's intention to present the best legislation for architects and professional engineers in our state. The changes proposed in LB899 are designed to reduce barriers to licensure for professional engineers, to encourage recent graduates to stay and work in Nebraska, and to attract and encourage the same highly-skilled professionals to have the ability to become licensed in Nebraska. The board is confident these changes will maintain the standards needed for practice of these important professions, while also making it easier to attract new design professionals already licensed in other states to have the ability work in Nebraska. Many of the relatively few remaining changes in this bill are technical, editorial in nature, but they serve to make the act more cohesive. Jon Wilbeck, Executive Director of the Nebraska Board of Engineers and Architects, will be testifying next, and he is much more versed in this profession. He can explain the benefits of the proposed changes in greater detail and answer any questions the committee may have. That concludes my opening, and I respectfully ask the committee's consideration for the advancement of LB899. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Lonowski. Are there any questions from the committee? See none. You'll be here to close?

LONOWSKI: Yes, ma'am.

SANDERS: Thank you. Any proponents on LB899?

JON WILBECK: Good afternoon, Senator Sanders, members of the committee. My name is Jon Wilbeck, J-o-n W-i-l-b-e-c-k. I'm the executive director of the Nebraska Board of Engineers and Architects. I'd like to thank the Senator Lonowski for

introducing this bill on behalf of the board, and this bill has the full and unanimous support of the board. I'd like to summarize the minimum requirements for licensure as a professional engineer, as described in the Nebraska Engineers and Architects Regulation Act. To qualify for licensure, individuals must meet basic requirements in education, experience, and examination. First, a candidate must hold an accredited engineering degree or equivalent to meet the education requirement. Second, candidates must gain acceptable experience in the profession. Engineers typically need to demonstrate four years of experience that shows they have taken on-- that their work has taken on more complexity, and they themselves have taken on more responsibility in the-- in their work after graduation. And finally, there are two separate engineering examinations that candidates must pass. The first is the fundamentals of engineering examination, and the second exam tests their knowledge of the principles and practice of engineering in a specific area, such as mechanical, electrical, or structural engineering. The second one is simply referred to as the PE exam. Both exams are national exams written by the National Council of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, or NCEES. The one major change proposed by this bill would allow professional engineer candidates to take their PE exam without needing to apply to our board to be eligible to take it. Currently, there are two eligibility requirements for taking that exam in the act: they have to first pass the fundamentals of engineering exam, and they have to meet the education requirements. These two exam requirements are also requirements for licensure as a professional engineer, and this bill simply moves these two requirements into the professional engineer licensure section. What this means is individuals who want to take this PE exam right now essentially have to apply twice for it, once to our board to take it, and then another to NCEES to register for the exam. The board sees this double approval process as redundant, and this bill remedies this redundancy. I would point out this bill does not change or reduce the rigor of any of the licensure components; all three of those, education, experience, and examination, would still have to be met before we would license a person as a professional engineer. And also, the board will not be losing any revenue. We-- the board changed the application fee for a PE exam admittance to zero five years ago, so we would not be losing any revenue. As Senator Lonowski mentioned, the rest of the changes are housekeeping in nature, and align the act with national architecture and engineering model law. I'll, I'll end by saying this bill hopes to continue the board's goal of reducing unnecessary barriers. Our act was

similarly changed to remove exam approval for the fundamentals exam in 2014, and the architects exam in 2020. That concludes my testimony, and I'd be happy to take questions.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony.

JON WILBECK: Yes.

SANDERS: Are there any questions for Mr. Wilbeck? Senator Wordekemper?

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you for being here. Has the board ever denied anybody from taking the test, or could they?

JON WILBECK: They could, but really, the, the requirements are just-- they're very black-and-white. They either meet the requirements, like, they've, they've either passed the FE and meet the education requirements, or they don't. So, it's really just an up-and-down process.

WORDEKEMPER: OK.

JON WILBECK: So, if they don't qualify, then they don't qualify, so.

WORDEKEMPER: OK. Thank you.

JON WILBECK: It's pretty simple. Yeah.

SANDERS: Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, sir, for being here, and for your testimony. Will the national organization then notify you of any individuals that passed their PE exam?

JON WILBECK: Yes, they, they will. They will. And actually, how we, we hope to set it up is this approval will-- and check will be done at the NCEES level rather than the board level. Again, it's just reducing a step that can already happen. There's just no need for our board to do that.

GUERECA: But you'll still get the notifications of, of the PE exam [INAUDIBLE] in Nebraska.

JON WILBECK: We certainly will. We-- we'll get their notifications, and the nice thing is we'll only get one application from that candidate which will be their license application. So, we'll check it at that point, too.

GUERECA: OK. Thank you, sir.

SANDERS: I see no other questions. Thank you for your testimony.

JON WILBECK: OK. Thank you.

SANDERS: Any other proponents? Welcome.

ERIC OBERT: Good afternoon, Chair Sanders, and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. I am Eric Obert, E-r-i-c O-b-e-r-t. I am here on behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies, ACEC Nebraska, to express our support for LB899. I am a licensed professional engineer with more than 30 years of experience. I serve on the board of directors for, for ACEC Nebraska, and currently the chair of Nebraska ACEC workforce development, and also on the national committee for workforce development. By day, I'm a principal at JEO Consulting Group here in Lincoln, Nebraska. We'd like to thank Senator Lebowski [SIC] for working with the Nebraska Board of Engineers and Architects and introducing this bill. ACEC Nebraska has an excellent relationship with Nebraska Board of Examiners and Architects. As we believe we do-- they do an outstanding job of including the industry in their deliberations and discussions regarding the proposed changes to statutes and regulations. I won't go into the specifics of the bills, as Mr. Wilbeck has covered that for you. I just want to state that ACEC Nebraska supports the proposed changes, as they eliminate the redundancy in process for applying the professional engineering licensure in Nebraska, which helps Nebraska's workforce. Workforce is identified as our top priority at ACEC Nebraska board of directors, and we put a lot of time and attention and resources toward that. I won't go into detail, but the handout that you have has QR codes on the back, on the written testimony, to look at our mentoring programs and all those things we are doing to develop our workforce for the state of Nebraska. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and happy to answer any questions.

SANDERS: Questions for Eric O--

ERIC OBERT: Obert.

SANDERS: Obert. Any questions? See none from the committee.

ERIC OBERT: OK. Thank you.

SANDERS: [INAUDIBLE] easy. Thank you for your testimony. Any other proponents for LB899? Welcome back. Friendly face.

JAN BOSTELMAN: Greetings, Chair Sanders, and committee members. My name is Jan Bostelman, J-a-n B-o-s-t-e-l-m-a-n. I want to thank Senator Lonowski for bringing this bill to the committee. I have been on the Nebraska Board of Engineers and Architects for nine years, and I also serve as the board chair of the legislative committee. I also have served on the vice-- as vice president, and on the board directors for the National Council of Examinations [SIC] for Engineers and Surveyors who you just heard about from John Wilbeck, our executive director, which is the organization that administers the examinations for engineers and surveyors. I am a licensed professional engineer in the state of Nebraska. I speak in support of LB899. While I have served on the board, during my tenure, we have strived to remove as many barriers as possible for licensure but still uphold the health, safety, and welfare of the public above all else. LB899 removes one barrier for the path to licensure for engineers. Currently in statute, if a person has passed the fundamentals of engineering exam and met education requirements, they must still come to the state board to get approval to take the principles of engineering exam, PE exam. This requirement is not in place for the architects; architects are able to direct register to the national exam board for taking their exam. Removing this requirement for engineers, allowing for direct registration, brings our process in line with the architect's examination process. Going to a direct registration model for engineers expedites a candidate's ability to schedule and then sit for the PE exam; it does not bypass the exam process or any other requirement to fulfill what is necessary for a licensure pathway. What the change does involve is allowing a candidate expediency to be able to register and then take the exam without having to wait for the state board to approve this candidate. I can entertain any further questions on this matter. Again, I am in full support of the legislation, and kind regards.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony, Ms. Bostelman. See if there are any questions. Don't run off yet, there might-- no questions. Thank you very much for taking the time.

F. MEYER: Don't know what to ask.

SANDERS: Are there any other proponents for LB899? Any opponents for LB899? Any testimony in the neutral for LB899? See none. Senator Lonowski, if you'd like to close. On the position comments for the hearing record for LB899: 1 proponent, 0 opponents, and 0 in the neutral.

LONOWSKI: Thank you, Chair Sanders and committee members. And thanks to those who testified, and I appreciate Mr. Wilbeck and, and Mr. Obert in working with me on this bill, and I also want to thank Mrs. Bostelman for her testimony, and I respectfully ask that the committee support LB899, and ask consideration of the committee to advance this bill.

SANDERS: Any questions for Senator Lonowski? See none. Have a good weekend. We now close the hearing on LB999.

LONOWSKI: Thank you.