

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
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Health and Human Services Committee  
May 02, 2017

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[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments to the State Board of Health and to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Senators present: Merv Riepe, Chairperson; Steve Erdman, Vice Chairperson; Sue Crawford; Mark Kolterman; Lou Ann Linehan; and Matt Williams. Senators absent: Sara Howard.

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you very much. This is the Health and Human Services Committee and today we're going to have a public hearing for the State Board of Health and one later on, following that one, the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I'd like to have our committee members introduce themselves. We'll start over here with senators and some staff and then we'll work to our page. So, Senator.

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Mark Kolterman: Seward, York, and Polk Counties; District 24.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Steve Erdman, District 47, it's 10 counties in the Nebraska Panhandle.

KRISTEN STIFFLER: Kristen Stiffler, legal counsel.

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Good afternoon. Senator Sue Crawford from LD45, eastern Sarpy County.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Matt Williams, Legislative District 36: Dawson, Custer, and the north part of Buffalo Counties.

SENATOR LINEHAN: Lou Ann Linehan, District 39, which is the western part of Douglas County.

TYLER MAHOOD: Tyler Mahood, committee clerk.

SENATOR RIEPE: And our page back here is a young man named Robert Larsen, who is from Papillion, Nebraska. And he's a junior at UNL. I happen to be Merv Riepe, and I'm serving as the Chairman of Health and Human Services Committee. Today, we're going to start off by talking to Brian Brightman, Dr. Brian Brightman, and we very much appreciate you being here. And it

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seems that he knows Senator Erdman, so we'll work around that. If you would just join us in the chair. [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you very much. If you would just give us your name and spell it, and then tell us a little bit about yourself. [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: (Exhibit 1) Sure. Brian Brightman, B-r-i-a-n B-r-i-g-h-t-m-a-n. I grew up in Fort Dodge, Iowa. My wife is from...her family farmed in Kearney, Nebraska, and we met in school in Chicago at optometry school. So we're both eye doctors and we moved to Lincoln in 2002, got very involved in the state association for optometry. Made a lot of good connections and worked with a private practice in Lincoln, EyeCare Specialties, and a big group practice, which I serve as president and CEO. I've always been very intrigued in the political process and trying to do my part to kind of help medicine in general. And I take that very seriously. So when I was asked to apply for this position, I was...it seemed like the right time to do it, so... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Great. Thank you very much. Now we'll see if the committee members have some questions. Senator Crawford. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. And thank you for being here and thank you for your willingness to serve. Have you participated in any of the 407 processes in your engagement before, or do you have any thoughts you would like to share with us about that? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: You know, I have never actively participated. I have chaired our PAC committee for the last five years and worked more behind the scenes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: So I haven't done any of the work with the 407. I'm familiar with it and the process, but I don't have a strong opinion one way or the other on that subject. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

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BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Are there other questions from the committee members? We may have some more, but we would invite you, if you have questions of us too. And maybe you don't know us that well. Senator Williams. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Senator Riepe. And thank you for being here. You mentioned the 407 process and being in the backgrounds of it. Do you have an opinion on the current process of how the 407 works or how it could be improved? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: From being in the background, I understand it is somewhat restrictive in how to get things put through. And there's been talk about trying to make that process easier with the steps that you go through. I don't have a strong opinion on any ideas to change that process. I would have to study it a little further. But speaking with others in the association and our executive director, that seemed to always be, with optometry as a profession, seemed to be somewhat of a stumbling block at certain points. But yeah, personally, I don't know that much about the detail of that part. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: What's been your experience with Medicaid in the state of Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: So with Medicaid, that it's a constantly changing aspect, especially with vision care, because Medicaid will contract their vision care services aside from their medical. So if you're a medical provider, then every so often they'll say, well, now our vision care is provided through this. So then we, as optometrists, recredential and sign up for those plans. But it's been, as a lot of professions know, it's been more difficult to keep up with that and to offer those services. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Are you able to do...oh, I'm sorry, did I see a hand up? Okay. Are you able to do follow-up on diabetic treatment programs? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: Yes, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. And in two minutes or less, can you tell us what we need to do nationally on healthcare? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: Oh yeah, actually I can. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Good, that's what we've been waiting for. (Laughter). Can we tap-in to Washington (inaudible)? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: No. I like the idea, speaking of healthcare, just I like the intrastate, opening the borders for that to make it more competitive. That's just my personal preference. And you know, that mandate for preexisting conditions I think is helpful because even we have patients that don't want to be told they have glaucoma, because they don't want that in their medical record for future reference. So they even will ask us, well, even if I'm a suspect, do you have to write that down? And of course we do, but that...when they're that nervous about a preexisting condition, that's the one area of healthcare...I really like that they've extended students to be able to stay on...or dependents to stay on until they're 26. So I think there's a lot of good things. I do think more state line crossing things will make it more competitive, kind of like auto insurances, and would help drive down costs. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Senator Williams. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: One quick follow-up question. As an optometrist serving on the State Board of Health, can you tell me about your ability and your willingness to take off your optometry hat when you're serving there? [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: And that's a great question, because as we all know there's what we call turf wars in the eye business, with ophthalmology. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: This committee knows it. [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: Oh, you're familiar. One of the reasons I was picked to be on this...or from Paul Salansky, who served on it previously, was he was looking for somebody that could be open-minded, not agenda-driven, not trying to drive our point through, to try to advance optometry. And I look at this position as just being at the table, being able to give my input. We personally, with our practice, have a phenomenal relationship with ophthalmology. From the legislative side, we see the eye wars, we see the turf wars, but on a day-to-day practice we have a great deal of respect for each other. We know what they're capable of with their advanced training, and we know what we're capable of. And we see patients together constantly, with very good rapport. So it does get a little ugly in the legislative battles, but I'm confident that I can be very objective and will not have an agenda to push optometry further than the rest of the board thinks it should go. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: Very good. Good question. Any other questions? Okay, very good. Thank you very much. We appreciate your coming here and to your willingness to serve. We appreciate that very much. [CONFIRMATION]

BRIAN BRIGHTMAN: Well, thank you. It's an honor. I appreciate you all coming as well. Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. Appreciate it. Are there any proponents, any supporters? Any in opposition before the doctor gets out the door? Seeing none, any in neutral? We want to check on that. None here on that. Okay, that concludes that hearing section for Dr. Brightman. Our second candidate, and this is a candidate for an appointment to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and that is Candice Arteaga. Did I pronounce that right? Okay, thank you. Ms. Arteaga, we would invite you to state your name or give us your name and also then if we can spell that out for the record. And then just tell us about yourself and your interest in the position, the appointment. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): (Exhibit 1) Sure. My name is Candice Arteaga, my first name is C-a-n-d-i-c-e, last name is A-r-t-e-a-g-a. I had grown up in Iowa and I actually moved to Nebraska when I married my husband. He had lived here in Nebraska, his family is here. I'm a stay-at-home mother and I've been a nanny from the time my boys were one years old. Now, the reason I'm interested in joining the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the reason I applied, is I'm interested in...I'm very involved with the deaf community and I am currently the president for the Omaha Association of the Deaf. And I'm just very involved with the deaf community and would like to continue. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you very much. Do we have questions from the committee? Senator Williams, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you, Chairman Riepe. And thank you for being with us today. Could you go into your background a little bit more? Your education and your experience with working with the commission? [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): Sure. Like I said, I was born in Iowa...hold on, I think I missed part of it. Would you tell me the question again, please? [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR WILLIAMS: Yes. Could you go into your experience and your educational background that qualifies you for being a part of the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing? [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): Sure. My education, I had graduated from the Iowa School for the Deaf. And I was there through high school and then I went to Iowa State University for a few years. I did not graduate from that school, but I had instead moved here to Nebraska and got married. I got involved with the Deaf Service Commission of Iowa, DSI, which is in Des Moines. I did an internship there during over the summer. And here in Nebraska, I got involved with community in different ways, such as serving with the Lincoln Association of the Deaf as a secretary, as I now am for the Omaha Association of the Deaf; I am their president. I was a temporary vice president before being the president, and then I was then...became president at the Omaha Association of the Deaf. And I have since been striving, working with others to get captioning on movie theaters and providing more communication access to restaurants and other access needs for the deaf with communication. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Crawford. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. And thank you for being here today. Did you see any examples of efforts in Iowa that you would like to bring to Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): I did. Right now, DSI, they do have interpreter issues. And I look at those and see what those are going on, and then seeing how they improve their system to access that into the interpreters that we have here in Nebraska. And we basically do need more interpreters in the state of Nebraska, and that's a big issue I'd like to address. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Are there other questions? How would you score us on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being high, in the state of Nebraska and our commission? [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): I would say 4. The reason I say that, because there's always room for improvement, there's always issues. So I would definitely say 4. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: So you could promise to help us move towards 5? [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): I can, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Are there any additional questions? Do you have any questions of us?  
[CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): No, I have no questions. Thank you.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Arteaga for being here. We appreciate that very much. Are there other proponents in support of Ms. Arteaga's interest in the appointment? Are there any opponents? Are there any neutrals? Seeing none, that concludes our hearing. Thank you so very much. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDICE ARTEAGA (THROUGH INTERPRETER): Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Members of the committee, thank you very much. We are adjourned.  
[CONFIRMATION]