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SANDERS: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee meeting. I am Rita Sanders. I represent District 45, which is the Bellevue-Offutt community. Thank you. And I think it's the best district in, in the state, so maybe a quick shout-out. The public hearing is your opportunity to be part of the legislative process and to express your position on the proposed legislation before us. Please note that due to the similar topics addressed by the bill, they are to be heard in a combined hearing. This means that you will be able to testify on one or both at the same time. This is to ensure that everyone who wants to testify, we will have the opportunity to do so. If a large crowd is present, there will be an overflow room used-- I believe even down the hall or next door. Individuals who will be testifying will be guaranteed three minutes to present their testimony. Testifiers will come up in the order of rows of seating, starting with the right side of the room. And I believe we will do six down the row, Julie, and six again. And we will go row by row. We will not use our usual procedure of asking for proponents or opponents or neutral. When it is your turn, you will be-- you will announce in your opening which bills you are testifying for and your position. Please complete a green testifier sheet-- I see most of you have one-- for each of the bills you will be testifying for. After you have testified, you will need to exit the room. When the testifiers are all done, we will then call the introducing senator to come up for their closing and remarks. Overflow attendants will be seated in the overflow room and managed by the Sergeant of Arms. If there are testifiers waiting in the overflow room, we will take a break after an hour and allow those in the room to move forward and those in the overflow room to fill the rows in the back of the room. If the hearing runs long, we will take a 30-minute dinner break at 5 p.m. Again, if you're planning to testify today, please fill out one of the green sheets for each of the bills you are testifying. These forms are on the table in the back. Be sure to print clearly and fill the form out completely. When it is your turn to come forward to testify, give the testifier sheet to the page or the committee clerk. If you do not wish to testify but you would like to indicate your position on the bill, there are also yellow sheets in the back of the room to fill out, and these sheets will be included as the exhibit in the official hearing record today. When you come up to testify, please speak clearly into the microphone. Tell us your name, and be sure to spell your first and

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last name to ensure we get an accurate record. We will begin the bill hearing today with both introducers giving their opinion-- opening statements. Then we will move through the rows in the audience. And this will allow you to have an ability to testify on one or both items being heard today. We will finish with a closing statement by both introducers if they wish to have one. We will 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 will have one minute of remaining time. And the red light will indicate your time has ended. Questions from the committee may follow. Also, committee members may come and go during the hearing. This has nothing to do with the importance of the bills being heard. It's just part of the process, as senators may have bills to introduce in other committees as well. A few final items to facilitate-- facilitate today's hearing, if you have any handouts or copies of your testimony, please bring up at least 12 copies and give them to the page. If you do not have 12 copies, the page will make sufficient copies for you. Please silence all cell phones or electronic devices. You may see committee members using their electronic devices so they can access more information. Verbal outburst or applause are not permitted in the hearing room. Such behavior may be cause for you to be asked to leave the meeting. Finally, committee procedures for all committees state that written position comments on the bill to be included in the record must be submitted by 8 a.m. the day of the hearing. The only acceptable method of submission is via the Legislature's website at nebraskalegislature.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 with us today introduce themselves, starting on my far right.

HUNT: Hi, everybody. Thank you all for being here. I'm Megan Hunt, and I represent District 8 in the northern part of midtown Omaha.

GUERECA: Good afternoon. Dunixi Guereca, Legislative District 7: downtown in south Omaha.

J. CAVANAUGH: John Cavanaugh, District 9: midtown Omaha.

ANDERSEN: Good afternoon. I'm Bob Andersen, representing District 49: northwest Sarpy County and Omaha.

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LONOWSKI: Good afternoon. Dan Lonowski, and I represent District 33: Adams County, Phelps County, and Kearney County.

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

McKEON: Dan McKeon, District 41: central Nebraska, eight counties.

SANDERS: And then to my right is our legal-- yes. We have our attorney for the day here with us today. Also, Senator Andersen is the vice chair. And I believe we have Julie Condon, which is our, our clerk for the day. She is the clerk of the Military, Government Committee. Thank you. And we have three, three pages with us today. And if I could have you please stand and introduce yourselves.

RUBY KINZIE: Hi, I'm Ruby Kinzie. I'm a third-year political science major at UNL.

WESLEY EARHART: My name's Wesley Earhart. I'm a senior political science major at UNL.

ARNAV RISHI: I'm Arnav. I'm a junior and political science major also at UNL.

SANDERS: Thank you. We will begin today's hearing. And we will ask the Governor's Office that, that are here today to please--

KENNY ZOELLER: Do I--

SANDERS: Oh, we-- yes. You do need the testifier-- so we have LB3, if you'd like to present, Senator Lippincott. And then we'll go to L-- LR24CA, and then testifiers.

LIPPINCOTT: Chairman Sanders and committee members. Greetings. My name's Loren Lippincott. I represent the 34th District. My name is spelled L-o-r-e-n L-i-p-p-i-n-c-o-t-t. First, let me just say that it's really encouraging to see the turnout today. It reminds you that, in fact, our government is we the people. Some of my close friends are on the other side of the fence on this particular bill. And it just reminds me that we always need to have an open mind. As a matter of fact, my staff reminded me a little while ago of a great quote by Aristotle who said, it is a sign of an educated mind to be able to

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entertain a thought without accepting any. So I've kept that in mind. I want to talk about three different things. Number one, let's talk about what the Electoral College is, the district plan that Nebraska and Maine have, and then arguments for and against. So we'll discuss these things just one at a time. Earlier today, I walked around the Legislature and I asked people, how is it determined how many electoral votes each state gets? And there's kind of a fog, a mist that kind of hangs over, over this whole idea about Electoral College. Let's just take that apart right now. We know that Nebraska has five electoral votes. We have two that are allotted for our U.S. Senate and then three that are allotted for our U.S. representatives. Now, our friends across the border in Wyoming, they're the least populated state in the nation. They have three electoral votes: two for the U.S. Senate, one for the U.S. representative. And our friends way out on the West Coast in California is the most populated state in the nation, with 39 million people in the state. They have 54 electoral votes. They've got two for the U.S. Senate and 52 for the House of Representatives. So we see there's a little bit of a disparity between the number of electoral votes that each state has. And the reason why that is important and the reason why winner take all is important is this: the U.S. Senate, the Electoral College, and winner take all, what it does is it spreads out representation geographically. It prevents pockets of power wresting in populated areas. Now, let me give you an example of that, what, what I mean by that. You have six cities in the United States that has more population than 14 states, including the great state of Nebraska. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City have a greater population than the combined 14 states. So in essence, if we had just-- if we just had a House of Representatives, our vote would just be completely wiped out. Another way of looking at it is this: if you just take the single city of New York City, of 8.2 million people, they have a greater population than 39 individual states, including Nebraska. So what the U.S. Senate does and what the Electoral College does is it spreads out representation amongst the entire United States. That's a good thing. Now, something's been going right because we're approaching 250 years for this constitutional republic that we have. We do not have a democracy. This is a constitutional republic. That's what we have. And something's going right because the average length of a constitution, considering all nations throughout the history since 1776 to present day, 17 years. That's kind of shocking.

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Shocked me the first time I heard that. We're approaching 250 years. As a matter of fact, it's a great quote from Thomas Jefferson. He said, a comparison between the governments in Europe and the comparison to our government here that we came up with is like the difference between heaven and hell. It's quite a contrast. Now, there's been several different selling points that have been heard, talking about the so-called blue dot. We've all been hearing about the blue dot of Omaha, the 2nd Congressional District. People say it brings the candidate to Nebraska. Now, the staff and I, we've looked from 1946 forward-- which is well before 1992-- and well after 1992, no difference. The number of visits that presidents and vice presidents have made coming to Nebraska, no difference. So it's a great selling point, bringing in candidates into Nebraska, selling the blue dot idea. The problem is it's not true. Then the other selling point that you hear is it brings a ton of money into Nebraska. That's a good thing. Now, this one was a little tougher than just looking up the president and vice president visiting the state. We had to look through the Re-- money coming in to the Republican Party, coming in to the Democrat Party, coming in to cities, commerce, money coming in to the TV stations, the newspapers, all the different ads. So it took some research. But again, we looked a long time ago to present day before and after we became the district plan. No difference. Well, how about Dan Osborne? That brought him-- that was the U.S. Senate. That was not the president. So let's talk about apples and apples, not apples and something else. So, again, you will hear today in your comments from a lot of folks that our district plan that we have currently brings in the candidates and brings in lots of money. The problem is it sounds good; it's not true. We've done the research on that. Also, people will tell you that voter turnout is increased with the district plan. Again, that is not true. Now, I have handed you-- handed out my talking points, my briefing guide-- and I'm not really following it verbatim, but you do have a lot of this material in front of you. Now, people will say, you know, the district plan is a great idea. It's more like democracy. And we already talked about we're not a democracy. We're a constitutional republic. But let's just say, for instance, that the entire United States overnight they said, you know what? Nebraska and Maine really have a great idea and this district plan really seems to work well. So the other 48 states, they joined us, and everybody's a district plan now. Well, in that case, then we would have had President Mitt Romney in 2012. He would have won the

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election with 277 electoral votes. And, of course, he did not. That's because we have winner take all. Most of the states have that. Some people will also say, well, you know what? This winner take all, it's disenfranchising the people in Omaha. It's making their votes not count. We don't want that. That would be a horrible idea. Well, in this last election, overall, if you look at all the different states, Donald Trump, he won 31 of the states. And Kamala Harris, she won 20. That doesn't add up to 52-- or, 50 states. It's 51. That's because you have to factor in the District of Columbia. So that's that. But with-- when you're looking at this district plan versus the winner-take-all plan, if you would-- well, let me just back up and just say this: the whole district plan that Maine started back in 1972 was to give a voice to third-party candidates. That's how it all started. Now, the third-party candidate back in 1972 was John Schmitz, who was a Republican from California, Orange County. Now, have you heard of him? No. You haven't heard of him. I haven't heard of him. But that's the reason this whole kerfuffle started. But let's just take that-- let's take that to a logical conclusion. Let's say that you have three people running for president. One person has 34% of the vote, two other people have 33% of the vote. Do you get a mandate with that? No, you do not. And also, not only is that important, but this is more important, and that is if no one gets a majority of the electoral votes, which is 270-- you take 538 votes, divide that in half, 269, plus 1 is 270. That's why on election night we always are looking for 270. But if nobody comes up with 270, a majority of electoral votes, guess what? Goes straight to Washington, D.C. to the House of Representatives, where every state gets one vote. And in this last election, Donald Trump would have gotten 31 votes. So that would be to the chagrin of my Democrat friends here in the room. They wouldn't want that. And I don't think the Republicans would want that either. That's how this whole thing started: to give a third-party candidate a voice. Now, another thing that it does, and that is this would enhance gerrymandering, which is to manipulate the political boundaries of the electorate if we had-- everyone went to the district plan. I don't think anybody wants that. Matter of fact, I have heard some of my Republican friends talk about shifting the boundaries of the 2nd Congressional District, which takes place in 2030. So I don't think that we want that. That's not a good idea. Again, the bottom line on all of this is winner take all, the Electoral College, the United States Senate prevents pockets of power in populated areas, which is

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what we do not want. We want representation to be split out amongst all states. Another thing that we're seeing-- and this is kind of subjective in nature, but that is this: we talk about the blue dot. And what's happening is we have us versus them. Do we want that? I don't think so. I think that having winner take all is unifying. I flew all-- I flew all around the United States. I flew all around the world, you know, flying for Delta Airlines for 30 years. And it's, it's just amazing how many people you'll see with Nebraska sweatshirts on, because Nebraskans are proud. And, you know, any time I'd see them, I'd go-- always go up to them. And, of course, we'd talk about, we're going to have a winning team this year. I just know we will. But Nebraskans are, are a proud people. They really are. And I, I say that not just simply because I'm a Nebraskan, but I really have seen that around the world. And so-- and I hear chuckling back here, but truly I do believe we want to avoid the us versus them. And I think that that's what happens with our district plan. And again, I know that that's a subjective call. I get that. I think in any of these things, we have to think principle brings about politics, not the other way around. And I think that the principle of the idea that winner takes all, the Electoral College, the U.S. Senate, all of these things promote the idea that we do not concentrate and we prevent pockets of power being concentrated in po-- in heavily populated areas. It spreads it out. Be happy to entertain any questions.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Lippincott. Let me check from the committee. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Madam Chair. Senator Lippincott, thanks for being here. And thanks to everybody else for being here. So-- I mean, I've got a lot of questions. So if other people want to jump in, that's fair. I guess my first question is, you, you understand land doesn't vote, right?

LIPPINCOTT: Correct.

J. CAVANAUGH: That people vote?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

J. CAVANAUGH: And that people are the ones represented in government? And that's why we have congressional districts and why the Supreme

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Court has previously held that districts have to have an equal number of people. You, you've got-- do you understand all that?

LIPPINCOTT: May I address that?

J. CAVANAUGH: The question's directed at you, yeah.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah. This is kind of interesting. I, I didn't realize a lot of these things. A U.S. representative represents approximately 700,000 people. And the number of U.S. representatives was fixed in the 1930s, and it hasn't changed. When your dad was serving, you know, there was X number of people in his congressional district, and that number probably has changed in the 2nd Congressional District as the population of America has changed. So you're correct. Land does not vote. People vote. That's true. But as the numbers change, we, we have-- what is it? We have 535 senators and representatives. So, you know, take 100 off that, we got 435 representatives. That number's fixed right now. So, for instance, in Nebraska, it's right around 700,000 people, which is the norm. Now, Montana, their one U.S. representative represents just a smidgen over 1 million people. That's a lot. And in Rhode I-- Ro-- Rhode Island, they're-- they have two U.S. representatives, and they represent approximately-- it's right around 500,000 people. So they represent the least. Montana is the most. So there is a, a bit of a, a sliding rule there.

J. CAVANAUGH: Right. The standard is-- not to digress, but the standard is every state gets at least one, which is why Wyoming has a much smaller number.

LIPPINCOTT: Correct.

J. CAVANAUGH: And Montana actually picked one up in the last redistricting. So they have two now. They're back up to two.

LIPPINCOTT: OK.

J. CAVANAUGH: But there, there is a minimum that every state gets a representation. I guess just one of my fundamental problems with your jumping-off point here is that we should be purposefully diluting the voice of people because they live in a populated area. That's-- right? Is that the, the premise of your argument, that we shouldn't be packing power in population, right? So I guess my question, why

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should, why should we dilute the vote of individuals in the interest of geography and land?

LIPPINCOTT: Yup. That's because there's a balance. There is a balance between the U.S. Senate, which is geographic in nature, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

J. CAVANAUGH: And don't you think the district plann-- plan strikes that balance by having district electors and then statewide electors?

LIPPINCOTT: No, sir. I do not. I'll give you a for-instance. Donald Trump, in this last election, he got 195,000 votes more than Harris. Harris, she won Omaha by 15,000 votes. So Donald Trump-- Harris was 1/13 of what Donald Trump got. OK. So that, so that is 7% of the popular vote. Whereas she received 20th of the electoral votes because she got one out of five.

J. CAVANAUGH: Mm-hmm. OK. I, I--

LIPPINCOTT: So, so my, my point here, sir, is that there is a balance. And I hear what you're saying, but the Founding Fathers, they said we need to take the U.S. Senate, which spreads it out, because knowing that the population with the House is going to, in fact, represent highly populated areas. I mean, take, for instance, our Legislature here in Nebraska. There's 14 state senators from Omaha. There's nine from Lincoln-- or, Lancaster County. There's five from Sarpy. So 9 plus 5's 14. 14 and 14's 28. That's 57% of our Nebraska Legislature is Lincoln and Omaha.

J. CAVANAUGH: Right. That's where 57% of people live as well, right?

LIPPINCOTT: That is correct, yes.

J. CAVANAUGH: So I'm glad you brought up the percentage vote because the governor put that in his press release, and I was very curious about this. So you just said-- I think you said 7%. The governor's press release said 8% of people voted for Kamala Harris.

LIPPINCOTT: Correct.

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J. CAVANAUGH: And you-- and you're saying that 8% should not merit 20% of the, of the electors, right? So do you think 29% of the people should be able to decide 100% of the electors?

LIPPINCOTT: Let me take your argument and go even further. The state of California had nine congressional districts that--

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, I'd, I'd like you to answer my question.

LIPPINCOTT: I'm addressing your principle that you're trying to promote.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. Do 20-- should 29% of the people get to decide 100% of the electors?

LIPPINCOTT: Say it again.

J. CAVANAUGH: Should 29% of the people get to decide 100% of the electors?

LIPPINCOTT: With the last election, Donald Trump won the state of Nebraska as a whole overwhelmingly. And if I-- and if I might just follow on to that, the president presides over the entire state, just as the Secretary of State is elected by the-- all the people in Nebraska, presides over all the people in Nebraska. Same is true for the governor, the auditor, the Attorney General. So shouldn't the president be elected by all of the people since he presides over all of the people?

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. So my question is, should 29% of the people get to decide all of the electors?

LIPPINCOTT: No.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. President Trump got 29% of the vote under your math, whereas Kamala Harris got 8% of the people. She got 29-- she got 29% of the popular vote. She got 12% statewide of the voters. She got a majority of the vote in the 2nd Congressional District. Donald Trump got 44% of the voters, 29% of the people. When you say Kamala Harris got 7% of the people and [INAUDIBLE] 20%, 20% of electors, you're saying she got 7% of all Nebraskans. So what I'm saying to you is, one, your math is questionable.

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LIPPINCOTT: More than. I said she got more than.

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, even if you grant the governor's math at 8%. And what I guess I'm trying to say is you-- in-- inherently right here, you're trying to diminish the value of the votes of those people. That's why you're saying that they're only 8% when they really are-- and then you just said President Trump got a majority of the vote in the state, which is-- he got plurality, not the majority. He got 44% of those casting ballots. So when you try-- when you say 8%, we'll say. You used the governor's number-- 8% of people voted for 20% of the electors. That's not-- that is not a fair comparison or accurate representation of the values of those people, right? That those people voted and they got a majority of the ballots cast in the election that they voted in. Right? Is that right?

LIPPINCOTT: Continue.

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, no. I'm ask-- that was a question, that people in the 2nd Congressional District, Kamala Harris got a majority of the votes in the 2nd Congress--

LIPPINCOTT: She did. By 15,000 votes.

J. CAVANAUGH: Right.

LIPPINCOTT: Correct.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. I just-- if anybody else has a question.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah.

SANDERS: I wanted to remind-- Senator Lippincott. I wanted to remind everyone-- and, and they're very attentive-- that we are here to listen to the public that are here to speak. The two of you will have time to debate on the floor. And so in, in respect to those that are here, if we could continue the debate on the floor if it gets out of committee, if that is OK. I think the other-- we might have other questions from the committee.

J. CAVANAUGH: What? Oh, I have more questions. I'll let Senator Andersen go.

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ANDERSEN: You got a long question--

SANDERS: Senator Andersen.

J. CAVANAUGH: I have a lot of questions.

ANDERSEN: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Senator Lippincott, I understand doing some-- a little googling that Maine in 2024 is the intermigration from a, a district allocation to winner take all. That means Nebraska will be the only one that does a district allocation of Electoral College votes. Are you aware of any state that's moving from winner take all to the district method-- any of the other 5-- 48 states in the union?

LIPPINCOTT: No, I have not. And that's a great question. As a matter of fact, just this past year, I was at a function in Washington, D.C., and one down in, in Texas, and I did talk with some state legislators that were from the state of Maine. And they said that-- and they were Republicans. And they said that if Nebraska moves back to winner take all, most likely they in Maine will be winner take all. So a lot of people will say, well, this is a move of the Republican Party to bully their way into getting another electoral vote. I hear that. But most likely, if we went to winner take all, Maine most likely would go back to winner take all. So it, it would be a wash. So it's not a bullying thing. This is based on principle. And if I may just follow up very briefly on what Senator Cavanaugh said just a few moments ago, and that is, that is this: it's the whole idea of disenfranchising, because we hear that. I hear you loud and clear. And that's a-- that's not invalid. That's a valid point, valid concern. But if that's true, the same principle then should be applied to California and their nine votes that would have gone to Trump but did not. And that figures out to be around 6 million people or so. So are those people disenfranchised or the people in New York State-- or the people that are in New York State with their seven electoral votes, are they disenfranchised? So that is a question. And again, if everybody went to the district plan like what we have, it wouldn't necessarily favor the Democrats or the Republicans. So it's kind of a wash.

SANDERS: Senator Cavanaugh.

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J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chairwoman. I, I mean-- well, I'm not going to apologize for asking questions. I think this is an important topic. There's a lot of people here, and a number of them are my constituents who don't want their voice silenced. So the reason I went on the numbers is you made-- your entire introduction was a lot of false equivalencies. And you, and you just made another one. We're not senators in California. Don't have the opportunity to change California. To be clear, I have been opposed to the Electoral College. I wrote a paper against it in seventh grade in favor of, of popular vote. So I'm a longtime popular vote guy. So the question-- and I, I'm glad you cleared up the part about Maine because, yes, Maine was in response to us. But I want to go back to when you said if we don't go to winner take all, there's the threat of gerrymandering to, to basically make a 2nd Congressional District that would be winnable by a Republican. Doesn't that kind of put-- tell the story here that this is about trying to create an electoral system where only one party can win or the outcome that is desired by those that have the most power can get more power?

LIPPINCOTT: No.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. Why not?

LIPPINCOTT: That's just all hearsay, which as you know-- as you well know, in a court of law, it doesn't go anywhere.

J. CAVANAUGH: But you said it. You're the one who said people are saying that, and you've said it as a reason why I should vote to go to winner take all.

LIPPINCOTT: But you know gerrymandering is a consideration in all of this.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. So why should we make a decision to take away the, the representaton-- repres-- representative vote of the people, specifically my constituents, because some other people are upset about how the election went?

LIPPINCOTT: There needs to be uniformity and standardization in how elections are done. That's why-- you know, why is it that nobody else has jumped on board with coming on to the district plan? If it's such

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a great idea, how come they're not doing it in Illinois? And we are part of the United States. So, I mean, things in California and New York, Illinois, that actually does make a difference. It's driven by principle, not by politics.

J. CAVANAUGH: And if you were here proposing a convention of states, we'll say, to eliminate the Electoral College and go to pop-- national popular vote, I'd be a cosponsor of that. But that's not what we're talking about.

LIPPINCOTT: Right.

J. CAVANAUGH: We're talking about creating a less representative election. Fundamentally, right?

LIPPINCOTT: No.

J. CAVANAUGH: By-- how is it not less representative if you come out-- you have some people voted one way, some people voted another way. And right now, you do get some representation based on how you vote. But under a winner-take-all system, everybody's voice is, is registered the same regardless of how they vote. How is that more representative? We're certainly--

LIPPINCOTT: It's because we're one of 50, that's why.

J. CAVANAUGH: Right, but we are us.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah.

J. CAVANAUGH: And we get to choose how we speak our voice. Right?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

J. CAVANAUGH: So-- I guess I'm not persuaded by the argument that we should speak with one voice. I think that we should speak with the diversity of opinions and be willing to accept that diversity of opinions.

LIPPINCOTT: OK. I just fundamentally disagree with you. Yeah. But thank you for bringing that up.

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J. CAVANAUGH: I get, I get that. And I, and I do appreciate your-- having a conversation. I can tell everybody else is sick of hearing me.

LIPPINCOTT: No, we're not.

J. CAVANAUGH: Yeah. I know. There's a lot of other people who want to talk. Well, Senator Lippincott, I, I will save any other questions I have for another day. And I'm sure you will find me on the floor and we'll talk about it. But thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: I, I appreciate your questions.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Senator Lonowski.

LONOWSKI: Thank you, Chair. Senator Lippincott, can you give us a brief history of when we came to this split electoral vote? One-minute explanation.

LIPPINCOTT: One minute. Well, you know that Maine went in 1972. Nebraska thought it was a trend. They tried it in 1990. It failed. 1991, it failed. 1992, it passed by 25 votes. Not a supermajority like we knew-- need today with the filibuster. So 25 votes. If-- then the Legislature thought, golly, gee whiz, I think we made a mistake. A few years later, 1995, they reversed course. The Legislature did. The Democrat governor-- Ben Nelson at the time-- he vetoed it. The veto was not overridden. So it stayed in place. Groundhog Day, two years later, 1997-- again, the Legislature, they reversed course. We made a mistake. They undid it. The governor vetoed it. And that's where we are today. There were not enough votes for the veto. So all in all, this has been-- there has been an attempt to reverse the district plan 11 different times. And that's where we are today.

LONOWSKI: Thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: 60 seconds.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Lonowski. Are there any other questions from the committee? I see none. Thank-- oh. Oh. Senator Hunt.

HUNT: I'll just put one more thought out there for you to think about, and, and you can certainly respond to it. I want to ask again and

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hopefully receive an explicit answer, how is it more representative government for 29% of the people to choose 100% of the electors?

LIPPINCOTT: That's a repeat of what Senator Cavanaugh said. Again, everybody needs to play by the same rules. We are one of 50--

HUNT: Everyone in the United States, you're saying?

LIPPINCOTT: Yes.

HUNT: OK.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah.

HUNT: OK. Why would we stop at election law? Why don't we say, you know, the electric vehicle credits that you can get in California, we should get that here too because we should have one voice and we should have one, you know, nation under God with the same laws. Why, why not recognize that, as a state, we have the authority to decide how we're going to do our elections and that perhaps could it be that our system is even superior? And could it be that the reason that states like California and New York and Illinois don't go to a system like ours is because they would lose power and the reason that you and others want to go to this system is because you will gain power? So I think it would be OK to explicitly admit that it is about power.

LIPPINCOTT: Well, I-- first off, I thank you for that question. Same one that he had just a few moments ago.

HUNT: OK.

LIPPINCOTT: And again, and again, we do have that. We do have that ability, that option because that's why we have the district plan right now. So-- if-- again, if, if it's such a great idea, why aren't any of the other states following it?

HUNT: Because they would lose power. It's the same reason they don't have a Unicameral, for example. They don't want to vote themselves out of a job. They don't want to take a vote to remove their power. Does that make sense to you? You look confused.

LIPPINCOTT: Sure.

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HUNT: OK.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah. And I, I hear you loud and clear. And that's-- yeah. It's a great question. Just, I disagree with it.

HUNT: OK. Thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: Yep. You're welcome.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Hunt. Are there any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you, Senator Lippincott. We'll now hear from Senator Dorn on LR24CA. Welcome, Senator Dorn.

DORN: Thank you. And I just want to say, welcome, Chairman Sanders and the rest of the committee. But I also want to thank Chairman Sanders and the legal counsel working with me, with Senator Lippincott so that we can have this, I call it, this hearing together so that we don't have two separate hearings on this because these are kind of the same-- a lot of the same topics or whatever, so. Thank you very much for all of that. Good afternoon, Senator Sanders and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Myron Dorn, M-y-r-o-n D-o-r-n. I represent District 30, which is all of Gage County and southeastern Lancaster County. I am introducing LR24CA, which is a proposed constitutional amendment to return Nebraska to a winner-take-all electoral system. I favor returning to this option-- that's the winner take all-- and I want the committee to know that I've told Senator Lippincott and a lot of other people I will be voting for Senator Lippincott's LB3. Having said that, there are two reasons why I've introduced this constitutional amendment. First, when looking at a national election, I think all states should have the same standard. I know states can control their election process, which is why we currently have our split electoral vote in this statute in the state of Nebraska. The electoral process was designed to balance out larger states' voters population to those of smaller, less populated states. By having the winner take all across the country, it reflects the majority of that state's vote. I believe Nebraska needs to be a winner-take-all state. The second reason for LR24CA is to have the voters decide this issue. There could be an initiative petition to try to change state law, but that would have to be citizen driven. The only way the Legislature can ask the voters to decide this issue is with a const-- constitutional amendment, hence LR24CA. If the

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Legislature were to approve LR24CA, the amendment would be placed on the next general election ballot, which is in 2026. The timing is right for this proposal because there is no current elect-- presidential election being impacted by the change like there would have been in 2024. I don't see this as a Republican issue. There are states where the Democratic Party is the dominant party, and I will not allow the chan-- and, and they will not allow the change to a split electoral vote. When dealing with national elections, I believe all the states should have the same standards. And with that said, I'd be glad to answer any questions.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Dorn. Let's see if we have any questions from the committee. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chairwoman. And thanks for being here, Senator Dorn. I appreciate your unique take. And-- so my question is, I've read in the press that the governor doesn't like your proposal. And I'm familiar with that experience. And I know you've talked with the governor about it, and I'm wondering if you can tell us why.

DORN: Yeah. I think some of the governor's people are here, and I think it would be a lot better if you heard from them. We had a good discussion, Senator Brandt and myself, and Senator Hughes was on the phone with us. And this was unfortunately one that governor-- we had a date scheduled and he was in Omaha in the hospital. But we did meet with Kenny, Kenny Zoeller and his chief of staff, Lopez. I would rather have you ask him that question so that they can answer it. I have my thoughts on it, but I'm not sure they line up the same with his.

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, I'd love to hear yours especially if they don't line up.

DORN: I think their main concern is that they would like to get something across, something have-- be successful in this legislative session that we have for winner take all. And as I would take their tech-- take on it, they don't want something to pull away from Senator Lippincott's bill. I don't either. That's not why I introduced this. I've had comments-- or, discussion with Chairman Sanders. I intend to hold mine in committee. I don't intend to pull it out. I hope that they-- this committee would vote his out. I want to see where his

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goes. And that's why I've said all along I will support Senator Lippincott's. Having said that, if there is a problem with getting that across, I-- in this session, then want to be able to maybe have the opportunity to pull this out and have this proposal heard.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. So your take is that the governor wants to score political points this, this legislative session and it's not-- see, my my take, I'll tell you, just-- now that I'm testifying-- but my take was that the governor's concerned that if we enshrined it in the constitution, when the population centers achieve a critical mass, it'll be harder to change it and we'll be stuck with a Democratic majority at, at the state level.

DORN: Like I told you, Kenny's here. That is a good question for them. I will be-- I gave you my opinion. I don't know whether it's right or wrong. That's a good question to ask them.

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, I appreciate it, Senator Dorn. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Are there any other questions? Thank you for your testimony.

DORN: And I did talk with you about-- we are in Appropriations. We were going on the budget. Senator Lippincott and I are both in Appropriations, so we don't always-- we want to have as many people as we can there. As I sit here today, my staff, Janet, she will be here all day taking notes. I will probably waive my closing. She is texting-- going to text me back and forth. If I need to come back, I sure can. We will check in off and on as there is time, but I intend to pretty soon go back to the Appropriations Committee. So just so people are aware of what's going on. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Dorn. We'll now call up invited guests from the Governor's Office. Welcome.

KENNY ZOELLER: Hey, thank you. Good afternoon. Chairwoman Sanders and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Kenny Zoeller. That is spelled K-e-n-n-y Z-o-e-l-l-e-r. And I serve at the pleasure of Governor Pille as his Director of the Governor's Policy Research Office. I'm here to testify in support of LB3, which is often referred to as winner take all. I'd like to thank

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Senator Lippincott for introducing this bill on behalf of the governor. As governor-- as Governor Pillen has stated multiple times, it's time that we end the 30-year experiment of allocating our Electoral College votes by congressional district. As you know, we are one of only two states that allocates our Electoral College votes in this fashion. The promised benefit of our current congressional allocation system have been exaggerated or simply not met. Our current system has not resulted in increased presidential attention during campaigns, as neither major political party's presidential candidate visited Nebraska in 2024. Also, our current allocation system has not resulted in a massive economic windfall for the state, since nearly all presidential campaign expenditures are untaxed. Simply put, our current system is just bad public policy. This fact is also backed up by multiple third-party, independent organizations. FairVote, a nonpartisan organization, has researched multiple ways to allocate Electoral College votes. According to them, the congressional allocation system makes the presidential election less meaningfully competitive. Additionally, it increases the likelihood of a candidate winning the election without winning the popular vote. For example, if this system was used nationwide in 2012, as referenced before, Mitt Romney would have won the presidency despite losing the popular vote by 5 million votes. National Popular Vote, an independent nonprofit organization, also states how splitting Electoral College votes has negative impacts, specifically that it increases the desire and temptation to gerrymander districts. Nebraska is an outlier in how we appropriate our Electoral College votes. We ignore 2/3 of our state by prioritizing one single congressional district. We simply are not on a level playing field with the other 48 states. If our current allocation system was fair, then why isn't California, New York, Texas, or Florida doing the same thing? I respectfully ask that the committee advances LB3 to General File. Thank you for your time. And I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Zoeller. We'll check to see from the committee if there are any questions. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you. And I know it's uncouth to ask staff in, in place questions, but since you said it and you opened up--

KENNY ZOELLER: Yeah.

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J. CAVANAUGH: First off, thanks for being here, Mr. Zoeller.

KENNY ZOELLER: Of course.

J. CAVANAUGH: Always a pleasure.

KENNY ZOELLER: Yeah.

J. CAVANAUGH: Did you have-- want to respond to anythings I-- kind of questions I generally directed towards the governor but at Senator Lippincott and Senator Dorn?

KENNY ZOELLER: Yeah. Absolutely. So-- the one directed to Senator Dorn. If I-- and if I forget any, please feel free to re-ask them. The, the governor, from his perspective, would like to caution putting an item in the constitution that frankly should be changed and we should have the Legislature be nimble and changing. So it's not as-- from, from the statement that you made previously, you know, that is fundamentally false from the governor's standpoint. He wants to make sure that we position Nebraska in a, in a way to make sure that we are taking advantage of a new Electoral College system. So let's say that 28 or 30 states switch back to the congressional allocation system, then maybe at that point it will be advantageous for Nebraska to switch to that system. Or as another example, if a majority of states decided to go to a proportionate allocation system, which would divvy up votes by the actual statewide total-- so let's say if you get 40% voting for one candidate, 60% voting for the other, you divvy up your Electoral College votes that way, then that's something that, frankly, Nebraska should take advantage of. The problem with, with an LRCA is the Legislature doesn't have the capability that I'm aware of of putting a statutory item to the ballot to a vote of the people. And if we decide-- or, excuse me, if the Legislature decides to put an LRCA on the ballot and it passes, then we could set ourselves up in a situation where we would not be able to change our congressional allocation system for the presidential election. So that, that's the primary reasons that he's opposed to it--

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you.

KENNY ZOELLER: --at this time.

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J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you for the answer. And it's not false. I was just wrong. I'm, I'm OK with being wrong. That's-- it's fair. I, I don't take offense at being wrong.

KENNY ZOELLER: Yeah.

J. CAVANAUGH: A couple of thing-- well-- so first of all, we've been sitting here. Somebody sent me that the state of New Hampshire is actually-- has a bill right now considering changing back to-- changing to the district method. So maybe it, you know, all this conversation that, that we've started here in Nebraska is creating some momentum.

KENNY ZOELLER: It's all good earned media, I guess, for a congressional allocation system.

J. CAVANAUGH: Maybe we'll get some tourism to come check it out. So-- and, and one of the things you said-- and I don't want to belabor you being here, and I appreciate it again, was that-- this 30-year experiment. And I-- with all due respect, it's not an experiment. It's just how we do it. And I just wondered if you were aware or anybody was aware that for the first hundred or so years of our country that it was pretty regular for states to divide their electoral votes. You know, the-- lots of states did them by congressional district for a long time. Some did the proportional method. And so it's, it's not an experiment. It's not revolutionary. But it's something that was consistent with the beginning of our country and, and is sort of-- maybe has become in vogue again in the last 30 or so years. So. That's not really a question. I guess I'm just telling you that. You can respond.

KENNY ZOELLER: Well, yeah. And I-- I mean, the reason why I call it an experiment is because how the states divvy up Electoral College votes should never be permanent. So we should always be taking a look at what is the best public policy for the state of Nebraska as a whole and, frankly, change the way we allocate our Electoral College votes to best represent the people in any given election, so. You know, the reason why I was very specific with the term "experiment" is because how we change-- or, how we divvy up our electoral college votes should never be set in stone and we should always have the opportunity to change it.

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J. CAVANAUGH: Thank-- thanks for that. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Cavanaugh. Are there any other questions from the committee? I see none. Thank you, Mr. Zoeller.

KENNY ZOELLER: Yep. Thank you guys.

SANDERS: And I think we can move forward with our public comment period now. So we will-- Mr. Love, please come forward. We'll, we'll allow it. And then we're going to start at the far right, and then we're going to go left. Welcome to the Government--

PRESTON LOVE: Thank you.

SANDERS: --Military and Veterans Committee.

PRESTON LOVE: I want you to know my name is Preston Love Jr. And that I wrote a wonderful testimony for this hearing. I-- and it was written as a statesman. I take it back.

SANDERS: If you could please spell your name for the record.

PRESTON LOVE: P-r-e-s-t-o-n L-o-v-e. I take it back. I am not going to try to be a statesman, because I've listened to the commentary and I've-- going to have to just be real on my reactions. And I put my statement in the wastebasket, and I give you my reaction to the dialogue. And it's not-- I'm embarrassed that I no longer can be a statesman for at least the rest of the day. Number one, I just want to say that I am amazed by some of the-- the facts are facts. Conclusions-- I disagree with most of the conclusions from the facts. I don't have the time to be able to deal with each one. I want to say that. Secondly, I don't think it's fair to bring Maine in and their methodology and their purpose. Third party has nothing to do with the Nebraska scenario. It's irrelevant. Also, I highly disagree-- and I must see the numbers, but I know that in Congressional District 2 in Omaha, we had a tremendous economic impact. Wow. [INAUDIBLE] the blue dot. We had people, money all over the place. People got jobs knocking on doors. The idea that there wa-- is and was no economic impact is not true. Thirdly, I hope that you heard the laughter when we talked about that this may put us in a position where we become they and us. We already there. We're already there. It is they versus us in so many ways. I ran for office, and I spent most of my campaign talking about,

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let's stop doing they for us. But we are there. And we are a partisan Legislature. We're not-- we are Republicans and Democrats. The they and the us, fighting this battle and so many others. Maybe we should-- since the other states don't do it the way we do, let's get rid of the Unicameral and be like the other states. No, we're not going to do that. So don't use the argument that the other states don't-- the other 48 don't do it, so why should we do it? Well, that's not good thinking. We should just evaluate what this means to us. And if I don't have time-- it's already yellow-- light [INAUDIBLE]. I just want to say, listen to a segment of your community, of your state, a whole congressional district that's saying give us a chance to let our votes count. I feel so good I-- about the fact that when I voted that I-- my, my candidate produced an electoral vote. And the collectively-- I can't speak for everyone-- I think everyone in Congressional District 2 feels that way. Are you just ignoring us? Let's forget about the number analysis. We're talking about good Nebraskans who are voting. And in spite the fact that our presidential candidate did not win the state, we feel good about the voting process and we feel good about the pro-- so now that it's going this way, you want to take it back. I could tell you about my grandfather and my father and the troubles that they had. I know my time is up. So I'd ask for you to, in conclusion, to just look at this in another way. You have a whole 1/3 of your state that doesn't want you to do what you're doing. So if you're going to just be strong theys, then you-- do it to us. And by the way, on the way out, you're already gerrymandering Congressional District 2.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Love, for your proposal. Let's see if there are any questions from the committee. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: I'll, I'll be brief. Thank you, Chair. Mr. Love, good to see you. I would just-- I would love to have a copy of your prepared remarks for my files.

PRESTON LOVE: Yeah. Yeah. I wanted-- in my prepared files, I do talk about the impediments for my race to vote over the years. My grandfather was impeded. He never had a chance to vote. My father, my famous jazz father, was impeded as he tried to vote in Nebraska. But we did some good things. One of the things we did, we, we, we made voter registration easier. But we also did district elections. Do you know, other than the state senate, that in our city council and our

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commu-- county commissioners, we were never able to, to get anybody elected around our community until we went to districts election? That's a good thing. Maybe we should bring that up and try to take that back. I see this proposal to take back winner take all in the same category. Trying to move back. But I-- the one thing that was mentioned is the bullying. I do see this as bullying because my dear friend, Pete Ricketts, raised the issue of winner take all right after we won the electoral vote in 2012. And, and so the governor, my dear friend-- we both played for the University of Nebraska. We're dear friends except for on winner take all. I want to go to the box. I mean, not box, but box. But anyway. So. Thank you for the question.

SANDERS: Are there any other questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you, Mr. Love, for your testimony.

PRESTON LOVE: Thank you. Do the right thing.

SANDERS: Thank you.

PRESTON LOVE: Do the right thing.

SANDERS: We will begin over on this right side. No, the-- hello. Yeah. This, this gentlemen will go first. Please come--

JOHN MARK RULE: Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome to the Government Committee.

JOHN MARK RULE: Thank you. My name is John Mark Rule, J-o-h-n M-a-r-k R-u-l-e. And I'm here for LB3. And I am just representing myself. One voter, one citizen in the state of Nebraska.

SANDERS: Proponent or opponent?

JOHN MARK RULE: I'm a proponent, yes.

SANDERS: Thank you.

JOHN MARK RULE: I believe it's time to end this failed 33-year experiment. I think when it was-- originally came in, that was kind of how they went at a-- the actual lady who-- the senator, excuse me. I'm sorry-- the senator who actually put it up said, you know, if you

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don't-- we don't like it, we can change it back. And I believe that it is an experiment and it's failed. It has divided and diluted Nebraska's Electoral College vote. How it has divided Nebraska is it has pitted the majority of Nebraska voters against a minority Omaha-based group of contrary voters. Nebraska only has five electoral votes. But when we divide those votes by even one, the ultimate outcome is a cancellation of the other-- of one of the other votes, leaving Nebraska essentially with three electoral votes. Elections are always determined by the difference between the votes-- whoever has the most wins. That's why I'm saying that there would be a cancellation. I am certain-- I am certain this makes Nebraska's electoral votes less significant. Let's be honest, continuing this split of our voice is solely to satisfy a minority group's desire to divide the unity of Nebraska's popular vote. It's time to correct the obvious partisan up-yours to the majority of Nebraska voters.

SANDERS: Thanks for your testimony. Let's see if we have any questions from the committee here. And we see none. Thank you, Mr. Rule.

JOHN MARK RULE: Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome to the Government Committee.

GAIL RULE: Hello. Good afternoon, senators. My name is Gail Rule, spelled G-a-i-l R-u-l-e. And I live in Omaha. And I'm here to support LB3. I happen to be a very analytical person, and my support or opposition to any issue is always based on extensive research. The more I studied LB115, the more opposed I was to the congressional district method. Senator, bad ideas are thrown around seven days a week, and sometimes they become law. What's important is that mistakes are admitted and corrected, which is exactly what Nebraska did in both 1995 and '97 when our Legislature overturned LB115.

SANDERS: Excuse me, Ms. Rule.

GAIL RULE: Yeah?

SANDERS: If you could--

GAIL RULE: Yes.

SANDERS: --people would like to hear your testimony--

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GAIL RULE: Oh, they can't?

SANDERS: --In the back of the room. It doesn't amplify. It records. So if you just speak up just a little bit more.

GAIL RULE: I've got a teacher's voice. So there I go-- which is exactly what Nebraska did in both 1995 and '97 when our Legislature overturned LB115. Unfortunately, we had a Democrat governor, Ben Nelson, who refused to sign the bill. And so our mistake continued. I could talk for hours on the origin and history about the Electoral College, presidential elections in Nebraska since 1986-- 1868, and how they-- and how LB115 came to be, its intended purpose and what it's actually done. And I can give the arguments for and against the congressional district method. But what I can promise you is that LB115 never fulfilled any of its original intent and purpose. In fact, here is the legislative floor discussion from 1991, highlighted and noted. OK. And therefore, objectively, it has been a complete failure. I'm going to focus on the 33 years and the nine presidential elections since its passage and objectively see what this system has actually done. Probably going to have to read it for yourself because I'm already yellow. But it has only split our Electoral College vote three times: in 2008, '20, and '24. In all three cases, it wasn't CD2. And I know they like to say that out loud, but go back and look at the voting. It isn't all of CD2. It's that little tiny blue dot in Omaha, Nebraska only. Period. The rest of CD2 voted the opposite direction. So I've got figures and facts for you here about the Electoral College vote. Our voting system never once made one hill of beans difference to the outcome of the general election nationwide. Not once. It's not even close, folks. But I think that one point that I want to make is it's almost as though Nebraska is handing out participation trophies. When you can go into a state, have an election, and you lose as badly percentagewise as some of these candidates have and yet they're still being handed an Electoral College vote, we've got a problem.

SANDERS: Thank you, Ms. Rule. Hold on just a moment. Let me see if there are any questions from the committee.

GAIL RULE: Nope.

SANDERS: I see none. Thank you very much for your testimony and taking the time. Welcome.

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MICHAEL TIEDEMAN: Thank you, Senator Sanders. My name is Michael Tiedeman. That's M-i-c-h-a-e-l T-i-e-d-e-m-a-n. And I'm a proponent for LB3. Main points I want to make is money. Simply put, our state has been plagued by outside donation money in excess of \$50 million every presidential cycle and to a lesser amount during the other federal years. We have allowed Nebraska to be a political pawn not by candidates, but by outside special interests who try to impact our eleshion-- elections and erode our values. Furthermore, this money is not an economic windfall for Nebraska, as most dollars are spent as political outreach through TV, radio, and mailers. Even Nebraska-based lobbyists should examine their-- the offsetting dollars that come in because of the CD2 anomaly and question whether their Nebraska dollars from their Nebraska members are neutralized if not overwhelmed by the excess of non-Nebraska dollars. Representation. CD2 has be-- has and will go through a redistricting. In 2031, if winner take all has not been passed, I believe Douglas County and surr-- the surrounding five counties will be political pawns from national entities to affect the numbers. Washington County constituents have been redistricted into all three congressional districts over the last several decades, so their representation at the congressional level has been constantly changing. To say this is a dot, whatever color you want to say it is, does not reflect the constant redistricting that will impact Washington, Dodge, Saunders, Sarpy, Cass, and, of course, Douglas County. This district was a political experiment that did not make sense in the 1990s and does not make sense in 2025 or the future. Please vote to move LB3 forward to the floor debate so a more robust conversation can occur amongst the state senators. Like all bills, LB3 needs 25 senators to pass. And if those 25 are represent-- representative of the highest vote-getting Republicans, they represent 59% of Nebraska voters. Please get this bill out of committee.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Tiedeman. Check if there's any questions. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chair. Thanks for being here, Mr. Tiedeman. Just to clarify, you-- the circ-- thing that was circulated, it looks like what you were reading is a letter from Republican Party Chair Eric Underwood.

MICHAEL TIEDEMAN: Yes.

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J. CAVANAUGH: So you're here representing the Republican Party?

MICHAEL TIEDEMAN: Yes. I-- he didn't get it in time, so I decided to include that in my public comment.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. That's fine. I just want to ask, are you here representing the Republican Party, though?

MICHAEL TIEDEMAN: Yes, I am here representing the Republican Party.

J. CAVANAUGH: OK. Thanks.

MICHAEL TIEDEMAN: Yep.

SANDERS: Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you, Mr. Tiedeman.

MICHAEL TIEDEMAN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Hello. Welcome.

LIZ ABEL: Thank you. My name is Liz Abel, L-i-z A-b-e-l. I am a strong proponent of winner take all, all, LB3. Here's my reasoning for why. First of all, I believe the system splinters our electorate. We are Nebraskans first, not Nebraskans by congressional district. I appreciated what Senator Lippincott said. Our votes should represent how and what our represent-- residents represent in total, not by a county here or there. Essentially, even though Douglas County thinks we're the big-- or, they're the big dog-- we're the big dog. I lived in Omaha-- we're still only one county, and it should not have a larger impact on our electoral votes other than the county-- in-- than any other county in the state. This would be exactly opposite of what our forefathers envisioned. They knew that if this was set up this way, large population centers would dictate election outcomes and effectively neuter the rural areas throughout the U.S. We are one state, and we are diffusing our own Electoral College votes by allowing Douglas County to split our state's five votes. By nature of this split today, we encourage out-of-state influence on our voters. During the last presidential election, there were upwards of \$1.5 million or more coming into our state from places like New York, California, and Illinois. Do these states have the values of Nebraskans? I personally don't think so. The only reason they have a large interest is because they believe they can influence elections.

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In the last election, I was receiving postcards from Illinois over and over again asking me to vote for Dan Osburn [SIC] and Joe Biden. That would never happen if we had a winner take all. I was totally irritated by receiving those cards. They all got trashed. And I asked myself, what do these Illinois people know about Nebraska? If we go back to winner take all, we will see a reduction, if not elimination, in out-of-state money, a return to Nebraskans having 100% influence over our elections, as it should be. Last, again-- and this has been said before-- I believe having a split electoral vote diminishes our overall state significance. And so, again, I am totally a proponent for winner take all. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions?
Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Thank you, Chairman Sanders. Thank you for being here today. Do you think that voters in other states ever get postcards from outside interests urging them to vote a certain way?

LIZ ABEL: I don't know. I can't answer that because I have not-- I don't-- I, I'm not here. I'm representing Nebraska and live in Nebraska right now. And I've never had-- I would say I've lived in Texas before and I never got cards from anywhere else in the United States asking me to vote for other candidates.

HUNT: OK. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Are there any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you for your testimony.

LIZ ABEL: You're welcome. Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome.

DOUG KAGAN: Thank you. Good afternoon. Doug Kagan, D-o-u-g K-a-g-a-n. Representing Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom for LB3. From the long debates over our Electoral College came a compromise based on the idea of electoral intermediaries. These intermediaries, however, are not picked by Congress or elected by the people. Instead, each state would appoint independent electors to cast the actual ballots for the presidency. These drafters of our Constitution assumed that electors would vote according to their individual discretion, not the dictates

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of a state or a national political party, because there were no political parties in 1787. The founders also assumed that most elections ultimately would become decided by neither the people nor the electors, but by the House of Representatives. The Constitution states nothing about how states should allot their electoral votes. As we know over time and now, all but two states passed laws to give all their electoral votes to the candidate who wins the state popular vote, winner take all. The 1820 election was the last election in which state legislatures played a dominant role. By this point, political parties had become entrenched. Electors no longer could realistically claim to act independent of the major political parties. Only then did this system seem like a fundamental part of the American voting system. The shift to statewide winner take all was the product of the two-party political pragmatism, as state party leaders wanted to maximize support for their preferred candidate. Once some states made this calculation, others had to follow to avoid hurting their opportunities in the Electoral College. Winner take all soon became the most common system. This method to allocate electoral votes is essential for ensuring the maximization of partisan electoral influence. So in states like Nebraska or California, where there is a dominant party which can reliably count on winning 55% to 58% of the vote, that party would not want to change winner take all because it benefits a-- in a part-- partisan fashion from winner take all. So the main point is-- however, retaining our split vote system would intensify gerrymandering at each census time and take up a lot of time of the State Legislature. Jonathan Rodden, noted political science professor at Stanford U, said it turns states into battlegrounds, contributing to partisanship by pitting urban versus rural and creating antagonism and lessened our clout in the Electoral College. The split vote system deprives voters of the representation in the district with a preponderance of voters from the opposite political party. In conclusion, adopting winner takes-- take all will maximize Nebraska influence in the Electoral College as long as two major political parties continue to dominate our elections. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. You're right on spot there. Red light just came on. Thank you for your testimony. I'll check to see if there are any questions from the committee. I see none. Thank you for your testimony. So we're over on this side now. It's all you.

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MELINA ARROYO: Yes. [INAUDIBLE] first of all, I'm nervous. It's my first time getting out of my little cave.

SANDERS: Just remember to say your name and then spell it.

MELINA ARROYO: Good afternoon. And thank you for having me here. My name is Melina Arroyo, and it's spelled M-e-l-i-n-a A-r-r-o-y-o. And I didn't write anything in paper. I wrote on my phone. I need to use my readers because I'm aging. I'm an opponent--

SANDERS: Both?

MELINA ARROYO: --of both.

SANDERS: OK.

MELINA ARROYO: I strongly oppose the proposed bill that seeks to change Nebraska's unique method of allocating presidential electoral votes. Nebraska stands apart from nearly every other state in how we allocate these votes, and that distinct-- distinction offers several significant advantages that should not be overlooked. Our system, which splits electoral votes based on congressional district results, ensures that the voices of all Nebraskans are heard. Unlike most states that award all their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote, our approach encourages presidential candidates to engage with us, knowing that our votes are genuinely up for grabs. This level of attention is something rarely seen in similar states. The fact that I lived in Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Florida and I preferred to live here for the past 14 years say so. By splitting the electoral votes, we elevate the concerns of Nebraskans on the national stage. Candidates actively seek our votes, and in doing so they address issues that might otherwise be overlooked. This means our voices, whether you're from rural or urban areas, are part of the conversation. Moreover, this system brings in valuable spending from media and campaign events that directly benefit our local economy. Whether it's through advertisements, rallies, or local engagements, this influx of attention will help strengthen our community. Importantly, the district-based system gives weight to minority voter voices in each congressional district, preventing the marginalization of voters who might not align with the majority in this state. Every Nebraskan, regardless of their political leanings--

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I'm an Independent-- deserves to feel that their vote counts and that their concerns are addressed. By maintaining this system, Nebraska demonstrates that there are more representative and inclusive ways to conduct presidential elections. Inclusive. It shows that we value diversity and fairness in how votes are cast and counted, ensuring that all voices are truly heard. Changing this approach would not only diminish our influence, but also undermine the values that make Nebraska unique. The winner-takes-all bill could definitely have serious implications for representation. Thank you.

SANDERS: Well done. I'm going to check to see if there are any questions from the committee. I see none. Thank you for your testimony. Hope to see you back.

RON CUNNINGHAM: I am in opposition. Ron Cunningham, R-o-n C-u-n-n-i-n-g-h-a-m. Chairman Sanders and fellow committee members. I represent myself. I'm a longtime Republican who votes for issues based on what's good for our country, what's good for our state, and certainly not what's good for the party. In 2015, I became an Independent. I assumed that from hearing testimony that most Nebraskans don't realize that, as an individual, 80% of the votes in the United States don't count, don't matter, has no effect on who you will elect as your president-- as your president. Republicans continue to promote unity and fairness, yet they want to take away a vote. In the most recent presidential election, both parties campaigned for that possible tie-breaking electoral vote. We were no longer a flyover state. Voters in each of our legislative districts have, although it's limited, a political voice. Republican senators and our governor shouldn't kowtow to Charlie Kirk over doing what they know is right for all Nebraskans. This bill is not about unity nor principles and certainly not ethics. It's about money, power, and greed. I fear this bill will pass based on the makeup of our supposedly nonpartisan Legislature, as it's a continuation of the far-right onslaught to desecrate the rights of voters. Let's be brutally honest: if LB3 passes, there's absolutely no reason for a non-Republican voter to vote in a presidential election, probably for decades. It will be one of the great thefts in Nebraska political history. Every voter in a congressional district who votes should be told if this passes, hey, the Republicans may change your vote. The Nebraska Legislature will-- to me, will essentially be legislating voter fraud. That should be unacceptable to all parties. Surely there's Republican senators that

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will say no. If the current disregard for nonpartisanship continues in this body, in time perhaps only Republican voters will even be able to express their opinions in the second house. Instead of LB3 or the CA, why don't our governor and our Legislature commit to joining the National Popular Pact? As all Nebraskans would say, it makes common sense. If all 50 governors are selected by popular vote, why not our president? Majority governs. It would then be one person and one vote. Your vote would have equal value to a voter in Florida, in Michigan, or California. Imagine a national presidential election and it's tied and you've got the last vote. It can't get any better than that. Thank you.

SANDERS: Perfect. Thank you very much for your testimony. Sir-- Mr. Cunningham, are you in opposition of LB3 and--

RON CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

SANDERS: --LR7-- LR24CA?

RON CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

SANDERS: OK. For the record. Thank you very much. Hold on. Hold on.

RON CUNNINGHAM: OK.

SANDERS: We may have some questions from the committee. Are there any questions? See none. Thank you--

RON CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

SANDERS: --for your testimony. We're over here. Welcome.

BEVERLY HORNIG: Hi. My name's Beverly Hornig, B-e-v-e-r-l-y; Hornig, H-o-r-n-i-g. I am an opponent of LR-- LB3 and LR24CA. Voter representation where a majority by each congressional district is the fairest system. I'm old enough to remember our own Republicans, Roman Hruska and Carl Curtis, were two of the U.S. senators who pushed for the split vote system at a national level in 1969. The Republican Party is not the same today. At the time, a proposed constitutional amendment to make this a national practice passed in the Senate but failed in the House. In the current divisive political climate, trying to eliminate this system in Nebraska now doesn't promote hea-- unity

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or healing, which our nation desperately needs. I had been a lifelong Republican, believing in less government control, until the divisiveness became toxic about eight years ago. And I think you all know what happened eight years ago that influenced me. Allowing more true citizen representation at all levels of government is healthy and sustaining for preserving our core democratic values. Our country has been slow to allow all citizens the right to vote, considering the belated amendments to allow blacks and then women the right to vote. Continuing to silence the voices of the underserved only fuels the dissatisfaction and political discourse we experience. We must do better to allow equality in representation at all levels and to address the needs of all. Let every vote count. Promote cooperation. Let every vote count. Promote cooperation. Let every vote count. Promote cooperation. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Hold on just a moment. Let's see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you very much for your testimony. Welcome.

JIM MARTIN: Hello. Thank you. I am Dr. Jim Martin, J-i-m M-a-r-t-i-n. I represent myself today. First, thank you, senators, for your service to the people of Nebraska, and I appreciate this opportunity. I'm here to express my opposition to both pieces of legislation. I've researched elections and electoral systems for the last 25 years in our country and abroad. While I have many criticisms of winner take all, I'll confine my remarks to its effect on voter turnout. Winner take all tends to depress voter turnout. It does so by creating the perception among many people that voting doesn't matter and the outcome is all but predetermined. This is especially true in a state like Nebraska, where registered Republicans outnumber Democrats by a large amount. Prior to the adoption of our current system for distributing electoral votes, voter turnout was on average about 4% lower. That's about 50,000 Nebraskans every four years that decided it wasn't worth their time to vote in a presidential election under winner take all. Under our current system, voter turnout in presidential years has been higher than it was prior to 1992 in every single presidential election and many by-elections too. Additionally, to address one of the talking points of those who support winner take all, both rural counties and those more populous counties have enjoyed higher voter turnout over the decades since our current system became law. In fact, voter turnout in rural counties has often been even

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higher than that in more populous counties. To conclude, our current system creates voter interest, enthusiasm, and engagement with the politics of both parties and for Independents. Correspondingly, it has consistently increased voter turnout across all of our diverse counties for the last three decades. More voters, more participation are always good for democracy. To that end, I ask you to drop this legislation from consideration. Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony, Dr. Martin. Let me see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you very much.

JIM MARTIN: Thank you.

MAUREEN HUTFLESS: Hello. I'm Maureen Hutfless. It's M-a-u-r-e-e-n--

SANDERS: Margaret, do you have your green sheets?

MAUREEN HUTFLESS: Oh, yes. I apologize.

SANDERS: Sorry.

MAUREEN HUTFLESS: Sorry about that.

SANDERS: Thank you.

MAUREEN HUTFLESS: Last name is H-u-t-f-l-e-s-s. Speaking in opposition to both LB3 and LR24CA. A little bit of background on me just for context. I've been registered as nan-- nonpartisan for many years, currently leaning Democratic, but I was a registered Republican for 30 years before that. I would like any Republican senators who to-- who support winner take all to ask themselves this question-- and please answer honestly: if Nebraska were a heavily Democratic state except that one area sometimes voted Republican, would I still say that winner take all is the way to go or would I instead argue that we must save the red dot because it would be wrong to disenfranchise thousands of Republican voters? If that is the viewpoint that you would take, then it is equally wrong to disenfranchise thousands of Democratic voters. There are simple, timeless principles in play here. I'm sure that most of us were taught as little children that fairness is a virtue which we cho-- we should all strive to practice. I would hope that as adults and elected officials, Nebraska senators have not

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abandoned that principle. For senators who are Christians, you can show that you really mean it when you're espouse the Golden Rule. So if you would not want a Democratic majority to kick Republican voters to the curb, then please don't kick Democratic voters to the curb. Please don't let political tribalism override higher principles. Ultimately, the question is this: will senators uphold Nebraska's exemplary electoral vote system or will you decide that fairness is not a Nebraska value? Thank you for your consideration.

SANDERS: Thank you very much. And-- again, was it Margaret?

MAUREEN HUTFLESS: Maureen.

SANDERS: Maureen. Thank you very much for your testimony. Let's check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you very much. We're going, we're going to now-- hold on. Mar-- [INAUDIBLE]. We're going to-- we have a, a wheelchair here. Hold on. Do you have enough room there, sir? Thank you.

WARREN PHELPS: Hello.

SANDERS: And welcome.

WARREN PHELPS: Hey, thanks for having me. My name's Warren, W-a-r-r-e-n; Phelps, P-h-e-l-p-s. I live on a farm near Lorenzo, Nebraska. How many people know where that is? Not many. South of Sidney, about 12 miles; way out in west in Cheyenne County. I'm chairman of the Republican Party in Cheyenne County. I'm a card-carrying member of the RNC, lifelong Republican. I am 100% opposed to Nebraska being a winner-take-all state. Western Nebraska-- the farther west you go in Nebraska, the more Republican it gets. I brought some numbers with me. There's 262,000 Republicans in the 3rd Congressional District; only 74,000 Democrats. We're the deep red sea. Everyone I've talked to in Cheyenne County at our local county meetings, going to the grocery stores, ma-- talking to people on the streets, nobody wants to be winner take all in Cheyenne County that I've talked to. As long as the 3rd District of Nebraska has that electoral vote, we have a chip in the game. I'm sure the Democrats in Omaha feel the same way. If the Republican candidate for president cannot convince 15,000 or 16,000 more voters in Omaha to vote for them, they don't deserve that electoral vote. Having-- if, if every

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state had this system of letting each ca-- congressional district cast their own electoral vote, it produces competition. Competition makes everybody better. It forces candidates to come up with good ideas, ideas that benefit everyone, ideas that help the whole country. The-- I had a lot to say, but I can't think of it right now, but-- anyway, I'm opposed to the LB3 and, and L-- what is it, LR24CA. I would prefer a con-- constitutional amendment that keeps the per district electoral vote in place. What's going to happen is Lincoln and Omaha's going to grow faster in the next 10, 20 years as rural Nebraska. There's going to be a lot more Democratic voters in this state at one time. I don't want to be drowned out by Democratic votes in the 3rd District. I want to keep our electoral vote in the 3rd District. Thank you for listening to me.

SANDERS: Thank you very much. And thank you for driving all the way out here.

WARREN PHELPS: 350 miles.

SANDERS: Hold on. Let's check if there are any questions from the committee. Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Thank you. Thank you so much for being here. Can you tell me your name again? I know I said-- it's good for the record.

WARREN PHELPS: Warren, W-a-r-r-e-n; Phelps, P-h-e-l-p-s.

HUNT: Thank you.

WARREN PHELPS: Thank you.

SANDERS: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Phelps. Appreciate it. And we're going to start back on this side again. Welcome.

JEANNE REIGLE: Thank you, Chair Sanders and this committee. I appreciate you-- the time. My name is Jeanne Reigle, J-e-a-n-n-e R-e-i-g-l-e. I am an ag producer from a very small commu-- community of 2,500-- oh. I'm, I'm a propo-- proponent.

SANDERS: For LB3 or both?

JEANNE REIGLE: LB3.

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SANDERS: OK.

JEANNE REIGLE: LB3. Yes. And I do not really feel strongly that either way is going to really affect the outcome of a presidential election. What I do feel strongly about is the amount of money-- and as you accurately depicted-- the power that is thrown into these presidential era-- races. And I think it trickles down to the senate races and the city council races. And it comes down to more and more power and money being concentrated in 1/3 of the state. And the rural areas of the, of the state are just not represented like I feel they should. And I've seen that firsthand in our small town. We have dwindling population because more and more population are going to the urban areas because that's where the money is concentrated. That's where the resources are. And the more money, more resources, the more you can grow. And I see the opposite in small communities. They're hurting. They're dwindling. And I see it on the senate. There's very few rural senators left and any, any that are involved in agriculture, which is our largest industry. And that concerns me. And so I would really like to see small rural communities, 2/3 of the state, retain as much voice as 1/3 of the state. Thank you for listening.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. See if there are any questions. See none. Thanks, Ms. Reigle. Welcome.

LINDA VERMOOTEN: Thank you. OK. Good afternoon, [INAUDIBLE] senators and members of the committee. My name is Dr. Linda Vermooten, L-i-n-d-a V-e-r-m-o-o-t-e-n. Listened to a lot of comments here today and thought, well, we need to go back and look at what was the intent of our Founding Fathers. Why did they not go with one man, one vote? Because in their wisdom, they had researched all other republics, all other constitutions that had come into play before we began this experiment of being a constitutional republic, not a democracy. Because they realized as the population would grow, if we look at our-- layout of our country now, if we go to one man, one vote, kiss Nebraska goodbye. Your vote won't matter. New York City, LA, and San Fran would vote and the rest of us would have no say. So in their wisdom, they came up with a plan of having an Electoral College to offset that. To look at how the people vote in the state is important. As winner take all-- and I'm a proponent on both. Sorry I didn't state that at the beginning. As has been stated before on two separate occasions, when we started this little experiment here in Nebraska, we

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always said we can change it. Interestingly enough, the people spoke through their legislators and through hearings. We do not want this experiment anymore. One individual in our state, one individual, overrode our legislator and vetoed what you said as our representatives in our state to go back where we were before, which was winner take all, to unite our voice. After all, we only have five votes in Nebraska. To unify, it would be better. To quote Mr. Evnen, our State Secretary, who was speaking at an event recently, he said, how come-- does a few thousand in our state have more power than the rest? Because they are the only ones who can break off an electoral vote from the rest. Arguments have been it is advantageous for us to have candidates come to our great state. Well, if my recollection serves me well, in 2024, we neither saw either candidate come to our state. So that argument just falls flat. That is not the truth. And the money coming in was really to a political end, and as has been spoken, was more in ads than into our local economy to help us. I believe we need to return to winner take all and allow a unification of all of our electoral votes to go according to how the majority of the people in our state vote. Thank you for your time today.

SANDERS: Thank you, Dr. Vermooten. Let me check if there are any questions from the committee. I see none. Thank you for your testimony.

LINDA VERMOOTEN: Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Welcome.

HEATHER NELSON: Hello, senators. I'm here to testify on behalf of both bills from a neutral perspective. I'm Heather Nelson. I'm the foun-- or, my name is H-e-a-t-h-e-r N-e-l-s-o-n. I'm the founder and CEO of Ideologix Insights. We're a new nonpartisan data analytics laboratory located in Omaha, Nebraska. We power pollthevote.com. We facilitate civic and community engagement. The platform connects us as citizens to you, our elected officials, candidates for office, and our community leaders. The laboratory measures public sentiment in real time from verified participants. The lab conducted a focus group on these legislative proposals over a period of four days, concluding just Tuesday. Every Nebraskan aged 15-plus can participate in our system. We had participants from all three congressional districts and 42 of the 49 state senator districts. 30% were from Omaha and Lincoln.

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The overall results when we asked them whether, whether or not they wanted us to keep the same Electoral College vote or to change was as follows: 91.83% said they want to keep the Electoral College voting system the same. 8.1% said they wanted to change to a winner take all. Here's some interesting findings as we looked at the data. Of you, the eight senators sitting here in front of me today, seven had constituents that participated in our system. You represented a total of 23.56% of the participation, and 98% of your constituents voted that they would like to not have a change. They do not want to see a winner-take-all system. 85% of the total participants are registered as either Democrat or Independent, of which 99% voted to keep it the same. 12% of the total participants were registered as Republicans, of which almost half still stated that they wanted the system to stay the same. Of the 5% registered Republicans that stated that they want to keep the system the same, the majority live in either District 4, von Gillern, or District 31, Kauth, and both of these senators are registered Republicans, yet had the largest representation in our focus group that said that they want to keep the system the same. In October of 2024, when our company first came out and launched publicly, we did a similar focus group back then, of which 50% of our participants were registered Republicans, and 60% of those again said they would like the system to stay the same.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions from the coun-- from the committee? See none. Sorry. We're going to try and--

HEATHER NELSON: No, I-- that's why I stopped at the red light. You have the rest of my primary testimony.

SANDERS: Yes, we do. I appreciate all the information. Thank you. Welcome.

ANNE DALY: Good afternoon, Chairman Sanders and members of this committee. My name is Anne Daly, A-n-n-e D-a-l-y. OK. Looking back at LB115, passed in 1992, there were numerous concepts for adopting the Electoral College condes-- congressional district vote system in Nebraska. It was not a new idea. In fact, it was used by many states at the beginning of our country's history. But even before Nebraska became a state in 1867, the majority of states using the-- were using the winner-takes-all system. And by 1872, every state in the nation

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was using winner takes all to provide its electoral votes. Nebraska could be a leader. Obviously, it has been 33 years since Nebraska instituted this split vote system. And how many states have followed since then? None. To even suggest California, New York, or Illinois would even consider this system is ridiculous. From 1868 to 2024, Nebraska has voted for the presidential winner 25 times and the loser of the race 15, 15 times. Nebraska's historical electoral college vote totals have changed over time, from three votes to five votes to eight votes to seven votes to six votes. And since 1964 to the present, five votes. Being from rural Nebraska-- I'm from Hamilton County, where we have one traffic light-- we are already underrepresented-- underrepresented in our Unicameral system that doesn't include a state senate where we could be equally represented. Adopting LB3 would at least allow those of us in the rural areas to be a part of a unified Nebraska voice on presidential elections.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony. Just to verify, you were testifying on LB3--

ANNE DALY: Right.

SANDERS: --as a proponent.

ANNE DALY: Proponent. Yes.

SANDERS: Thank you very much. Hold on. Are there any questions? See none. Thank you, Ms. Daly.

ANNE DALY: Thank you.

SANDERS: Let's see. Where are we? Here we go. Welcome.

GRETCHEN EURE: Hello. I am an opponent of both LB3 and LR24CA. Thank you. And I, I want to say from the front that part of my statements today are based on some of the offensive language that was used this morning in relation to the plane disaster in Washington.

SANDERS: Can I have you make sure you state your name and spell it?

GRETCHEN EURE: Yes, I'm sorry. My name is Gretchen Eure. My first name is spelled G-r-e-t-c-h-e-n; last name, Eure, E-u-r-e.

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SANDERS: Thank you.

GRETCHEN EURE: Our state has shown the nation a little blue dot in the middle of the country representing all the voices in the region. But there are some Republicans that are trying to snuff out the diversity of people, especially here in Nebraska. A majority of voters have true representation, but some people with [INAUDIBLE] insecurity would want those voices silenced. It is the fragility of Republicans who are doomed to follow the criminals and the rapists and the insurrectionists that dominates their policies and objectives. But the people who are not decadent or deplorable want to preserve their place on the map when it represents the moral decency of Nebraska occupants. So if you want to decide to brand the state along the lines of corruption promoted to incompetency, we will succumb to the political gratification of a few. It is not OK to hide the true agenda of some Republicans seeking personal or political favoritism from the Oval Office. When it's done at the sacrifice of the good people of Nebraska, partisan politics per-- corrodes our patriotism and disenfranchises the efforts of well-meaning, civic-minded residents. You pretend you are a Unicameral, but we're not fooled. Representation should be split out among all people, not just the few.

SANDERS: Well done. Thank you very much for your testimony. Hold on. Let's check to see if there are any questions from the committee members. See none. Thank you very much. Welcome.

DARRYL EURE: Hello. My name is Darryl, D-a-r-r-y-l. My last name is Eure. That was my wife. E-u-r-e. So you're getting a double dose of us. I'm just speaking off the cuff. And my issue is, what is this Legislature afraid of? I'm in opposition to both of those bills. I'm in opposition because we have got to be a true democracy. I've been hearing so much today about this country not being a democracy, but being a republic. My goodness. All through grade school, all through junior high, all through high school, all through college, we talked about this country being a democracy. And now we're talking about it's no longer a democracy, so therefore we don't have to all vote together and everybody's vote don't count. The problem we've been having throughout our community is getting people to vote. And when you begin to take away that vote from people by gerrymandering, by voter ID laws, by changing where people vote at, all of these type of things stop people from voting. And now you want to take away our little blue

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dot in the middle of Nebraska, in the middle of the country because some people are saying, well, we want everybody to vote alike. That's not democracy. You have to have some division. You have to have some opposition. Don't be afraid. Do not be afraid because somebody votes differently than what you would. We have got to be a, a country that, well, I didn't win this time. My candidate, Kamala Harris, did not win. OK. We got Donald Trump in office. OK. But that's what democracy is all about. But if you want to stand back and say, oh, no, we want everybody to vote like this and nobody else is in opposition of us and you can't vote differently, that is not a democracy. That is a totalitarian country. And we are built on a democracy where we do have divisions. We do have oppositions. But we come together as one country, one vote, and we represent the very best of ourselves. Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Eure, for your testimony. See if there are any questions. See none.

DARRYL EURE: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for taking the time.

PEG O'DEA LIPPERT: I need a booster chair.

SANDERS: Welcome. I, I understand that.

HUNT: I do too.

SANDERS: Welcome.

PEG O'DEA LIPPERT: Madam Chair and committee members. I'm Peg O'Dea Lippert, L-i-p-p-e-r-t. Peg is the first name. I am here to testify in opposition to LB3-- which, to the best of my recollection, I've testified against each time a similar bill has come before the-- this similar committee-- and to speak to LR24CA. On December 17, I cast the electoral district-- Congressional District 2 vote at the Nebraska Electoral College. My testimony today is an adaptation of the comments I addressed to the governor on that occasion and which was published in the Omaha World-Herald two days later. The split electoral vote is a priority of the governor and has been introduced into this Legislature by Senator Lippincott. As I said to the governor that day and I say to you today: I'm willing to assume that you believe in

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democracy-- or in the republic-- whichever you choose to call us-- and our democratic way of life. If that is so, it defies reason to not continue the current system, which more closely represents one person, one vote. I have lived and voted in Nebraska for 53 years. And until the enactment of the split electoral vote, mine didn't count as a Democrat in an otherwise Republican state. Not only is the fairer way to let the voices of the people be heard, it puts Nebraska on the map in the national news and brings otherwise absent campaigners to this state, particularly at this time in Congressional District 2. Some 25 paid staffers, three campaign offices, news media personnel, and countless blue dots contributed significant dollars to the state's economy. Because of our split electoral vote, Nebraska is no longer a flyover state during presidential election season. Do you think Nebraska would be in the national news, even mentioned, if not for the potential split vote? You and I both know the answer is no. Although December 17 was not the celebratory event I had hoped for, I was proud Nebraskan to cast the CD2 vote that day for Kamala Harris and Tim Walz. It was a vote for the continuation of our democratic way of life. Regarding L-- LR24CA, this resolution must be withdrawn, as it is nothing more than an end run to-- end run to achieve winner take all. I propose that Senator Dorn or another senator introduce a resolution-- a resolution in the next session enacting Nebraska to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Pact and then wait until such time as a sufficient number of states have joined to equal the current 270 electoral votes necessary to elect the president. This will trigger the beginning of the end of the Electoral College and a move to the national popular vote, the apt time then for such a resolution to be proposed. 17 states and the District of Columbia have already joined the pact. I'm asking to vote no on LB3 and to withdraw the LB-- and to withdraw LR24CA. Thank you for your consideration.

SANDERS: Thank you very much, Ms. Lippert. There's also, I believe, a testimony from George Lippert.

PEG O'DEA LIPPERT: Yes. I, I wrote a note there that he was not able to come and was unable to, to follow whatever directions there were about submitting. So I brought that on his behest.

SANDERS: Perfect.

PEG O'DEA LIPPERT: Thank you.

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SANDERS: Appreciate your testimony.

PEG O'DEA LIPPERT: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thanks for coming down. Let me check to see if there are any questions. See none. Thank you very much.

PEG O'DEA LIPPERT: Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome.

HAROLD BLEVINS: Good morning.

SANDERS: Yeah. It's 3:30 p.m.

HAROLD BLEVINS: Well, good afternoon. Good afternoon. I'm-- my name is Harold Blevins, H-a-r-o-l-d; Blevins, B-l-e-v-i-n-s. I'm against-- I, I do not want this bill. I'm an opponent, I guess. The reason. We have a, a president now who, prior to him becoming president-- like three or four days prior to that-- he invited all the Republican governors to his little home in Mar-a-Lago and said, do it my way. And this is one of the little bills that came up to do it his way. I don't like it. It is, is not democratic. We have a fabulous system in Nebraska and in Maine. Now, people keep talking about the blue dot. I'm sorry, but my friends in Lincoln, my friends in Syracuse, my friends in other cities voted Democrat. It's not just a blue dot. I'm just here to say I think it's ridiculous to change it. It doesn't cost the state any more money to leave it in than to change it out. You're wasting precious time that you could be addressing the bigger issues. That's all I have to say.

SANDERS: Appreciate your testimony. Duly noted.

HAROLD BLEVINS: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for for coming out. Appreciate it. Welcome.

PEGGY BLEVINS: Good afternoon. My name is Peggy Blevins. That was my husband. I am opposed to LB3. I am from Omaha. And I, I don't have a lot of facts and figures that I'm going to quote today. I could have done that. But mine comes down to a commonsense approach of why I'm

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opposed to this. I am from a small rural community in Nebraska. And after high school graduation, I went to college, and then from there moved to several different cities. But I'm from a small rural community in Nebraska originally. And the election days was a very important day in rural communities. People would go to the local gym, you know, where you, you would see your family coming in to vote. And sometimes the family didn't come in to vote, or friends. And I would say, why didn't you come in to vote? And under the system that was there at that time-- it was a system where one vote takes it all-- and they would say, my vote doesn't count. Omaha and Lincoln are going too rural. What happens in Nebraska? And at the time I thought, this is really sad that you really think that your vote is not going to count. So to do away with this bill or to, to do away with what the-- this system that we have in effect right now, I think it's going to disenfranchise many of rural Nebraskans and they're going to feel like their vote is no longer important. And it's going to prevent them from going to the polls. So I am opposed to this change. And that's where I stand.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony.

PEGGY BLEVINS: OK. Thank you.

SANDERS: I'll check to see if there are any questions. See none. Thank you, Ms. Bluvis, Blevins [SIC] for coming in.

PEGGY BLEVINS: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Welcome.

MARK METCALF: Hi. Good afternoon. My na-- I'm speaking in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. My name is Mark Metcalf. That's M-a-r-k M-e-t-c-a-l-f. I happen to be the chair of the Fillmore County Democrats, a determined group of rural Nebraskans who want legislation that is rational, fair, and beneficial. Senators, I expect today that you'll hear a lot about the political, social, and economic benefits of our current method of allocating electoral votes. Those benefits are significant and undeniable. The Republican Party is pushing these winner all-- winner-take-all proposals, but the party should realize that it benefits from our current system too because the party has to step up its game up in order to compete in our 2nd District. Today,

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the party is incentivized to get up off the culture war couch and get in some steps in the direction of substantive issues and political moderation. Are Nebraska Republicans truly afraid of fair competition? Surely not. Since this split vote went into effect, I believe there have been nine presidential elections, and Republicans in the 2nd District are six and three. You were bowl-eligible by 2016. Are Nebraska Republicans tired of having their presidential nominee show up in Nebraska? Of course not. And they have shown up here. The nation is paying attention to Nebraska and Nebraskans are paying attention to politics. Nebraskans in the most populous area of the state actually have hope that their votes for president will matter, and that's a good thing. Finally, the way things are going now, there will be some serious political backlash against the current occupant of the White House and his party. The day may be coming when the Republican Party will treasure its singular red patch in the 3rd District of Nebraska. Let us avoid fixing something that is obviously not broken. Let us drop LB3 and LR-- LR24CA. I'll be happy to take any questions for those who want to draw out the session.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Metcalf. Just check to see if there are any questions. I see none. Thank you very much.

MARK METCALF: Yeah.

SANDERS: Now, nobody move. I think we're going to take a five-minute break. It will allow you to move forward. And we can fill in those that are out in the hall. And so we're going to take a quick five-minute break up here. Please do so. But we'll move everybody up. The Red Coats will help guide you.

[BREAK]

SANDERS: Good afternoon. We had a great crowd here the first couple hours. And I think some of you are still from the first half. So welcome back. I just want to remind how we're going to move through this process. We're going to start on this end for the next testifier. And we're-- wait a minute. I'm sorry. Down on this end here and down. And then we'll go back to this end and down. And, and when you finish with your testimony, if you will please exit the room. It will make more for, for more. So with that, we'll go ahead and get started. Welcome to the Government Committee.

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JOSEPHINE LITWINOWICZ: Thank you, Chairman Sanders. Good to see you again. And members of the committee. My name is Josephine Litwinowicz, J-o-s-e-p-h-i-n-e L-i-t-w-i-n-o-w-i-c-z. And it's-- as important this is, I, I-- every time I come up, we better watch President Trump. It, it, it's bad. He's taking over forms of government. He's persecuting people. He's setting his standard. He's weaken-- weakening our institutions. And I, I, I can't-- it's so important that-- you, you probably [INAUDIBLE]. You better have an open letter ready. You better have an open letter ready for when it comes, the next biggest thing. OK. So first of all, on this, this nonsense of, of, of unifying all of the-- oh, I also wanted to say, it, it's tough. And-- you see how tough it is? I talked to-- I got some promises on this as far as, you know, being able to speak proper. I can go into that later too, but-- you know. Like-- there was arguments made that, you know, unifying the whole state and, you know, submitting all the electors at once. But I think it's a-- who, who likes a small government? Or what about local where we all get to decide? Why, why can't-- well, we know why we can't, why we have to, you know, get this forced. And I don't know if you were paying attention, but all, all of this-- you know, when-- we clearly want in certain locations, as we proved, District 2, that we did not-- we are-- we're-- who we wanted for president in that district. Now, let's look at it locally. We can split it up even more, I'd say. But now-- we'd get a re-- better representation of the electors that go-- that vote on the presidency. And of course, of course, the, the-- of course these-- Electoral College is nonsense. Right? Because it was meant for totally different purposes. And it's just sad that it exists at all because then, yeah, in terms of morality, we are the flyover states. You get two senators. We're-- Los Angeles has the highest population, eighth highest population in the country, and we should have a bunch of senators from there. But we can't, right? Because you just want to keep-- you want to-- nobody wants it fair. So we're just going to keep that as long as we can, huh? Two senators for California no matter what their politics. So we're just going to make sure-- we're going to make sure that the people-- the smaller population that agrees with some of these things, we're going to make sure the smal-- they win. Right? Just like the governor appointing the governors that he know will kowtow. Now, realize that this is how autocracies form in part, you know. In the name of religion, we're going to-- OK. I didn't get the finish, but we got to move on.

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SANDERS: Yeah.

JOSEPHINE LITWINOWICZ: Thanks a lot.

SANDERS: Josephine, I appreciate your testimony.

JOSEPHINE LITWINOWICZ: Thank you. I will always pay attention to the rules. Have a great day.

SANDERS: Thank you. You too.

JOSEPHINE LITWINOWICZ: I was about halfway done. Take care.

SANDERS: OK. Starting on my right. Welcome.

SHERI ST. CLAIR: Good afternoon. Hi. I'm Sheri St. Clair, S-h-e-r-i S-t. C-l-a-i-r. I'm here this afternoon testifying on behalf of the League, League of Women Voters of Nebraska in opposition to both LB3 and LR24CA. The league believes that the direct popular vote method for election of the president and vice president is essential to representative government. As such, we support abolishment of the Electoral College. Absent that, we reiterate our dedication to promoting an open government system that is representative, accountable, and responsive, including voting methods that encourage voter participation and voter engagement, particularly of those with minority opinions, including underrepresented communities. Nebraska's Electoral College split recognizes that our congressional districts differ in not only partisan makeup, but also racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other demographic compositions. There has been a consistent recognition that the district method better balances local representation with national unity, offering a middle ground between the winner-take-all and the direct popular vote systems. Speaking, you know, historically, nationally, there have been a lot of bills introduced over the year proposing constitutional amendments that would replace the Electoral College with either the district method or direct popular election of the president and vice president. I'm not going to repeat all those ones that are listed in the written statement, but do note that replacing the Electoral College was supported by our forefather James Madison, and President Andrew Jackson was the first to call for outright abolition of the Electoral College in favor of direct popular vote. In this century, there have

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been a lot of proposals submitted in favor of direct popular vo-- or, changing in the Electoral College, including one in 1934 by Nebraska's Senator George Norris. And interestingly, Nebraska Senators Roman Hruska and Carl Curtis signed on as cosponsors of the 1969 constitutional amendment, which would have adopted a split system. The district method is a practical and principled system rooted in our ideals of fairness and local control. Nebraska thus honors the legacy championed by its political leaders, who understood the importance of giving all voters a voice. Repeated attempts since its adoption in Nebraska-- most recently in 2023-- disregards this history in attempt to achieve partisan advantage rather than achieving more representative elections. When compared to the winner-take-all systems, Nebraska's current system-- in use since 1992-- has better reflected the will of our people and should continue to be used to do so. Neither of these bills, LB3 or LR24CA, should be advanced from this committee. Thank you.

SANDERS: Well done. Thank you, Ms. St. Claire. Let me check there-- see if there is any questions for you. See none. Thank you for your testimony and your patience.

SHERI ST. CLAIR: Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome.

HEIDI UHING: Thank you, Chairman Sanders and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Heidi Ewing, H-e-i-d-i U-h-i-n-g. I'm Public Policy Director for Civic Nebraska, speaking in opposition to both LB3 and LR24CA. Civic Nebraska is a nonpartisan, non-- pro-voter organization and has long been in favor of the split electoral vote because it serves Nebraskans well, ensuring a more localized representation of voter's intent. It bolsters our state's relevancy in federal elections, generating more attention from national candidates, and boosting voter turnout. All of these are good things. We've testified to this effect before, but something notable has happened on this issue that I want to recognize, particularly for the senators new to this committee. This winner-take-all bill was heard in this room as recently as 2023. The hearing was comparatively short and sweet. There were five proponents, seven opponents. It didn't make it out of committee. No senator prioritized it. And now the governor has named it a top priority for

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the state. We have an uncomfortably packed hearing room, an overflow room, and a very long night for all of you. What has changed to create this interest? The bill that gave us the split electoral vote in 1991 had five cosponsors: two Republicans, three Democrats. It passed with the support of five Republicans in the body. What's different today is that, last April, with only hours left of the legislative session, someone from outside Nebraska suddenly made a demand of this body that would best serve a particular candidate in a tweet. I encourage you to prioritize issues that are homegrown priorities for Nebraskans, to resist partisan pressure when it's not in the best interest of Nebraskans. Prioritize process over partisan outcomes. You've heard calls today to conform to how other states tally these votes. They're right. It would be more consistent. But this very institution is evidence of Nebraska's tradition of doing things differently. Those who have come before us have customized the government and this unique electoral system designed solely to better represent us. Nebraska and Maine got it right. It's OK to be better than the rest. Thanks.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony. To confirm, you're, you're opposing LB3 and LR24C--

HEIDI UHING: That's right.

SANDERS: Thank you very much.

HEIDI UHING: Thank you.

SANDERS: Let me check to see if there are any questions. Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Thank you, Chairwoman Sanders. Thank you, Ms. Uhing, for being here. First, could we get a copy of your testimony when--

HEIDI UHING: Happy to.

HUNT: --you get a chance? OK. And then second, in the beginning of your testimony, you talked about how our split electoral vote brings interest from candidates to Nebraska, it brings economic opportunities for Nebraskans, increases turnout. You mentioned these things. Senator Lippincott in his open, he said the opposite of all that. He said it doesn't help turnout, it doesn't bring money in. And he did not have any citations for that view. But do you have any that you can share with us later?

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HEIDI UHING: Yeah, I'll pull together some information that, that bolsters those arguments and provides some context for those statements.

HUNT: Thank you.

HEIDI UHING: I think a lot of it is contextual that we kind of observe and kind of can assume based on the makeup of Nebraska, our size, and its relevancy to the larger scope nationally, how different it would be if, if we did not have this split vote. But I'll, I'll find some data for you to back that up. Thank you.

HUNT: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Hunt. Are there any other questions? Senator Wordekemper.

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you for being here. Just a note to follow on Senator Hunt. I think if you're gathering the data-- I understand the vice president or president might not make it here, but I think it would be important to note or maybe research if any of the people that work for them or represent them have made the trip. I think that would be telling also, please.

HEIDI UHING: Good point, Senator.

WORDEKEMPER: Thank you.

HEIDI UHING: Thank you. I will do that.

SANDERS: OK. Any other questions? See none. Thank you for--

HEIDI UHING: Thanks so much.

SANDERS: --your testimony, Ms. Uhing. Welcome.

GAVIN GEIS: Chairwoman Sanders, members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Gavin Geis. That is spelled G-a-v-i-n G-e-i-s. And I am the Executive Director for Common Cause Nebraska. Common Cause Nebraska is a grassroots organization with a 40-year history of advocating for accessible and accountable government that serves us all. Today, Common Cause Nebraska opposes

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LB3 and LR24CA because we believe doing away with our split Electoral College vote would be a loss for every Nebraska. Much has been made of how moving to a winner-take-all system would better serve Nebraska's interests. In truth, our current model not only reveals a more accurate picture of how Nebraska is voting, but it gives us all greater influence and power in presidential elections. For decades, presidential campaigns have mostly been the territory of battleground states. Last year, 94% of campaign events were held in just seven swing states. 32 states did not receive any visits from candidates, a class that includes our neighbors in Missouri, South Dakota, Kansas, and Wyoming. Sadly, most states have been deemed irrelevant. Yet despite those odds, Nebraska was among the handful of nonswing states that received attention from both campaigns last year. Because we bucked the norm, candidates are forced to pay attention to us. That attention means that Nebraskans get a better chance to judge the candidates and that they must consider our interests when pitching themselves. In short, it gives us better insight and leverage in presidential politics than most states. Another way to measure how our system's-- system gives Nebraskans an advantage is by considering how much campaigns spend on advertising to us. Based on a review of spending during the 2020 election, just over \$6.5 million was spent on advertising by presidential campaigns and their supporters in Nebraska. While the totals for 2024 aren't available yet, we can be sure that spending has only increased to gain our votes. To be clear, Common Cause is no fan of the climbing costs of our elections, but we recognize that spending is an indicator of how candidates are looking at states. And the fact that they're willing to spend millions on media here is a clear signal that our votes matter. Yet another way to understand the influence this system has given Nebraskans is by examining the pressure that was put on this Legislature last year to change the system. When it looked like Nebraska could hold the keys to electoral victory, national interests moved in to persuade senators to do away with the split vote before the November elections. Make no mistake, in that scenario, it was Nebraska who held the power. If instead we moved to a winner-take-all system, you can be sure that presidential candidates won't be calling you asking for a favor. Instead, they'll forget all about us and we'll have given up the leverage we now hold. Rather, I'd encourage you to be proud of the model and the strength it gives us. At a time when people are feeling more helpless than ever to impact our national politics, we maintain a

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system that prioritizes the power of Nebraska's voters. And as such, we urge you to reject LB3 and LR24CA. Thank you for your time.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Geis. Are there any questions from the, from the committee? See none. Thank you very much for your testimony--

GAVIN GEIS: Thank you.

SANDERS: --your patience. OK. We're moving over here. Welcome.

PAULA RAY: Hello, senators. Thank you for the opportunity to be here. My name is Paula Ray. I'm a retired clinical psychologist. I live in Lincoln, Nebraska. My name is P-a-u-l-a R-a-y. And I am here to speak in opposition to both bills. And my comments will be brief. You know, I've heard comments today around the importance of money and candidates. And what I want to speak to is personal pride as a Nebraskan, as a grandparent. I value the sense that I live in a community where my grandson can bring friends that speak the, the logos of Republicans and those who speak the logos of Democrats. And they can have a rational discussion with the adults in our family that helps them think about issues, helps them be able to think abstractly about very complex concepts that you're all dealing with, that when it comes down to the individual of one doesn't mean that much. And because of that, because it cannot-- because these issues are so big, when it comes to an individual, they can very quickly lose a sense of competency. And I want my grandchildren as Nebraskans to feel proud that they have the ability to receive not only a good education in the educational system, but in their environment. And their environment is based on the sense of pride. They might not have a vote that counts, but they have a voice, and that voice is important. So I speak for that voice.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony.

PAULA RAY: You're welcome.

SANDERS: To confirm, opposing LB3 and LR--

PAULA RAY: Yes.

SANDERS: --LR24CA?

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PAULA RAY: Correct.

SANDERS: OK. And let, let me check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you very much for your time and patience.

PAULA RAY: Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome.

JASON BROWN: Hi there. I'm in opposition to both pieces of legislation.

SANDERS: Thank you.

JASON BROWN: Good afternoon. My name is Jason Brown, J-a-s-o-n B-r-o-w-n. I'm a proud, lifelong Nebraskan. I grew up in southwest Nebraska in the tiny village of Hendley, population 22. Now I live in Omaha, our largest community. In between the two, I lived right here in Lincoln for almost 25 years. So I'm proud to have lived, I guess you could call it, the full Nebraska experience, having resided in all three of our awesome and very unique congressional districts. So last fall, my wife and I created the very first hand-painted blue dot yard sign. It grew from the one we placed in our yard to over 15,000 by Election Day. To be clear, we didn't do anything all that special. We just painted a dot on a sign. But we do feel honored to have started a positive movement and feel proud that, more than anything, it became an education movement about how we do it better in Nebraska. Early on, we were warned to expect extreme negative pushback. We were even warned to expect threats of violence over a simple blue and white sign. But this is Nebraska. By and large, the negativity was pushed to the sides. We are not a state of extremists on either side. Being reasonable is in our DNA. Over and over, we met Republicans in favor of keeping our system. Why? They all said it just makes sense because it's good for Nebraska. Our current system very much honors the dominance of red in Nebraska, but Nebraskans have shown a hint of blue in just three elections. Those blue Nebraskans are your friends. They are your family. And they are your neighbors. So let's continue to show the world that, yes, we are a state with a wide swath of red. And yes, on occasion, we are a state with a little streak of blue. Since adopting our allocation system in 1992, we have awarded 42 votes to

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Republican presidential candidates and just 3 to Democrats. So I hope we can agree that with a score of 42 to 3, our current system very much honors the dominance of red Nebraska and it honors rural Nebraska. A common defense of winner takes all argues that we should just do it like the other states. But to me, I just don't believe that's a good argument. Should we be swayed to change just because that's what everyone else is doing? Consider this-- and you've heard it today-- aren't we all proud to be the only state with a Unicameral? It is unique and it is better. I imagine we would shut down any arguments to eliminate it just to do it like the other states. Our approach ensures others pay attention to Nebraska. Attention means we all win. Attention turns into dollars-- a lot of dollars for Nebraskans. Cant-- campaigns have spent millions here. Ending our current approach guarantees those millions will forever disappear. Additionally, we live in a state where candidates actually visit and show interest in hearing from us. Why would we give that up? Please do not change to winner takes all.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Brown, for your testimony. Hold that thought. Any questions from the committee? Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Thank you. Thank you so much for being here. You know, thank you for being so active in the community. I would say that to anybody who, you know, played such a, a role in, like, getting out the vote for either side, for sure. I just want to know-- and I only say this to you because it's maybe the third or fourth time I've heard it. Just know there are many people in the Legislature who would like to get rid of the Unicameral. So don't act like that's so precious to us. And be careful what you bring up too much. So thank you very much.

JASON BROWN: [INAUDIBLE].

HUNT: Thank you.

JASON BROWN: Thank you, Senator Hunt.

SANDERS: Any other questions from the committee? See none. Thank you for your testimony and your patience.

JASON BROWN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Welcome.

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DORIS RUTH HUEBNER: Hi there. I'm Doris Ruth Huebner, D-o-r-i-s R-u-t-h; Huebner, H-u-e-b-n-e-r. This past election season, my husband and I started the blue dot signs. Yes, I'm the other half of this couple. We were delighted that it led to an educational campaign regarding how our state awards electoral votes and benefits our unique vo-- voting system that it brings to the state. Now, the argument for changing our current voting system is-- or, it seems to primarily be that 48 other states do it as winner takes all and thus we should too. The argument for keeping our current voting system is because it's better for Nebraska. And that's why we're all here today, is what is best for Nebraska. And when we think about that, it's better because presidential candidates, both Democrats and Republicans, listen to us. They work with us. They court us in order to win our vote. It's like we're a mini swing state within a state. And why would we want to lose that power that it yields us? Now, news media also shines a spotlight on us. This last election season, our state was visited dozens of times by local and national media. We also had media outlets and international news media, from Germany, to France to Sweden to Spain. We had these people flying in. The, the entire world was-- we, we were on their, on their spotlight. They were putting us, Nebraska, on the map. Why would we want to lose that? This pumped money into our economy. It kept us on the ma-- and this helps our state also be attractive for business looking for a place to call home. So that's an economic win, one that lasts beyond the, the election season. Now, there will always be political topics that Democrats and Republicans disagree on. In politics today, it seems like when one side wins, inevitably the other side has lost. But it does not need to be that way with LB3. Nebraska's current unique way of casting electoral votes is a win for our state. Nationwide voter turnout of registered voters is only 63%. In Nebraska, we achieved 76%. A 13% higher voter turnout is what happens when people feel like their vote and their voice matters. They are engaged in the political process. Let's not lose that. Our mini swing state brings in resources and encourages people from all walks of life to know that Nebraska is a state where they can do business. Their employees will feel at home and feel welcomed rather-- whether they are red or blue. Let's continue to be grou-- groundbreaking. Let's continue to give Nebraska an edge. And let's continue to give all Nebraskans a voice. Thank you.

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SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. I'm going to check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you for your testimony and your patience, Ms. Huber [SIC]. Welcome.

TIM CONN: Hello. Thank you all for all the work you do. I am Tim Conn, C-o-n-n. I am in opposition to both bills. First, I have a couple of comments regarding earlier discussion. Senator Cavanaugh, I will never grow tired of listening to you. And I might get in trouble with Senator Hunt later with one of my comments. I hope not. Also, Senators Lippincott and Dorn, I just want to register my opposition to something that they said-- I think they're gone-- but I believe the Founding Fathers left it to our states to decide how to allocate the electoral votes, and I don't think doing what other states are doing was part of that mandate. Hi, I'm Tim Conn. My wife and I have been married for 54 years and have both lived in Omaha all of our lives. My father grew up in Cozad. My mother lived on a farm west of Omaha. I'm a proud Nebraskan. I'm proud of Nebraska volleyball, football, all of our wonderful neighbors. And I am proud of the good life. I will say proud a lot in this because I am. I'm proud of our system of government that sends electors to Washington based on the desires of our individual congressional districts in the state. And I'm proud of our Unicameral, which I have been-- I have read considers the people to be its second house. We hope you consider keeping our system and not change the way our three districts vote for the electors. Since the early 1990s, CD2 has voted for blue candidates three times but red candidates six times. I am proud of our system because depending on the mood of our nation and of our state and the issues that are important at the time, we have the right in each of our three districts to decide who is the best fit to leave our-- lead our country. We should showcase our system as a model for the rest of America to copy. Our system puts us on the map. It encourages our citizens in political conversation and will welcome people to Nebraska knowing that, whatever their political philosophy, they have a chance in Nebraska to have their voice heard and their vote count. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Let's see if there are questions from Senator Cavanaugh. I see none. Senator Hunt.

HUNT: I'm good. Thank you.

SANDERS: OK. There are no questions. Thank you, Mr.--

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HUNT: Thank you.

SANDERS: --Conn, for coming in today--

TIM CONN: Thank you very much.

SANDERS: --and taking the time and your patience. Thank you. Welcome.

VICKEY PARKS: My name is Vickey Parks, V-i-c-k-e-y; Parks, P-a-r-k-s. And I'm here in opposition of both bills. I just want to acknowledge that so many things that I intended to say have already been said by people who are in opposition to this legislative change. I also want the committee to know that I've lived in Nebraska long enough that in Omaha for years we never could get any representation from our community until we got district elections. Our votes never counted until we got district elections. And I want you to put yourselves in my shoes. How do you think we in the black community and communities of color and poor people see this move? We see this as another attempt to take our power and our voice out of the political process. That's how we see it. We can't see it any different because you can't show us any different. We remember what it was to not ever get elected people by our vote in our community in our lifetime. I hope that you have the wisdom to know-- I get calls from peop-- African-Americans all over the country who say, one thing you Nebraskans do besides good football, y'all got it right on how you elect-- how you do the Electoral College. I get that from all over the country, that that is the one thing that we in north Omaha can be proud of for this state doing-- political doings. I hope that you recognize that we want to be heard, that we want to be listened to. And the representative body, we want you to know that we're watching and paying attention to what you're doing. The reason a lot of my sisters and brothers aren't here is because they can't take off work and spend a day in Lincoln to talk about one political issue. That's why they're not here. And how would you feel if we in Douglas County decided that we want 50%-- with 51% of the vote, we can vote to lo-- move the Unicameral to Omaha? How would you-- how would people in Nebraska take that? I hope that you use your wisdom and keep a system that's worked and that represents the voices and the concerns of all of the people of Nebraska that you really represent. I have no other comments.

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SANDERS: Thank you very much, Ms. Parks, for your testimony. I'm going to check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you for your time and patience. Welcome.

AMELIA ASPEN: Thank you, Madam Chair and committee. I appreciate your time. My name is Amelia Aspen, A-m-e-l-i-a A-s-p-e-n. And I am against LB3 and LR24CA. Additionally, I am a sophomore at Duchesne Academy in Omaha, and I will be a voter next time America has a chance to care about Nebraska in national elections. Before I start the speech I've prepared, I'd like to read something I jotted down throughout this meeting. I heard some comments saying the blue dot-- as we have been calling it today, at least-- is splitting us apart. However, that is not true-- or, at the very least, that is not what we should be focusing on. If you look at us today, the blue dot has unified all of us. If we go to how all the other states have it, our opinion will be diminished and neither party will have the passion we have now. I know Nebraska is a place that is very political. I have talked to my friends-- the youth-- from other states about politics, and they're not nearly as politically involved as I see most of my friends and peers from Nebraska. I mean, nobody has kids or high school students driving to the Capitol to talk about their political opinions. However, our electoral votes split in such a way gives people of all parties hope and help-- and helps people keep themselves educated on the ongoing in our politics. So let's keep the youth involved in politics, and the first step to that is keeping this electoral system so we don't go back. OK. Now for the one I prepared. A lot of people don't really understand how unique our way of life is here in Nebraska. Nebraska ha-- as the flyover-- here in Nebraska, as they fly over us to get to bigger cities. We help out those who need it and encourage the strong to help themselves. We might not live next to big cities that people respect more, like New York or LA, but that does not mean that we don't have the-- we don't have important ideas to share with the rest of America, ideas that can balance the extremes as well as ideas that can make everyone stronger. Our divided electoral system gives our country a chance to see what our val-- what our values are all about. Because of it, we play a disproportionate role to presidential elections because politicians have to at least respect what we stand for once every four years. I think our ability to award electoral votes the way we do helps us dilute coastal values with the ones we already know give us the-- give us the chance to live the good

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life. Why not let the rest of the country see what makes us such a special place? I encourage you to vote against LB3 and LR24CA because it would be sad for America to lose our voice and the voice of young leaders.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Check to see if there are any questions from the committee. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chairwoman. Thanks for being here, Ms. Aspen. Do you know that Duchesne is in District 9, the best district in the state of Nebraska? I just have to give a shout-out.

ANDERSEN: Shameless.

J. CAVANAUGH: Yes, shameless. Well, it's true. When it's true, it's easy to say.

HUNT: [INAUDIBLE] us versus them we're talking about.

J. CAVANAUGH: Yes, but you should-- I, I commend you for being here. As a person who wrote a paper about this, as I said, in seventh grade, I still never testified at the Legislature until I was actually in the Legislature. So I appreciate you being here.

AMELIA ASPEN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Are there any other questions from the committee, comments? Thank you, Ms. Aspen--

AMELIA ASPEN: Thank you.

SANDERS: --for your testimony and your patience. Thanks for [INAUDIBLE]. Welcome.

WESLEY DODGE: Thank you. My name is Wesley Dodge, W-e-s-l-e-y; Dodge like the car. I'm also associ-- I'm from Omaha. And I'm also associated with Represent Us. And I'm doing something that's a little outside the box here. I hope to break up the boredom or the, the, the repetitiveness of it. But I want you to admi-- imagine a meeting-- oh. By the way, I'm in opposition to both pieces of legislation. I want you to imagine a meeting in a boardroom where you have four people talking, a billionaire, the head of a party, a political leader, and

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the head of the social media corporation. And imagine this conversation. Did you see Nebraska's still relevant because of that little split electoral vote thing they do? They laugh. Of course Nebraska. Trying to punch above its weight. Don't they know their place? I mean, who gave them permission to be different? Really, the nerve. While the rest of the country's coloring within the lines, Nebraska's here thinking they're Picasso. I mean, splitting the electoral vote. Who do they think they are, a swing state? Exactly. If we could get them to go along with everyone else, it would be so much easier. No more wasting money, energy. No more convincing. Just, just no more effort spending money we could use elsewhere. Effort's for losers. The whole point of strategy is to avoid doing actual work. Why should we have to campaign in Omaha or Nebraska at all? They should just fall in line with the rest of the Midwest and call it a day. Right. Like, Nebraska, stop trying to be innovative. You're not Silicon Valley. You're cornfields, volleyball, and football. Stick to what you know. Didn't one of the Republican senators say their system is really what everyone should do? Shh. OK. So how do we convince them to comply? Do you think they know it's easier for us to seize and hold power under a winner-take-all system? Do they know that we want to rule, not represent? Maybe we can say Nebraska, stop being special, sincerely, the rest of America. Let's create a reality TV show how-- about being different is overrated? We'll call it Electoral Monotony: The Way It Should Be. I like that. Very relatable. We could even throw in a tagline. Why be unique when you can be predictable? Or Nebraska. And they all laugh. Brilliant. But seriously, we should just convince them to be like everyone else. I mean, it's almost like they think they matter. We all know the game. Big states, big cities, big wins. One person, one vote is such an inconvenience. Nebraska trying to make an impact? Please. That's adorable. Let's end this nonsense. Nebraska, buddy, here's a thought, stop being spe-- a special snowflake and melt into that puddle that's the rest of the Midwest. Amen to that. Now let's get, get to more important matters like figuring out how to spin "corn-fed compliance" into a campaign slogan. Nebraska, the land of following directions. Nebraska, where innovation goes to die. Cornfield compli-- corn-fed compliance. I like that. We may have just saved democracy. And then they all laugh. So that's my one-man show. I'm not, I'm not quite a thesbian, but-- and I do have some other notes and-- am I out of ti-- I'm unofficially out of time? OK.

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SANDERS: I appreciate your testimony and your patience. Hold on. Let me see if there are any questions. I see none. Thank you very much.

WESLEY DODGE: OK. Thank you.

SANDERS: Welcome.

CHERI DURYEA McPHERSON: Hello, senators. My name is Cheri Duryea McPherson, C-h-e-r-i D-u-r-y-e-a M-c-P-h-e-r-s-o-n. I'm here in opposition of LB3 and LR24CA. Nebraska's unique method upholds fundamental democratic principles and ensures fair representation for all Nebraskans. Here's why we must preserve it. First, our approach ensures that every voter, no matter where they live, has a meaningful say in determining the outcome of the presidential election. Winner-take-all systems have the potential to silence the voices of voters who support minority political views within their states. Here in Nebraska, your vote matters whether you live in Omaha, Scottsbluff, or anywhere in between. Our system respects the range of political views and diverse geography of our state. Second, this system ensures fairness and representation. By allocating electoral votes based on cogresh-- congressional districts, Nebraska better represents the political diversity of our population. This balance would be erased under a winner-take-all system, where only the majority matters and minority voices are left unheard. Additionally, our current system encourages voter participation. This was on full display in the last election with the healthy competition between the blue and red yard sign campaigns. Thanks to people who were up here earlier. When voters know their ballots can directly impact the allocation of an electoral vote in their district, they are more likely to head to the polls. This system gives people a reason to believe their vote counts, and that belief is vital in building trust in our democracy. Let us not forget that Nebraska's system has operated effectively for over 30 years. It's proven to well-- work well for our state, providing a model of fairness and innovation in a country where political polarization threatens to disenfranchise too many Americans. So I ask, why change a system that has served us well? The answer lies in outside political pressure. Forces beyond Nebraska's borders are pushing for a winner-take-all system, not because it benefits our state, but because it serves their own partisan goals. Should we sacrifice Nebraska's unique voice in the name of national political

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strategies? Absolutely not. Let us take a firm stand in protecting the voice of every Nebraskan. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony. Hold on.

CHERI DURYEY McPHERSON: Oh, sorry.

SANDERS: Are there any questions from the committee? See none. Thank you for your time and patience. Good afternoon.

TRACY ZAISS: Good afternoon, Senator. Thank you so much. My name is Tracy Zais, T-r-a-c-y Z-a-i-s-s. I'm speaking today in opposition to both bills. And I want to specifically talk about the shallow and insulting argument that we should reverse years of effectiveness just because everybody else does it. I am a fifth-generation Nebraskan. I love our state and have always been proud of the culture that makes us unique. Our culture can be summarized as a fierce independence that is committed to freedom of thought and opposed to unfairness and unrestrained power, a culture that is focused on what is best for all Nebraskans, not just the rich and powerful. It is inspiring and rooted in a strong sense of morality. It is the envy of other states. Our ability to split electoral votes is just one demonstration of our inspiring Nebraska independence, but it's an important example. It demonstrates that we value our citizens and their opinions, and it demonstrates that we love democracy. If you don't understand that, you don't understand what makes Nebraska special. To eliminate this distinct advantage would do nothing to help Nebraskans. In fact, it would take away valuable benefits like the relevance and attention it gives to our state. So the question becomes, who does moving to winner take all benefit? I guess it's just the outside political interests who have no interest in doing what's best for Nebraska voters-- like when Lindsey Graham came here to tell us all what to think and how to behave. I do not understand the strong desire of Nebraska elected officials to emulate New York and California, just to name a couple of states. When I was a young girl, my mother asked me, if all your friends jumped off a cliff, would you too? I'm guessing your mother said something like that to you too. And we all know it's a pretty good idea to listen to our mothers. Mine taught me that we all owe it to ourselves and to God to think independently no matter who is trying to get us to follow them blindly-- whether it's your friends, your thoughts, your governor, your senator, or your president. Nebraska

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voters value independent critical thinking. This Unicameral is getting the reputation of ignoring the voters of Nebraska. Before you lose credibility, I urge this body to start thinking for themselves about what is good for Nebraska and the people you promise to serve. Do not advance LB3 or its backup measure, LR24CA. Thank you very much for sitting here all afternoon and your excellent running of this hearing--

SANDERS: Thank you very much.

TRACY ZAISS: --Senator Sanders.

SANDERS: It's good to see you again.

TRACY ZAISS: It's nice--

SANDERS: [INAUDIBLE] see if there are any questions for you. Are there any questions? See none. Thanks, Ms. Zaiss.

ELLIE ARCHER: Senator Cavanaugh, Elmwood Tower, District 9.

J. CAVANAUGH: The best.

ELLIE ARCHER: I'm here in opposition to both the bills. My name is Ellie Archer, E-l-l-i-e A-r-c-h-e-r. Senators, we are here today because Governor Pillen wants to fix something that isn't broken. By making winner take all one of his top priorities, he is deflecting attention from the truly pressing problems we face. This is simply political gamesmanship. To be clear, as a resident-- I'm sorry-- registered Independent, I'm not here out of allegiance to any political party. I'm here because I'm opposed to the intent of LB3 and LR24CA. While at first blush the latter appears to be fair and democratic, in reality it greenlights deep pockets with unlimited funds to buy yet another election. These bills are a partisan power grab designed to divide rural and urban Nebraskans in order to curry favor with outside interest. In fact, on the very day LB3 was introduced, Governor Pillen was at Mar-a-Lago talking about advancing the MAGA agenda. Well, what about Nebraska's agenda? What's the governor's motivation for the switch? He says that falling in line with other states will somehow better reflect Nebraska values. Really? Where's the value in getting lost in the crowd? Value is the amount of positive attention, political leverage, and revenue we gain with our

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current system. It literally puts us on the map and makes us uniquely relevant in national politics. But true value is citizens of all stripes believing that their vote will count. In 60 years of participating in every election over four states, never have I seen more engagement, enthusiasm, and healthy competition than this past fall. Is that really something you want to suppress? An alarming trend suggests that perhaps it is. The voice of the people is increasingly disregarded. This week, a new senator here brazenly stated that he is not dissuaded by what voters defeated at the ballot box just last year. Hopefully this hearing isn't a cynical waste of everyone's time. In closing, ask yourselves, is winner take all more critical than our budget deficit? Is it more important than water or affordable housing or worker shortages? How about health care and the aging population in our rural states? Should it take precedence over your own priority bills? Apparently Governor Pillen thinks so, but do you? If the answer is no, then please have the political courage to kill these bills in committee. In a Unicameral, this should not be a litmus test of party loyalty. You and your colleagues need to focus your limited time on the truly important things that actually benefit your constituents and are in the best interest of all Nebraskans. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Ms. Archer. Check to see if there's any questions. See none. Thank you again for your time and patience.

ELLIE ARCHER: Thank you.

SANDERS: Easy does it.

NAOMI FRANCIS: Wish I could stand.

SANDERS: Welcome. Well, you can.

NAOMI FRANCIS: I may. Thank you.

SANDERS: You bet.

NAOMI FRANCIS: My name is Naomi Francis, F-r-a-n-c-i-s. I heard about this on the Nebraska legislator yesterday, registration online yesterday. And I came without knowing really what I was doing. And I saw a veteran on the page itself, and I feel like I'm in a good place. So I am 100% service-connected disabled veteran. I am war's daughter. My great grandfather, Jesse Lane [PHONETIC], survived eight years in

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George Washington's Revolutionary Army. Every generation in my ancestry since then has served, and I've followed that same calling. In service, I met my husband. He's a combat veteran from O'Neill, Nebraska. And we met serving over at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. And my military service left me in constant pain day and night. I could not have dreamt of the healing and the peace that I would find raising my kids in rural Nebraska. It's, it's been amazing. But in my military service, we're not supposed to talk about-- we're not supposed to talk about politics. But yeah, we talked. And I'll never forget-- and this was in 2007-- when one of the Marines that I was stationed with overseas told me-- they were like, who would you vote for? Who are you voting for? And he said, I'm from New York. If I don't vote blue, doesn't matter. That was in my 20s. And I have always just voted my conscience, but I thought about that. And I remembered that back in California, it's always blue. But everybody I knew was voting Republican. And I remem-- and I realized in listening to a lot of the speeches here today, or a lot of the, the, the desperate hearts seeking your attention, have said that there's blue dots and there's red seas. Well, if you knew the red seas in California like I do, if you knew how the Nebraska farmers and the California farmers need to be talking and need to be friends, and if you knew how similar they are-- but in California, this should not be winner take all. And Nebraska should be proud that the votes are heard and that you have a chance. And all the things that have been said today. And that's my experience from being a California veteran who then served in several different states and overseas and met so many people. And I'm telling you, please do not. I absolutely oppose winner take all. I want to see Nebraska continue to represent all of us. I want to raise my kids here. I want my kids to-- one of them-- I got six sons. One of them could sit in one of these seats one day and I would be so proud. Keep me proud. Please.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony and thank you for your service to our country. I'm going to check to see if there's any questions. We have one. Senator Wordekemper.

NAOMI FRANCIS: Yes, sir.

WORDEKEMPER: I do not have a question. Thank you to your family and your service.

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NAOMI FRANCIS: Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Thank you for coming in and your patience. Welcome.

JIM TIMM: Thank you, Chairwoman Sanders. Members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. I'm here in opposition to LB3. My name is Jim Timm. That does rhyme. J-i-m T-i-m-m. I represent the Nebraska Broadcasters Association. We represent the states over the air, FCC license, radio, and TV stations all across Nebraska. Our membership consists of over 40 companies that operate over 200 signals around the state. We believe in maintaining our current system that ensures the vote of every citizen is valued by all presidential candidates. If you look back at the 2024 presidential election, we attracted several campaign visits to eastern Nebraska. But under winner take all, we would suffer some big losses. First, for media, local media, we would lose access to candidates. If LB3 passes, local TV and radio stations are left reporting on presidential candidates strictly through the eyes of national media. Our coverage would be void of local candidate visits, interviews, discussions with candidates, citizens, and local interviews on issues that matter to the people. Do you really want it left to the national media outlets, the cable shout shows, and social media to educate Nebraska about our presidential candidates? We think that's risky. Another loss would be jobs. If LB3 passes, local TV and radio stations, especially those in CD2, would lose millions of dollars in revenue. That money would be diverted to states that are having actual races. And even with these elections occurring only every four years, stations rely on this revenue to keep newsrooms adequately staffed, update to the latest technology, to provide local, trusted content, including lifesaving weather reporting. Lost revenue would lead to lost jobs. And if LB3 passes, we do lose some needed tax income. Under our current system, when campaigns come to Nebraska, they hire Nebraska consultants, stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants, shop at our retail businesses. That all trickles down and creates state and local tax revenue. The Greater Omaha Chamber shares the very concerns that I have expressed here this afternoon. In closing, you know, we've all heard that we want Nebraska to be a fly-to state and not a flyover state, but moving to winner take all just guarantees that these important political campaigns will fly right over Nebraska. Thank you for listening. And we hope that you will keep LB3 in committee and not allow it to advance. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

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SANDERS: OK. Are there any questions for Mr. Timms [SIC]? See none. Thank you for your patience.

JIM TIMM: Thank you for your time.

SANDERS: Thank you. Welcome.

MARY T. MINTURN: Good afternoon. I'm happy to be here. Happy to be here. My name is Mary, M-a-r-y; middle initial, T, as in Teresa [PHONETIC]; and Minturn, M-i-n-t-u-r-n. And I want that a middle initial down there because there are, like, four Mary Minturns in Nebraska. I'm here in opposition of both bills, LB3 and LR24CA. And I'm going to apologize to Senator Hunt because I am going to mention the Unicameral. So I am opposed to the passage of any electoral vote winner-take-all legislation in the state of Nebraska for several reasons. First one is unfairness. The Omaha World-Herald recently quoted Governor Pillen as saying that Nebraska's split vote system is unfair to this state. Unfortunately, in that article, there was no explanation for his view offered. I think Senator Lippincott, probably when he spoke today, reflects the governor's views on that. But I would argue that denying any Nebraskans the value of their vote is unfair and undemocratic. In Nebraska, a winner-take-all system actually has the effect of voter suppression. Second reason is I think it makes us enemies. I think a winner take all fosters an adversarial atmosphere because a good number of Nebraskans will see that their voices are not heard, their votes don't count. This type of atmosphere diminishes opportunities for civil debate where we can agree to disagree or come to a compromise. And then third reason is party dictates. From 1934 to 1937, Senator George Norris advocated for and worked hard for a nonpartisan Unicameral in Nebraska, believing this would allow lawmakers to base their actions on their own convictions and the needs of their constituents rather than party dictates. With the introduction of this bill-- or, these bills, it seems that Nebraska State Legislature is no longer par-- nonpartisan, but rather that some senators and the governor are pushing the agenda of one political party. This was grossly evidenced by an influx of this party's leaders to the state just before the 2024 presidential election to pressure for the passage of a winner-take-all bill that might get their candidate elected. Number four, we're a conglomerate. Secretary of State Bob Evnen was recently re-- reported to have said that a split vote system is not reflective of the needs of the entire

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state. In refute of his statement, I say that our state is a conglomerate of individuals with diverse opinions and needs which should all be considered and valued in order to foster a sense of fairness and unity. As many constitutional scholars have pointed out, the electoral system is inherently unfair. We are lucky in Nebraska to have a split vote system that mitigates some of the-- some measure of the unfairness by allowing all of our votes to count. And I urge you to vote no on both of these bills.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony. See if there are any questions. See none. Thank you, Ms. Minturn, for your patience and testimony.

MARY T. MINTURN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Welcome.

KAELA VOLKMER: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Kaela Volkmer. I'd like to thank you all for-- louder?

SANDERS: Spell your name.

KAELA VOLKMER: Oh, sorry. Kaela, K-a-e-l-a; last name, Volkmer, V-o-l-k-m-e-r. And just a big thank-you to all of you for welcoming us in today. And I guess I just want to also say a big thank-you to all my fellow Nebraskans who rearranged work schedules or asked for a vacation day or a way to be here because this is so important to so many people. So thanks to all of us who are here showing up for our democracy and to lift our voices today. I'm just going to keep this very short and sweet. A lot of thoughts and ideas have already been shared, so I don't want to be repetitive, but I just do want to share that I'm here today in opposition of both of these pieces of legislation. I am deeply concerned about this move towards a winner-take-all system because it will effectively silence the voice of thousands of Nebraskans, as we've heard today. And doing this sends a message that some voices and votes simply don't count and don't matter in our state. I would ask the proponents of this bill in this room to consider, how would you feel if the tables were turned and you were part of a red dot in a blue state and some in your State Legislature were proposing these bills to silence your voice? Would you feel angry? Would you feel disenfranchised? Would you feel

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devalued? I'm guessing that you might. I'm guessing that you'd want to take some action. So I'm asking you, why would you do this to your neighbors if you would not like to have it done to you? This bill will only sell-- sow further division and tear our communities further apart instead of fostering healthy debate, civic engagement around the pressing and important issues that we all face together as Nebraskans. I hope that you will vote for the strength of our democracy, for decency, and for the voice of every Nebraskan to be heard in our electoral process. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you very much. Check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you for your patience and time. Thank you. Welcome.

JEN MANGAN: Welcome. Thank you for this opportunity today, Chairman Sanders and committee members. My name is Jen Mangan, J-e-n M-a-n-g-a-n. I'm a longtime Omaha resident, married to a native Omaha business owner. I'm here to speak in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. Kind of taking a little bit of a different angle here. You know, we've been hearing a lot of big picture stuff, but I want to kind of drill it down to something that's personal to a lot of parents my-- in my same situation. My husband and I have three children, aged 19, 20, and 21 years old. They are hardworking, industrious, and highly engaged out-of-state, full-time college students. I often hear in the news about the concerns that we're experiencing brain drain in our great state of Nebraska. The point I am here to make today is that all three of our highly educated children have vowed they will never return to Nebraska under our current political climate. We are proving to be the antithesis of welcoming to young, progressive talent, as we are actively pursuing legislation to drive them away from Nebraska. This is kind of an aside, but it's worth noting that 73% of my daughter's 2020-- 2021 graduating class from Duchesne Academy left the state for college. We retained just a quarter of those kids for college in Nebraska. These brilliant and forward-thinking woman-- women are now all seniors in college. And as far as the ones that we're all in communication with in big gangs over Christmas break, very few of them are looking to return to our state of Nebraska at this time. And this alone is a fact that our native children are hesitating whether or not to return to our great state. This push to further disenfranchise the voices of voters by making Nebraska a winner-take-all state is a prime example of so-- why so many of our youngest and brightest talent can't

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comfortably call Nebraska their home. Removing our blue dot effectively gives them no reason to vote by mail and to participate in our electoral process. Saying, saying that winner takes all isn't taking all of our voices-- saying that winner take all isn't taking all of our voices is gaslighting, basically, at its finest because it is stripping voices of many Nebraskans. I thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

SANDERS: Thank you very much for your testimony. Check to see if there is questions from the committee. See none. Thank you for your time.

JEN MANGAN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thanks for coming in. Thank you. Welcome.

BECKY APP: Thank you. Thanks for having me. My name's Becky App, B-e-c-k-y A-p-p. And I am an opponent of both. I'm here to speak today, and I prepared lots of written statements. However, we've heard lots and lots of words today, lots of lots of numbers, lots of things that we can review. And I won't repeat anything. I think actions speak louder than words. So I'll be very brief, and I'm going to use my testimony today to highlight the actions of a new friend I made here today in the parking lot. He testified here today. You got to hear from him. I met him today, Warren. And Warren and I were looking on how to enter the Capitol for the first time together. And Warren shared with me that he had come 350 miles to testify here today, to have his voice heard. He is the President of Cheyenne County's Republican Party. He has spoken with so many Republicans-- he told me he tried to find some Democrats, but he couldn't find any-- and they all shared with him how important it was that their vote count, but not at the expense of taking someone else's. Yes, they want their Republican voice heard, but not by taking someone else's vote. And the respect I feel for Warren is so moving. That's what I want to highlight here today. That is Nebraska. That is what's bringing us together. I have a new friend that I met from the complete opposite side of the spectrum. Warren also shared with me how President Trump is going to be the best president in our entire history of United States of America. So I don't agree with Warren on everything, but I still respect him. I respect his actions and I respect his ability to listen to other people. And I will listen to him because he's acting with integrity and moral values. And that's what's going to bring us

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together. Let's listen to each other. Let's not silence each other. Let's build friendships. And let's let ethical actions speak louder than any partisan words. Thank you so much for your time and your service. It's appreciated.

SANDERS: Thank you for your time and patience as well today and your testimony. See if there are any questions. See none. Thanks for coming out.

BECKY APP: Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Welcome.

MELISSA PETERSON: Thank you. Good afternoon, esteemed committee members and concerned citizens. My name is Melissa Peterson, M-e-l-i-s-s-a P-e-t-e-r-s-o-n. I am here today to oppose LB3 and LR24CA, the removal of Nebraska's congressional district voting in favor of a winner-take-all system, for a myriad of reasons. First of all, a proportional representation system creates a more robust democracy. In states that historically vote in favor of one party, i.e. California Democrats or Texas Republicans, their winner-take-all system discourages those who tend toward the opposing party from participating. In our American system, the Founding Fathers designed a system of the people, by the people, and for the people. And when entire groups feel as though their vote will not matter, it decreases the importance of elections and the opinions of the people. Nebraska holds a uniquely diverse political landscape, which includes everything from rural farming communities to the most urban inner-city living. The values and perspectives of all groups of people in Nebraska deserve a fair chance to have their political opinions heard and represented. With these differences, one group should not be allowed to represent the beliefs of all residents of Nebraska. Proportional representation encourages a larger number of voters to come to the table and express their opinions. Additionally, it encourages candidates to spend the time and energy to visit our state, giving Nebraska a place at the large-- on the larger election stage. When candidates believe a state is a lock for one party or another, they are far less likely to spend time campaigning there. In recent elections, Nebraska was pushed to the national forefront due to the ability to split our Electoral College votes, making it an enticing place for all candidates to spend time campaigning and listening to

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the concerns of all of our citizens. In 1962, the Supreme Court upheld one person, one vote precedent in their Baker v. Carr decision. With a winner-take-all system, the precedent of one person, one vote is heavily negated for those who vote whose vote is cast in opposition to the majority party candidate. Historically, the Founding Fathers intended the Electoral College to correct for the lack of education shared by most Americans at the time. We have come a long way with compulsory education and to create an interested electorate. All people should feel as if their votes matter. If the goal is to create an educated and informed electorate, the people should hold great political efficacy, and that will not happen for a percentage of the population under the winner-take-all system. As a civics and advanced placement American government educator, it is often difficult to get students interested in politics and voting, especially when they feel as though their vote is insignificant. For the past 24 years, it has been quite rewarding to stand in front of the future of our country and tell them, in Nebraska, every person's vote matters because we do not ascribe to the winner-take-all system. Thank you for your time today.

SANDERS: Thank you very much. Check to see if there are any questions. Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Can you share your name for me one more time?

MELISSA PETERSON: Yes. Melissa Peterson.

HUNT: Thank you.

MELISSA PETERSON: Yes.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. See no other-- no questions or comments. Appreciate your time. Thanks for coming out, Maureen [SIC]. Welcome.

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: Good evening now, senators.

SANDERS: Hi. That's about right.

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: Yeah. All right. My name is Timothy C. Melcher, and I'm here to testify in opposition to both LB3 and LR24CA. I live in District 9, but I grew up on a farm in--

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SANDERS: Can you spell your first and last--

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: Oh, yes. Timothy Melcher. That's T-i-m-o-t-h-y C. M-e-l-c-h-e-r. So I grew up on a farm in northeastern Nebraska, and I went to a parochial school until I was a sophomore in high school. If I would have come out as gay during that time, I would have been expelled. When I did come out, my dad told me that if I brought any queers back home, he was going to shoot them. So my response was, does that mean I can't come home anymore? And he said, don't be cute. But I won't forget that. My brother was a little bit more accepting. Sorry. My brother was a little bit more accepting. And when I brought my first boyfriend home-- word travels fast in the rural area. And so my dad got really upset with me and he told me to go to New York or LA. He told me to go to New York or LA or Chicago, anywhere but here because he has to live here. I don't want to live in New York or LA or Chicago. This is my home. This is where my family is, and I want to stay here. If you look at the electoral map, you see that California, New York, and Illinois are all blue states and Nebraska is a red state. So mentally, I associate red as danger and blue as safe. I see the blue dot in Nebraska as a safe oasis. And to have it-- to have the question to eradicate it makes me feel unsafe and threatened, frankly. And so highly emotional testimony. I did not anticipate to cry. I apologize. But I wanted to shed a different angle-- or, share a different angle on how I view-- how we take care of politics in Nebraska.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Appreciate it. Hold on. Any questions from the committee? Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chair. Thanks for being here, Mr. Melcher. And obviously, District 9's the best district. I just want to make sure, you're here as an opponent, right?

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: I am an opponent to both bills, yes.

J. CAVANAUGH: All right. I just want to-- the record shows a proponent on the Excel spreadsheet here.

JULIE CONDON: The sheet says proponent.

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TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: It does say proponent? I'll fill out a new one and submit it.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thanks for being here.

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: Oh, you're just going to change it for me? All right. Perfect.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Melcher, for--

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: Thank you. I appreciate that.

SANDERS: --your testimony. Greatly appreciate it.

TIMOTHY C. MELCHER: Yes. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your patience as well. Good evening, and welcome.

NICHOLAS AMATANGELO: Good evening. Chairwoman Sanders, members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Nicholas Amatangelo. I will spell that for you. It's N-i-c-h-o-l-a-s; last name, A-m-a-t-a-n-g-e-l-o. I am a registered nonpartisan and here on my own behalf requesting the committee reject both measures up for debate today. I believe I am uniquely qualified to give my perspective, although it seems that a lot of people have said a lot of the things I'm going to be saying already, but I appreciate that as well. I graduated in May of 2024 with a master's degree in political science from UNL. My capstone was a deep dive into District 2 elections. Much of the research required included a broad look into presidential outcomes in the district, even if my writing was more devoted to recent congressional races. Based on this ample research and my own observances, I urge the committee not to advance these measures. First, while much discussion has been given to potential advantages it may give Republican candidates in the future, arguments in favor of returning to winner take all are misnomers. If the proposals were in place during the 2024 election, it is true President Trump would have received one more electoral vote from Nebraska, potentially swinging a close race. But Nebraska obviously is not the only state which divides her votes. Maine, a state which overwhelmingly votes in favor of the Democratic Party, was required to allocate a vote for Donald Trump in 2024 based on a similar system

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requiring Nebraska to allocate one for Kamala Harris. Maine's Democratic speaker of the house has already repeatedly said if Nebraska were to change, Maine would do the same. Therefore, in the future, the impact would be nonexistent as the new Republican vote in Nebraska would be offset by the new Democratic vote in Maine. Secondly, what might be the right decision to achieve an additional vote today might backfire tomorrow. I grew up in Illinois, and for decades, the Democratic political machine in Chicago has dictated the state's political direction. While land doesn't vote, people do. There is resentment among the people of downstate Illinois regarding the overwhelming influence of the Chicago districts. As the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas continue to grow, it is not a stretch to think one day the voting power from the two cities could overwhelm other parts of the state the same way. But if the current system was allowed to persist, District 3 would still allocate a vote for a Republican even with overwhelming Democratic support in the other districts. Finally, Nebraska and Maine are the only states which have the allocation correct. In states like California, if you were to remove the democratic voting power of the major metropolitan areas, you'd still find a sizable minority of Republican support. Likewise, in states such as Texas, there are strong pockets of Democratic support. Shouldn't we as a country be promoting a voting system in which the attitudes and values of our districts are represented on the national stage? Nebraska's current system allows for that, and this system should be emulated, not eliminated. This means millions of voters across the country could have a newfound belief their vote matters on the national stage and drive up turnout. Let's advocate for a balanced, commonsense approach that leaves everyone feeling empowered because their vote matters. That's how voters in District 2 feel now. In conclusion, Nebraska has never been afraid to go its own way, nor has it shied away from being a leader among the states. The argument that we need to do what other states are doing does not hold a drop of water when it comes from the only Unicameral Legislature in the country. There are no concerted efforts to change from a Unicameral system. And to me, the logic is the same. Again, I implore the members of the committee to reject the measures. Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

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SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Let's check from the committee if there are any questions. See none. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Amate-- tangelo--

NICHOLAS AMATANGELO: Amatangelo.

SANDERS: Amatangelo.

NICHOLAS AMATANGELO: Thank you, senators.

SANDERS: --and your patience. Thank you. Good evening, and welcome.

MARLENE WAGNER: Thank you. Marlene Wagner, M-a-r-l-e-n-e W-a-g-n-e-r. Thank you, senators, first for stepping up and serving all the citizens of this great state of Nebraska. My talk is going to be more personal because most of what I feel has already been said. I have always been proud to tell my children and now my grandchildren what a unique and forethoughtful state Nebraska is with our almost 90-year-old Unicameral, nonpartisan, so that we are to work together, to compromise, and it's-- and with its electoral system that seeks to honor all the voices of our electorate, giving weight to minority voters who don't always align with the majority. We are unique in a very good way. We are an example for the rest of the country to follow. Let's not let Nebraska fade into the background. I ask you to vote no on these two bills. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you so much for your testimony. Are there any questions from the committee? See none. Thank you again for your patience. Welcome.

NANCY GADE: Thank you. My name is Nancy Gade, G-a-d-e. Looks like Gade. And I am speaking in opposition to both bills and testifying particularly about LB3. First, thanks for your service, all of you, to the people of Nebraska and thanks for this opportunity to testify today. This is a first for me, and it has been a mini bucket list item for me to participate in democracy in this way. So the bad news is the benefit's going to be mine because I'm not going to tell any of you anything you don't already know. But I will share my personal perspective on this. I clearly remember in fourth grade, at Bryan School in Lincoln, Nebraska, learning about the Nebraska Unicameral and going home and talking to my parents about it and having a long

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conversation with them that I still remember about how unique Nebraska is and has always been in our approach to politics and our desire to vote for issues, to vote for people that were best for the state of Nebraska. My regret about what is happening with this bill is the partisan nature of it. It's difficult for me to understand how shifting to winner take all is more fair, more representative of Nebraska, or more democratic. The comparisons to other states ignores the legacy that I learned about in fourth grade about the independent thinking of Nebraska and our difference in approach to politics. I have always been so proud of that. The hyperpartisanship in Washington, D.C. is simply interfering with good governance. We're all seeing it. Unfortunately, our Governor's Office, most recent and present, seemed to have bought into this partisanship. I'm so sad to see it. I ask that you honor our long legacy of independent thinking and not move these bills out of committee. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none.

NANCY GADE: Thank you.

SANDERS: Appreciate your patience. Thank you. Good evening, and welcome.

LINDA SALTZMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much. My name is Linda Saltzman, L-i-n-d-a S-a-l-t-z-m-a-n. And I am here to express my opposition to both bills. And I thank you for the opportunity to speak-- I guess it's still this afternoon, so thank you for that. So hearing the testimony this afternoon really brought some questions into my mind. And I wanted to just express some of those questions for you all today. One question is, I don't understand how people who are in favor of these bills believe that it will eliminate an us versus them mentality. Because I believe you're hard-- we are all hard-pressed to deny that. Really, we're already there. And arguably, that is the underlying reason for these bills in the first place. But from where I'm sitting as just one voter, I just want to say that I feel like these bills are deliberately stealing my voice and my vote. I also perplexed by the argument that people oppose that populated areas would have more representation. I feel like that's kind of what democracy is and that's the idea behind the U.S. House of Representatives. And no one here today has suggested that people in

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the rural areas would lose their electoral vote. My other question is, why are some people so insistent on being followers instead of leaders? If every state in the nation decided, oh, we should all drive on the left side of the road, like, would we all decide, oh, OK, we'll just follow along like, like sheep. But as a Nebraskan, I have to say that I'm very proud to be from a state that does buck the trend and does what is right for its citizens by thinking independently. And so, as we heard from one testimony earlier, it's OK to be better than the rest. And so my last question is, for all the people who have shown up here today to speak for all of you, will our voices be heard? Will it even matter? I do hope that the members of the committee remember the amazing movement that brought so many more people into the democratic process and brought so many voters into the system through the Blue Dot movement. And I do hope that members of this committee remember that they are here to represent and serve their constituents and not the governor and certainly no one in Washington. I ask you to please reject both measures. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Checking to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you for your time and patience as well.

LINDA SALTZMAN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Welcome.

MELISSA SCHOP: Good afternoon.

SANDERS: I think it's evening.

MELISSA SCHOP: Is it evening? It is evening. Good evening. My name is Melissa Schop, M-e-l-i-s-s-a S-c-h-o-p. And I'm here in opposition of both bills. So I am a born and raised Nebraskan. I lived in Massachusetts, Illinois, Texas, and Arizona, and I have come home because of what a special place this is. I've imported my husband from New York, who probably loves Nebraska more than I do. The current system ensures that minority political voices within the state are heard. Transitioning to a winner-take-all system will marginalize minority political voices and effectively silence them. What I have heard today is that Nebraska should speak with one voice, which I don't quite understand, because elections are about speaking with your

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own individual voice. Why would we want to silence 40% of our state's voices? I have no desire to silence the voices of western Nebraska or District 3. Their voices are heard through the other four electoral votes. And this all leads to-- silencing our voices will lead to decreased voter engagement. The other argument that I've heard is that no one else does it this way. And as everyone has said, as a proud Nebraskan, I take pride in the fact that we do things differently. Why is it wrong that we don't do things like Florida and California? We do things like Nebraska. We encourage our children to be themselves, to not conform. We tell them you do you, be a leader. We need to walk that walk and be that example. Maintaining the current electoral vote allocation method upholds the principles of representative democracy by ensuring that all voices within the state are heard and considered in presidential election. It reflects Nebraska's commitment to a fair and inclusive electoral process that honors the different perspectives of all of our citizens.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony.

MELISSA SCHOP: Thank you.

SANDERS: Check to see if there are any questions. See none. Thank you again for your patience and time.

MELISSA SCHOP: Thank you.

SANDERS: So I had-- when we opened the meeting today, said we would probably take a break aft-- after every two hours and definitely at 5:00 for a dinner break. However, I think we have about two hours left only, and maybe we can take a ten-minute break and also stretch a little bit and then also move up for the next session. So we're going to take 10, not 20, not 30. Thank you.

[BREAK]

SANDERS: Welcome to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee on LB3 and LR24CA. And good evening.

RAY NIERMAN: Good evening. My name is Ray Nierman, R-a-y N-i-e-r-m-a-n. And I'm here representing myself. As a proponent of democracy as a way of life and governance, I am opposed to the implementation of both of these legislative bills under consideration.

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The split electoral vote system in Nebraska was established to better give a true democratic say to each other. Both Nebraska and Maine lead the push to honor the true intention of the founders when they established the separate houses of the legislative branch: one house to give a vote to each state evenly and the other house to give a say to each congressional district within the states. Mathematical analysis of states that have a winner-take-all system shows that there are many votes on both sides of the aisle in the U.S. each election year that are not accurately represented in electing president and vice president, directly disenfranchising millions of voters each year. In just 2024, Texas had 4.8 million votes for Harris, while California had 6.1 million for Trump, none of which had any electoral representation due to their states reliably leaning the other direction and the winner-take-all system in place there. Since at least 1972, the Democratic presidential candidate has gotten at least 25% of Nebraskans' popular votes, while the Republican presidential candidate has won at least 30% of those in Maine. The split system used by these two states gives a voice to these voters where otherwise they would have none. If we utilized a proportional system, like the governor's representative discussed, Nebraska would actually have allocated two electoral votes to Harris this past election. Our current system has also shown to increase voter turnout, involvement, and participation in Nebraska over the last few decades. Because every citizen recognizes they have the power to change an electoral vote through discussion just within their congressional district, Nebraska voters get more involved, invested, and generally more educated than those of states that do not split their votes. This also leads to federal congressional candidates that better represent the true values of their constituents. Ironically, another implication is that this disenfranchising of Nebraska's 2nd District would likely push Independent voters, which make up 25% of the 3rd Dis-- the 2nd District left, having a potentially signif-- significant impact on future congressional candidate elections and therefore the political balance in the U.S. House of Representatives. To summarize, this is not a question of Democrat versus Republican. This is a question of whether to uphold government of the people, by the people, for the people. Nebraskans should take pride in the fact that we discuss, disagree, debate, and, at the end of the day, shake hands and take pride in our state. We should not allow national political polarization to have an undue influence on the unique democratic setup

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we have, which we should be proud of. Any state legislator that votes to have this system reversed is not acting as a representative of the people because Nebraska's current system better represents the people of our great state as well as the ideals of the United States of America. My request to this committee is that you make the decision to continue to uphold Nebraska as a shining example of what a truly representative democracy looks like. We can only hope that other states will follow our lead and give the voice of their people better representation. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Well done. Your family will be proud. We're going to go ahead and check to see if there are any questions from the committee. There are none. Thank you for your testimony and your patience.

RAY NIERMAN: Yes. Thank you.

SANDERS: Let's see. We're going down the line. You're next. Good evening, and welcome.

ROBB GIAMBRONE: Thank you. Thank you for having me. I am Robb Giambrone. That's R-o-b-b G-i-a-m-b-r-o-n-e. And I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you all this, this evening. I am a proud resident of Omaha since 2006, where I live with my wife and our three kids. And I'm speaking to you today to strongly oppose the legislation that is being considered today in committee, for both LB3 and LR24CA.

SANDERS: Thank you for that.

ROBB GIAMBRONE: The attention brought to Nebraska and Omaha this past election was a wonderful experience for my family and a tremendous educational opportunity for my children to learn about and engage in the political process. It was also not lost on my wife and myself that Nebraska's current presidential voting system provided a beautiful example of respectful, enthusiastic, civic engagement from both sides-- as we all know, unfortunately, a very rare occurrence in our currently divided country. Regardless of our political party, doesn't this make you proud? I know that I beam with pride when speaking to my family in western New York about the respectful, meaningful political discourse that happens in Nebraska and especially in Omaha. I would hope that you all feel that sense of pride too when speaking about it

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to your friends, family, and loved ones that are not in Nebraska. We are Nebraskans, and I am proud to say that. Furthermore, being a native of Rochester, New York and having attended college in Cleveland, Ohio provides me a meaningful perspective that I am grateful to share with you. My family and friends, both Republicans and Democrats, in these and other parts of the country are envious that my vote for President of the United States in Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District is much more impactful than theirs. My family in western New York-- where voters are more Republican-- often lamented the fact that their vote is drowned by the voters in New York City. On the opposite side of the political spectrum, my friends in Cleveland-- more liberal and democratic-- remind me how fortunate I am to live in a swing district. Our current system in Nebraska provides a very strong example of democracy for other states to follow and emulate throughout the country. The very successful mobilization of blue dot energy among other groups brought together constituents of all political affiliations excited and enthused to actively participate in this most democratic process. The attention this garnered throughout the country lasted several weeks, creating a lasting economic impact in our state. And the aspect of this we should all be most proud of: it was all accomplished peacefully. Nebraska's electoral voting system allowed the world to see a powerful example of democracy as our nation's Founding Fathers-- founders envisioned, one where Americans of opposing viewpoints worked respectfully and admirably amongst each other to advocate for their candidate. It is Nebraska's electoral voting process that allowed our state and Nebraska's 2nd District to provide this shining example of democracy, and I urge all of you state legislators to let it continue. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Any questions from the committee? See none. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Giabonnie.

ROBB GIAMBRONE: Giambrone.

SANDERS: Giambrone. Thank you very much. And your patience. You're up. Good evening.

ROY HELM: Good evening. And I appreciate your patience and, and taking the time to hear all of us and, and what we have to say. My name is Roy Helm, R-o-y H-e-l-m. I identify with the pronouns of he and him.

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And I am in opposition to both LB3 and LR24CA. Like the gentleman before me, I, I, I am also from back east Iowa, but I have lived in Nebraska for 50 years, so I, I consider myself a Nebraskan. And whenever Nebraska plays the Hawkeyes, I always cheer for the Cornhuskers. And, and, you know, following with that, it, it-- I've always appreciated that in this state we value competition, fairness, fair play. We also recogni-- and, and appreciate the hard work that people do, and, and we value our voting. And our votes need to be important and we need to ensure that every vote in this state matters. It's with that that, that even not being a resident of, of the 2nd District, I look, I look that direction and, and really appreciate that we have something in this state that is so valuable. I agree that we do not need to emulate other states. We should be the leaders. We are the leaders. And we need to maintain that sense of pride in what we do in this state. There are several speakers who have spoken my mind very well, and perhaps more eloquently than I could ever have. And I hope that you take it all in consideration. And, and please, please let these proposed bills die in committee. We don't need this. We have far more important issues as a state to deal with. You have more important work ahead of you. This isn't work that needs to be taking your time. So again, I appreciate your time here. It's a long day for you. And I could not pass up the opportunity to speak before you. So thank you. And go Big Red.

SANDERS: Appreciate your testimony, Mr. Helm. But let me double-check to see if there's any questions from the committee. I see none. Thank you.

ROY HELM: Thank you. And I'm glad you could understand me through my Iowa accent.

SANDERS: Welcome, and good evening.

TOM BECKA: Good to be here as a private citizen. My name is Tom Becka, T-o-m B-e-c-k-a. And I am not here to defend the blue dot. I am here to defend all three dots because I think calling it the blue dot is a misnomer. Because if it really was a blue dot, we wouldn't have Congressman Don Bacon. If it was a blue dot, we wouldn't have Mayor Jean Stothert. If it was a blue dot, we wouldn't have Mike McDonnell changing parties. OK? So the people of the 2nd District do not speak in one voice. We are there to let our voices be heard. And I

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appreciate you letting us express our views here, having our voices heard before you, because using the argument that we want to be like everybody else-- I can make the argument then, well, you know what? Donald Trump won the popular vote, so therefore he should have complete control over everything everybody does. Right? He wants Nebraska to be winner take all. He won the popular vote. Other countries are-- have dictators. We can make the same argument that you're making that we got to go along with the rest of the state. I think that it's important that we keep our voices heard. And by the way, by the way, as I mentioned, you know, that's been the red dot many times. And if they nominate-- the party nominates some different candidates, I'm sure it'll be a red dot again. I'd also like to comment on a few things that Senator Lippincott said there. It's not 1942 anymore. All right? The candidates aren't coming through on whistle stops and giving quick speeches on the back of a train. All right? When they campaign now, they pay attention to this district. And that does bring a lot of money into this district. I want to elaborate on what the gentleman from the Nebraska Broadcasters Assoc-- Association said, in that when the tornadoes hit Elkhorn and Bennington, primarily Republican districts, when the tornadoes hit, Mayor Stothert and Governor Pillen held a joint news conference where they, of course, praised all the first responders, but also commented on the importance of the media and the [INAUDIBLE] information about and keeping people safe. Local media's under a lot of pressure right now. The World Herald is a pamphlet. KFAB doesn't have their reporters on the street. Fox 42, my employer, got rid of all local employees, all local news peo-- department. It's important that this money that comes into these TV and radio stations help employ people that live in Nebraska, pay Nebraska taxes, and continue to get information, reliable information out to the people. So I hope that you will all vote no and, as the previous person said, let it die in committee. And I want to also reiterate the fact that I really do appreciate the work that you do. It's a lot of hard work. You're not getting rich and you got to put up with a lot of crap from loudmouths like me. And so thank you very much.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Becka. Let me check to see if the committee has any questions. None. You got off easy.

TOM BECKA: All right. Thank you.

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SANDERS: Thank you. Thank you for your patience. Let's see. Where are we? We are-- beginning here. Good evening, and welcome.

JERROLD HARRENSTEIN: Hello. Thank you. Hello. My name is Jerrold Harrenstein, J-e-r-r-o-l-d H-a-r-r-e-n-s-t-e-i-n. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. I must admit, this is my first time testifying in this manner. I also want to express my gratitude to the senators and everyone present today for your dedication to civic engagement and time and, and the preservation of our governmental processes. I stand in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. As a lifelong Nebraskan, I take great pride in our state's independent spirit, our do-it-our-own-way attitude. Our Unicameral system is unique in the United States and has operated effectively and efficiently since its inception in 1937. Likewise, Nebraska is one of only two states that allocate Electoral College votes by district rather than adhering to the winner-take-all model. Shifting to a winner-take-all system would be a step away from democracy, further diminishing the value of individual votes. Such a change would reduce voter motivation and discourage participation at the polls. Additionally, it would make Nebraska less relevant in national elections, as candidates would simply write us off as a predetermined outcome. I firmly believe in maintaining our current system regardless of which party stands to gain. I urge you to vote against LB3 and LR24CA. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Hold on. See if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you for your time and patience.

JERROLD HARRENSTEIN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Good evening.

KATIE BRADSHAW: Good evening, Senator Sanders and committee members. This is also my first time speaking at one of these. And, yeah. I thought I'd be done by 3:00, so. I'm Katie Bradshaw, K-a-t-i-e B-r-a-d-s-h-a-w. I'm representing myself as a citizen of Nebraska, speaking in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. So I believe in the promise of American democracy, a constitutional republic. In keeping with my beliefs, about ten years ago, I started serving as a poll worker. First in Scotts Bluff County-- which, if you're unfamiliar, that's right next to Wyoming-- and then last year in Lancaster County. I

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believe that engaging Nebraskans, all Nebraskans, in their civic responsibility leads to a stronger democracy. I'm concerned with the division and disengagement that has been occurring in our, in our country and in our state. I'm concerned that people are losing faith in our system. Research says that some ways of setting up electoral processes are more effective than others in strengthening citizen engagement and therefore strengthening democracy. This proportional distribution system that we have helps Nebraska voters feel that they've been heard. When people feel heard, they're more likely to engage in the democratic process. And there's that competition angle as well, that, if, if it's not in the bag, that maybe our elected officials will listen a little bit closer to what we have to say. So I believe that the proportional allotment of electoral votes is the best system to maintain a strong democracy in Nebraska. My opinion was formed in part by a book on human nature that I recently read called High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out. And that's by Amanda Ripley, R-i-p-l-e-y. I would encourage everyone to give that book a read if you've got the time. The wormhole that I went down in the research while reading that book in terms of the proportional electoral process is that the winners and the losers are both unhappy to some extent with an electoral process. But when you have this proportional representation, the losers are less dissatisfied because they feel that their voice has been heard. And I thank you for hearing my voice this evening, and would take your questions if there are any.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Senator Guereca.

GUERECA: Could you repeat the name of that book, please?

KATIE BRADSHAW: High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out by Amanda Ripley, R-i-p-l-e-y.

GUERECA: Thank you for your testimony.

SANDERS: Any other questions from the committee? See none. Thank you for your testimony and your time and patience. Thank you. Welcome, and good evening.

ELIZABETH TOMPKINS: Hello, Chairperson Sanders and members of the committee. My name is Elizabeth Tompkins, and that is spelled E-l-i-z-a-b-e-t-h T-o-m-p-k-i-n-s. And I'm from Papillion, Nebraska. I

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am here today in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. Although I was born and raised in Minnesota, my roots in Nebraska are strong. My father hails from Hastings, growing up across the street from Coach Tom Osborne. My mother, the daughter of a Lutheran minister, lived in towns and cities across Nebraska. From the time I was born, I was a Husker fan. We traveled to Lincoln to visit family and cheer on the football team. And when it was time to apply for graduate school in speech language pathology, UNL was at the top of my list. This was not only because of its highly rated program or my love for the state or the football team because I-- but because I would get to move down south, where it was warmer in the winter. After I received my graduate degree, I decided to make Nebraska home. I have been a speech language pathologist and special education teacher in the Nebraska public schools for almost 30 years. My role is to ensure that students have the skills to communicate and advocate for themselves. These students grow up to be proud, hardworking Nebraskans who want their voice to be represented, as all Nebraskans do. Over the past few years, my journey has taken me on another path, which has included knocking doors and speaking with Nebraska voters and ca-- about candidates and causes. I have knocked thousands of doors across several counties, including Sarpy, Douglas, Cass, and Buffalo. No matter the party affiliation, the response I have consistently heard has been, but my voice doesn't matter; or, politicians don't listen to regular people like me; or, they're going to do what they want anyway. Voters talked about how they want their voice to count. In a winner-take-all system, the state would further strip the voices of Nebraskans. Elected officials would be sending the message, you're right. Your vote doesn't really matter. We don't need your opinion in this election. How do you feel about ignoring the voices of over 400,000 voters within each congressional district? Voting is important, and elections are critical for our democracy. According to the people at the doors, they want their voices to be heard, to count, to matter. Keeping Nebraska's current system of awarding Electoral College votes is the best way to make sure this happens. I am proud of my Nebraska roots. I am proud of the uniqueness of Nebraska. Nebraskans value hard work and innovation. And we truly care about one another. Nebraska's a place where we don't mirror other states' policies or political structures. We stand for what's best for all Nebraska residents. I appreciate your time and consideration and thank you for allowing my voice to be heard. Please do not pass LB3 and LR24CA out of committee. Thank you.

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SANDERS: Thank you, Ms. Tompkins. Let me check to see if there's any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you. Have a good evening. And thank you for your patience, time, testimony. Good evening, and welcome.

LEAH KUESTER: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Leah Kuester. That's L-e-a-h K-u-e-s-t-e-r. I come before you to express my opposition to the winner-take-all system for the presidential elections in Nebraska. I appreciate your time. This is going to be a lot to repeat, so I thank you for giving me a space. First and foremost, the-- this approach undermines the principle of rec-- representative democracy. In a state as diverse as ours, voters hold a variety of perspectives and beliefs. A winner-take-all system effectively silences the votes of those who choose-- choices do not align with majority. This disenfranchises many voters and diminishes their incentive to participate in elections. When individuals believe their votes won't matter, they may choose to stay home, resulting in lower voter turnout and engagement. Moreover, shifting to a more proportional system would encourage candidates to engage with all constituents, not just those in their base. This could lead to a richer political discourse where issues important to all Nebraskans are addressed rather than just those that cater to the majority. It fosters a healthier democracy where every vote counts and every voice is heard. Lastly, let's consider the message we send to the citizens of Nebraska. By embracing a system that values every vote, we reinforce the idea that democracy is not just by winning, but about representation and inclusion. We must create an electoral process that reflects the people's true will. In conclusion, I urge you to consider the implications of the winner-take-all system and its impact on our democracy. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. I-- any questions? I see none. Thank you again, Ms. Kuester, for your patience and testimony.

LEAH KUESTER: Thanks.

SANDERS: Good evening. Welcome.

MATTHEW TIRPAK: Good evening.

SANDERS: Long day, but thank you for hanging in there.

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MATTHEW TIRPAK: Thank you for having me. My name's Matthew Tirpak, Matthew with two T's; Tirpak, T-i-r-p-a-k. I come from Papillion, Nebraska. Originally from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Florida, lot of places. I served in the Marine Corps for nine years. I'm a federal employee at StratCom, and that's what brought me here to Nebraska. Puerto Rican descent, first-generation born in the United States from my father's side. And I haven't heard anybody say anything like that today since I've been here since 1:00. So I think I have a lot more to say about labels than anybody else has said about labels. What I have heard a lot today is that we need education of civics. People talk about democracy and direct democracy. But what I remember from high school and elementary school was that we were established as a constitutional republic. And what the Greeks did-- a direct democracy where everybody had one vote. And what we did in Iraq, everybody had one vote, didn't really work out so well. And so everybody's conflating our national political structure with our local political structure, where we have a direct democracy. Yet state and local politics are kind of the same, but national politics are never the same as state and local. But all politics are local. I was thinking earlier the Pledge of Allegiance and in the line is, we pledge allegiance to the Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. It's a symbol. Symbolism. What does this bill do? I am a proponent for this bill, for both bills, because symbolism means something. In the Marine Corps, we have our EGAs. A lot of us call it our eagle, we took it from the Air Force. Our rope, we took it from the army. The anchor, we took it from the Navy. And on the world when God rested, we took over the world. That brings us together as Marines against everybody else. But that's what makes us Marines. That brings us together. It's a symbol. The flag, our flag right there, brings us together as a nation, as a constitutional republic. This bill-- these bills brings us together once again as a nation. Being the same. We still are different. We are still different. The distinguished Preston Scott said earlier about money coming into the district in the 2024 election. Yet all that money that was coming in in the news media said that we were going to miss out on it. Yet I have not heard how that money benefits any of the disenfranchised, the homeless, or the down-of-luck people. How's that money going to benefit anybody? We still have homeless out in the street in Omaha. I was one of those

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homeless people a couple weeks ago. And so I am in support of this bill. And I urge you to consider unifying our nation.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony and thank you for your service. I'm going to check to see if the committee has any questions for you.

McKEON: I just want to make a statement.

SANDERS: Senator McKeon.

McKEON: Sorry.

SANDERS: Go ahead.

McKEON: Thank you for your service. And, and what you're saying.

MATTHEW TIRPAK: I have one more point. I forgot.

SANDERS: Please do.

MATTHEW TIRPAK: Senator Hunt brought up a question about outside state voter interference via mail. And I wanted to bring up the fact that I did receive stuff because I haven't heard her ask that question to anybody else since I've been here. But I did receive outside mailings from Texas, Louisiana, and I think California, from both Democratic and Republican. I'd love to give it to you, but because of my current state, I can't go back to my house and retrieve them for you.

SANDERS: I appreciate that. Thank you.

MATTHEW TIRPAK: Welcome.

SANDERS: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Last name again?

MATTHEW TIRPAK: Tirpak.

SANDERS: Tirpak. Thank you very much.

MATTHEW TIRPAK: You're welcome.

SANDERS: And thank you for your patience as well.

MATTHEW TIRPAK: You're welcome.

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SANDERS: OK. Good evening.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: Hi.

SANDERS: Come on down.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: Thank you. Yeah. Thank you for your time, your service. Didn't know it was-- could be an endurance test, did you?

HUNT: We did.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: Yeah. Maybe you did. It appears that this bill and these proposals struck a chord. Nothing like determining how much votes count. You know, that, that'll strike a chord more than anything else. My wife, she couldn't make it-- oh, I'm sorry. My, my name.

SANDERS: State it and spell it.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: Yeah. Roger Paul Sparwasser. That's S-p-a-r-w-a-s-s-e-r. Anyhow, I would say my wife, she's the wisest person I know. And, and, and she wrote some comments online. And they basically were-- summarized. And if-- you know, if it's not broken, don't fix it. And I think that holds true here. There's no reason to change what is working very well. You know, and as a concerned citizen, I'm urging you to vote for Nebraska and vote against LB3 and LR24CA. Anyway, the reasons, I guess, can be summarized with Nebraska values, Nebraska interests, and math. We talked a lot about math at the beginning of this hearing. Nebraska values. I moved here 19 years ago. Since I've been here, I voted for both Republican and Democrats, including president. One of the things that drew me here and kept me here is that Nebraskans have their priorities straight. They focus on things that really matter. They have common sense, independence. They help one another. And they have the ability to have civil discourse. The nonpartisan Unica-- Unicameral's one example. And the congressional district method of selecting electors is another. When it works and when we keep it, we are a model for the country. Nebraska interests. Some peop-- people call us flyover country. I think we're the lifeblood of the nation. Nebraska cattle bring people together for family gatherings and little league cookouts after little league games. The congressional district method was chosen in part to prevent us from, from becoming flyover country. The state is more relevant

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during our elections because of it. Our voices are heard and our interests are taken into account. And then math. I heard it discussed, you know, whether this is more or less representative-- this, this bill would be more or less representative. I think about a million people voted in the last presidential election, 60% for President Trump and 40% for Vice President Harris. One electoral vote obviously went towards Vice President Harris and the other four towards President Trump. In my mind, having all five of them would certainly be less representative, and I think that's self-evident. So for Nebraska values, Nebraska interests, and simple math and just not breaking something, ur-- that's working very well right now, I urge you to vote against these bills.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions? Thank you for your time, patience.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: Thank you.

SANDERS: I'm going to try to say your last name. Smar--

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: Sparwasser. Yes.

SANDERS: Sparwasser.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: It's S-p-a-r-w-a-s-s-e-r. Yeah.

SANDERS: Thank you.

ROGER PAUL SPARWASSER: All right. Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Good evening. Welcome.

GROVER KORN: Good evening. My name is Grover Korn, G-r-o-v-e-r K-o-r-n. That is my real legitimate last name. People ask all the time.

SANDERS: Say it again. Grover--

GROVER KORN: Grover Korn. OK. So we've talked about a lot, you know, well, if we go to this all-- winner-takes-all system, we're streamlining with the rest of the nation. It's-- well, it, it's-- that's-- when-- since when was Nebraska about streamlining to the rest

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of the nation? We're-- we as people are very individual. Look, we have the only Unicameral in the country. We have-- I believe we're the only state with publicly owned electricity. First state with a Capitol that is so vertically inclined. I mean, there's all sorts of unique things about our state. We're not ju-- the same as people in New York. When they bump into each other on the street, they cuss each other out. When I bump into someone, I go, oops, sorry. We're not the same. That doesn't mean we're divided. But individual-- individuality is important to us as Nebraskans, and that is bipartisan. We've talked a lot about this in a sort of partisan sense, but this should not be a partisan issue. Both a value of conservatism and liberalism is that the individual is so important. The split electoral system actually helps us all get our individuality across. We all came here because we wanted to get our individual-- individuality across. And it went-- it's going a long time. That shows you how committed Nebraskans are to that individuality. There's been some concerns raised about, oh, well, we don't like that this gives immediate attention to Nebraska in a way that ends up having, you know, outside-of-state money, outside-of-state influencers running in here. If we were worried about that, then I think more of us would have spoke out about Elon Musk giving voters \$1 million for free. We would have spoke out about Lindsey Graham coming to the state. So I don't think that's a real legitimate reason that people believe. I think it's an excuse. If we really think that the split electoral vote is suppressing the rural voice-- the score is 42 to 3. I don't think that's really a suppression of the rural vote. And if you were so concerned about not suppressing anyone, then why wouldn't we actually put this on a, on a ballot measure? Well, that's actually because not enough Nebraskans support it. Why wouldn't we move to the popular vote nationwide? Well, some of you wouldn't like that Al Gore would've won in 2000, or Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2016. Ultimately, I just want you senators to consider-- you know, in Nebraska, we are about individuality. That does not mean division. It just means that we are Nebraskan. So I urge you to listen to the people and put the people before party, because this is not about party.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Check to see if there are any questions for you from the committee. See none. Thank you, Mr. Grover Korn.

GROVER KORN: Thank you.

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SANDERS: Appreciate your testimony and patience. Thank you

GROVER KORN: Thank you for your time.

SANDERS: Good evening, and welcome. It takes my hips a little longer these days too, so take your time.

KIM ANTHONY: My name is Kim, K-i-m; Anthony, A-n-t-h-o-n-y. And I am a concerned constituent from Omaha, Nebraska. I've lived here 38 years. I come from St. Louis, Missouri. My husband's employer moved here-- us here in 1986. So my children have grown up in Nebraska. And I am very proud of how they've done. They both graduated with their master's degrees from Bellevue University, and they're doing very well in their professions. And I have three beautiful grandchildren. My husband passed in 2022, and I had to make a decision on whether or not I wanted to go back to St. Louis or stay here. I decided to remain here because I moved-- I was welcome to the Omaha, and I have a lot of network in Omaha. And I love the way my kids have gotten along with their classmates. They grew up in the Millard area. It's just been a wonderful place to live in. But I oppose LB3 and LR24CA. And-- because Nebraska's current system of allocating electoral votes by congressional district is a reflection of the diverse views held by our state's voters. It ensures that all Nebraskans, regardless of where they live, have a voice in presidential elections. The proposed change to a winner-takes-all system would silence the political preferences of those living in districts that may differ from majority statewide, undermining the principle of fair and equal representation. Our unique system is a model of inclusivity, and I-- and has long served as a reminder that every vote matters. Moving to a winner-takes-all approach would erode this foundation and discourage civic participation among those who feel their voices would no longer count in a system that prioritizes majority rule over representation. I respectfully ask you to consider the negative implications of LB3 and, and LR24CA and stand with the many Nebraskans who value a fair and representative electoral process. Please vote against this bill and, if possible, testify on behalf of preser-- preserving our current system. Thank you for your time, for your service to our state. I trust you will do what is best to ensure all Nebraskans are heard.

SANDERS: And thank you for your testimony.

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KIM ANTHONY: Thank you.

SANDERS: Is there any questions for Ms. Anthony? See none. Thank you very much. Good evening, and welcome.

ELAINE ADAMS: Thank you. I debated when standing out there. And I was-- as I listened to all the testimonies. My name is Elaine Adams, E-l-a-i-n-e A-d-a-m-s. I'm short and sweet for once. I will be. And I thank you for your service, all of you. I-- how do I say this? OK. I'll start with my dad and my mom. My mom and dad grew up in Pickensville, Alabama. Don't, don't blink your eye because you'll miss it. Except it was a rural, very rural, community. So-- and, and my dad, who passed away November 6 of 2024 at age 102, a World War II veteran who went through-- lived through Jim Crow. He lived through dese-- segregation and deseg-- an African American man who I'm very, very proud to be his daughter. And he voted in the 2024 election because he was a poll worker as long as I could remember. My parents raised four children here in the state of Nebraska-- one child born in Alabama. But my parents lived here for 68 years. So before my mom's passing and my dad's then. In that time-- in that time, I learned about voice, watching my parents very quietly doing what they should be doing. And as my father would say, to be an asset, not a liability. And as my mother would say, that we can count the seats in an apple, but only God knows how many trees in a sead. I became a public school teacher and then ended my career in Omaha as an elementary school principal. So this is much like a school board, but I was usually on the other side-- school board meeting or PTA meeting, which were-- so I really appreciate what you go through. But the thing that-- and the thing that I think about are all the voices that are not heard and the voices that don't feel that they have a voice or they feel that they're not heard. And so I am opposed to these two bills. I am. Because as an elementary school principal and as a member of the community, I saw the power of allowing someone who didn't think they had a voice to have a voice. And I think that is true for our rural communities and our urban communities. Our urban communities. Lincoln is, is-- it's a suburban-urban. So I urge you to think about that and think about all the voices that, that don't feel that they are heard, don't feel that their vote counts. Think about that and think about your own children. My children have done pretty good. Pretty good. We took pictures when they voted because that was what we did as our-- in our family. I know that a lot of my former students didn't feel that.

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And I've heard tragic stories in that. But I've also heard many successful stories. So without talking the rain out of a cloud and being a principal, I just urge you-- I urge you to vote against this because everybody, everybody's voice needs to be heard, so.

SANDERS: Thank you, Ms. Adams, for your testimony. I'm going to check to see if the committee has any questions for you.

ELAINE ADAMS: Did I spell my name?

SANDERS: Like A-d-a-m--

ELAINE ADAMS: Yes.

SANDERS: Yes. Yes. And Julie, Julie got it too. So thank you--

ELAINE ADAMS: Thank you.

SANDERS: --for your testimony, your time, patience.

ELAINE ADAMS: Thank you.

SANDERS: Have a good evening. Thanks for being here. Good evening, and welcome.

KATHLEEN WIECHMAN: Good evening.

SANDERS: No one has fallen asleep yet.

KATHLEEN WIECHMAN: I'm getting a sleepy-eyed. Thank you for this opportunity. I do not support winner take all. And I do not support the LR24CA. I feel that Nebraska and Maine have the most--

SANDERS: Excuse me.

KATHLEEN WIECHMAN: --fair--

SANDERS: Before you go further, we need you to say your name for the record--

KATHLEEN WIECHMAN: Oh, I'm sorry.

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SANDERS: --and spell your name for the record, even though we have the written testimony.

KATHLEEN WIECHMAN: This will probably be the longest part of this. Kath-- Kathleen Wiechman, K-a-t-h-l-e-e-n W-i-e-c-h-m-a-n. OK. Thank you. I've heard a lot of comments that I had kind of played on with line-- with what I'm going to say, so I can cut it short a little bit. When I looked at the elections and the electoral votes that people received, and in the states that were winner take all, and I would see states that were almost 50/50, but yet the person with the most got all of those electoral votes. And some states are, you know, 54, there's 40. And I'm like, good grief. How, how do you compete with that? That's not fair. Nebraska has five electors, and-- this might be my dad talking to me because he was a math teacher. But I was really getting into this. So I took-- I multiplied five, because we have five electors, five times the percentage of votes that each candidate receives. For example, Nebraska, Harris got 38.9%, which would be 1.9 electoral votes; and Trump got 59.3%, which would be 2.965 electoral votes. It made me think that a simple calculation could replace appointed electors. The calculations would be unbiased. And that brought me to-- this LR24CA was really cumbersome, I thought. There was a lot in there about electors, and I thought, my gosh. So just to cut this short, I said, OK. I am not for either one of these bills, and I hope that you all feel the same way. After today, I heard a lot of-- a lot of statements from people who have some good, good thoughts. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony, Ms. Wickam [SIC]. Hold on. Anybody have any questions on the committee? See none. Thank you, and have a good evening.

KATHLEEN WIECHMAN: You too. Thank you.

SANDERS: Good evening, and welcome.

COLE BALLANTYNE: Good evening. My name is Cole Ballantyne. That's C-o-l-e B-a-l-l-a-n-t-y-n-e. I'm a student at UNL. I skipped class for this, but it was-- seemed very educational, so I--

SANDERS: [INAUDIBLE].

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COLE BALLANTYNE: I've noticed doing some research that, in the last decade, particularly in the last five years, there have been an uptick in voter-restricting laws that have been enacted throughout the U.S. I wrote some stat-- statistics down. So in 2020, the federal government reported that over 150,000 ballots were rejected for supposedly mismatched, mismatched signatures. And in an investigation by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, they found that a black person was-- a black person's ballot was 900% more likely to be disqualified than that of a white voter. Another bill-- this was SB 202 in Georgia-- this was in 2021. This bill, among other things, created more narrow deadlines for mail-in ballots and limited number of drop boxes in each county. And then more recently, for the last election, 2024, True the Vote-- which is a Trump-supported organization-- they had 40,000 volunteers who were challenging votes. And by the August of 2024, they challenged over 300,000 votes, 300,000 voters, after which, you get a provisional ballot if your vote is challenged, if your ballot is challenged. And 40% of ball-- those ballots, provisional ballots were said to not be counted-- in 2016, for example. Black, Hispanic, and Asian American voters were 300% more likely than a white voter to have to use a provisional ballot. What do these have in common with the proposed two bills? They serve to restrict voter rights. They serve to suppress the minority vote. And it's sort of-- it's less democratic overall, so. I think that's the end of my statement.

SANDERS: Thank you. To confirm, LB3 and LR24CA--

COLE BALLANTYNE: Yes.

SANDERS: --you oppose?

COLE BALLANTYNE: Yes, I oppose both bills.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Let me check if there are any questions from the committee. Senator Cavanaugh has a question.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chair. Thanks for being here, Mr. Ballantyne.

COLE BALLANTYNE: Yes, sir.

J. CAVANAUGH: I just got to know what class did you skip.

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COLE BALLANTYNE: I skipped Tim-- Kim Todd's landscape design class. Yes.

J. CAVANAUGH: It does sound like it'd be a big sacrifice, so. Thank, thank you for being here.

COLE BALLANTYNE: It's a good class, but I-- she's very-- she's a very understanding professor, so.

J. CAVANAUGH: Well, thanks for being here.

COLE BALLANTYNE: Thank you.

SANDERS: Let me double-check. Any other questions? See none. Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne, for your testimony. Good evening.

TIM ROYERS: Good evening, Senator Sanders, members of the committee, thank you for your continued presence here. For the record, my name is Tim, T-i-m; Royers, R-o-y-e-r-s. I'm the 2016 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, an adjunct history professor, and a James Madison Fellow speaking in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. I want to address specifically the characterization the proponents have made that our congressional district method is a 30-year experiment when in reality it is far closer to how the framers of the Constitution intended for electoral votes to be allocated. Setting aside the merits of the Electoral College itself, which was done to resolve the massive difference in suffrage rights between the northern states and those southern states that subjugated major swaths of its people into slavery, there is clear evidence of how the framers intended the electors to be selected for the college. While you can find reference to this in convention notes, Federalist 68 by Alexander Hamilton, there is no clearer articulation of that vision than in a letter James Madison wrote to George Hay when he wrote, quote, the district mode was mostly, if not exclusively in view when the Constitution was framed and adopted, end quote. Now, if the framers intended for states to select their electors in the manner that Nebraska and Maine do currently, why then do a majority of states now do winner take all? And unfortunately, the answer is partisanship. So in the very contentious buildup to the 1800 election, the Democratic-Republican's Jefferson and the Federalist Adams were both worried that their opponent would get electoral votes in each other's own backyard. So

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Virginia moved to winner take all. Massachusetts moved to let the legislature decide their electors, and then the dominoes all fell. So despite this, though, I-- it's important to point out that even Thomas Jefferson himself acknowledged in a letter to James Monroe that he still felt the district method remained the ideal method of electoral vote allocation. This does not mean that we should rely exclusively on the framers to determine how we conduct our elections. In many respects, we have departed dramatically from how-- from their original vision, whether it's the onset of political parties, the introduction of tickets via the Twelfth Amendment, or the mere fact that women and people of color even have political franchise. Our elections have evolved substantially since 1787. However, I share this historical context with you today because proponents of both LB3 and LR24CA have insisted that we must return to what they imply is the original method of winner take all when the reality is that the framers absolutely preferred the district method and actually regretted not specifying that in the Constitution itself. Both Hamilton and Madison actually pushed for an amendment later in their life to require the district method. So in addition to all those other clear reasons that you've heard to maintain our present system, I want to make it known that preserving the district method we enjoy in Nebraska today would also be a way for our great state to hold true to the original intent that Madison, Hamilton, Morris, Washington, and others envisioned when they drafted the Constitution. We should honor the framers' intent on this issue, preserve the greater reflection of the will of Nebraska's voters, and, in fact, encourage other states to follow in our footsteps and adopt the district method. Thank you. And I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Royers. Let me check with the committee if there are any questions. See none. Thank you for your time, patience, and testimony.

TIM ROYERS: Right back at you. Thank you for your patience. Have a good night, everyone.

SANDERS: Good evening, and welcome.

CLARENCE KING: Good evening. Thank you for waiting so long for me to testify. My name's C.J. King. That's C-l-a-r-e-n-c-e; King, K-i-n-g. I'm the chair of the Douglas County Democratic Party. You might guess

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I'm in opposition to these two, and you would be correct. I live in LD 6, which is home to one of the best Cavanaugh's in the Legislature. And while I represent a partisan organization, I'm not here to spew partisan facts. I believe in, in-- I believe in facts. I don't believe in partisan BS. Can I say that in a hearing? OK. So I, I-- in listening, there were a couple things that I would like to dispute and a couple of things I would like to elevate. In the opening, Senator Lippincott said that in 20-- if we'd use the district system, President Romney-- Mitt Romney would have won the president. He can't and doesn't know that. I can't and don't know that. If you change the rules, you may change the outcome. There's no way of going backwards and saying, I can extrapolate this data if everyone voted the exact same way. But campaigning would be done differently, potentially be done differently, resources would be done differently. So please don't accept that as fact. But it was then doubled down on by the Governor's Office when they said, how would Dems feel about Romney as president with 5 million less votes? And, and I thought he was doing good until Grover Korn came up and pointed out that we know how they would feel, that President Hillary Clinton won by 3 million votes and the president, Al Gore, won by half a million votes. But that didn't happen. I think that was to try and bait into an argument about what level of, you know, of a, of a discontent would be there. Well, we would see a peaceful transition of power, because that's what Democrats do. It's in sharp contrast to what we saw in 2020. OK? And then-- so those, those were two things that were stated as fact that I just don't believe should be accepted as fact. And then there were a couple of things that were stated as fact that I can't, I can't verify, but I do appreciate. The person that represented the Nebraska Republican Party-- I was outside. I apologize for not getting the names-- but they said-- and, and I just want to quote him on this, that we are plagued with \$50 million of out-of-state money in our elections. I don't know where he came fro-- with that number, but I'll agree with him. We are plagued with \$50 million of out-of-state money coming to Nebraska, being spent here, being used by local resources, being taxed. All of that happens. It was followed up with-- the next person said, pass this and we'll see a reduction, if not an elimination, of out-of-state money. Perhaps those two things are true. I hope when you have the budget debate you consider that, because this is-- let's bring in that out-of-state money. So with those facts in mind, what I'd like to do is just end by saying I just recently

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retired and I want to share with you the best piece of advice I, I got in my career. I worked as a, as an international rep for a large labor organization. When I first took over, I was in-- you know, I was meeting on a, on an arbitration case, and I didn't think we were on the right side of it. And I called my boss, the vice president who hired me, and I said, hey, you know, my members, my constituents, the folks that I love, that, that call me brother and that I call them brother and sister, they'll be upset if I don't, you know, if I don't-- they'll be mad. And he said to me, he goes, I didn't hire you to make everybody happy. I hired you to do the right thing. Please do the right thing.

SANDERS: Appreciate your testimony. Thank you. Are there any questions for Mr. King? See none. Thank you.

CLARENCE KING: Thank you.

SANDERS: Have a good evening.

CLARENCE KING: You too.

SANDERS: Thank you for your patience. Good evening, and welcome.

GRACE JACOBSON: Hi. Thank you for staying so late and taking a short break instead of dinner so we can [INAUDIBLE] testifying. My name is Grace Jacobson, G-r-a-c-e J-a-c-o-b-s-o-n. And I am testifying in opposition, representing myself. Most of the points that I would have made have already been made. Historical precedent, fairness, not disenfranchising other Nebraskans, everything. I'm going to tell you guys about-- guess what? I was also a fourth grader when I learned about Nebraska's split electoral system. And I asked my teacher, well, why is it that we do this? I like it. I think it's great. It means it's more fair, right? It means that even if only one part of the state feels a certain way they still get their voice heard. It doesn't matter who's the majority. Everybody gets a say. And I asked, who else does it? And she's like, well, Maine does, but no one else has done it yet. And I love the fact that she framed it as a yet, as hopefully other people will follow our step-- our position to be able to ensure that everyone gets a say. Because in all honesty, as a bunch of you already-- probably remember me from last year and the year before, I don't feel like this legislative body actually listens to a lot of

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Nebraskans. I'm very concerned that the longer I keep paying attention, the more partisan things are becoming. I remember-- the reason why I chose to stay in Nebraska when I had the opportunity to go and study in France was because I was so proud of how we have natural resource districts, public power, and how our Unicameral was bipart-- was bipartisan. There was, there was no partisanship. Everyone worked together. And then something changed around 2017, 2018, and suddenly everyone's at each other's throats. Suddenly, anything that helps the little guy just gets kicked to the curb. And this really feels like a continuation of that escalation. And I'm frustrated. I'm so, so frustrated, frustrated watching my home that I have lived in my entire life just become worse. It's like I'm watching the slow death of my hou-- of where I live, where I love, where my family is. I'm a fifth-generation Nebraska-- Nebraskan. One side, I might actually be the seventh, but we don't have definitive proof. That means my family's been here for over 100 years on one side, guaranteed. I'd say that makes me pretty truly a Nebraskan even if I'm not into sports and not into Huskers. So please do the right thing. Continue our honestly wonderful history, even if it's only as long as my lifetime-- it's actually two years older than me. It's 32, not 30-- of listening and respecting the votes and the concerns of the constituents. Because-- I don't live in Omaha. I'm not from Omaha. That vote doesn't benefit me. But I still think they deserve to be able to be their little blue dot. So thank you for your time.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Are there any questions for Ms. Jacobson? See none. Thank for your patience, testimony, and time.

GRACE JACOBSON: Yeah. Thank you for staying. There were multiple times where we didn't get to testify, so.

SANDERS: Thank you. Welcome. Good evening.

GARETH GILSDORF: I have an article I would like to reference. May I use my phone just briefly?

SANDERS: Yeah. We'll start with your name and spell it first and then--

GARETH GILSDORF: Yeah. Thank you, members of the committee. My name is Gareth Gilsdorf, G-a-r-e-t-h G-i-l-s-d-o-r-f.

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SANDERS: Thank you.

GARETH GILSDORF: I am here in opposition to both proposed pieces of legislation. So first, I'd like to start with referencing an article from UNL titled Snapshot Reveals Complex Political Identity Behind Nebraska's Red State Status, from the University Communication and Marketing. Let's see. Nebraska is known as a red state, but data from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Bureau of Sociological Research indicates the state is more politically diverse than the moniker suggests. This is according to the latest Nebraska snapshot by part-- a bimonthly report using data from the Nebraska Annual Social Indicators survey. Statewide, about two in five Nebraskans report having conservative or very conservative political views, while 34% say they're in the middle of the road, and 25% hold very liberal or liberal views. Similarly, 41% of Nebraskans also self-identify as Republican, 28% reporting being a Democrat, and 31% being reported as Independent or other. This means that two in five Nebraskans is conservative according to these numbers, and Republican. And three in five Nebraskans is Independent or moderate or liberal. And I think this is a wonderful thing. From my own experience, I moved to Nebraska two years ago. I am now a citizen. My father was born in Nebraska, and we moved back after a wildfire destroyed our home in a different state-- or, destroyed our town. And where we came from in 2022 was so uncompetitive that the minority party did not put up a competitor in the election at all. So-- and on top of that, we didn't have this, well, honestly incredible representative system. And I-- having come from Arizona and California, where my vote didn't matter, it has been honestly amazing to see the Unicameral and the vote system and public power. There's nothing like Nebraska. It's-- and-- I, I mean, I even ca-- my dad raised me Nebraskan even though I wasn't, I wasn't born here. I came here and Nebraska nice was just-- that's how it was. Nebraska nice. It was so different from everywhere else, but I just fit right in. And-- one second. Here we go. Let's see. A few different times, the money coming into Omaha has been referenced, and that actually-- it has been argued both for and against, positive and bad, because-- sorry. One second. Has been-- brain fart. I think the money coming into Nebraska is good for jobs, but I think it's bad for politics. And I believe that the real remedy to this is not to get rid of our system, but to instead champion campaign finance reform. So-- let's see. Yeah. Eight score and one years ago, a U.S. president first

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from the Republican Party began a speech in this matter in Gettysburg. He spoke reverently of America's government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Nebraska named its city-- its capital city after him: Lincoln. My personal vote matters here more than anywhere else I've ever lived. We are supposed to be a laboratory for democracy. And here in Nebraska, with our Unicameral and our voting system, I'm proud to reject red versus blue and embrace red, white, and blue. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Thank you. Any questions for Mr. Galsdorf?

GARETH GILSDORF: Gilsdorf.

SANDERS: Gilsdorf. See none from the committee. Thank you for your testimony. And you've been here for hours as well, so thank you for your patience.

GARETH GILSDORF: Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you. Good evening. Welcome.

SPENCER RICE: Good evening. First for me.

SANDERS: Oh. Take your time. Take a breath. Glad you're here.

SPENCER RICE: Thank you.

SANDERS: Remember to say your name and then spell it. You know those things.

SPENCER RICE: My name is Spencer Rice, S-p-e-n-c-e-r R-i-c-e. Guess that makes me the second food person here. All right. Committee, I speak for myself. I want to consider the pro-- these propositions. I oppose both bills, sorry. And I want to consider these through the lens of the original position or the veil of ignorance by philosopher John Rawls, where we imagine designing a society in which we are going to live but we don't know where we're going to live in it. How would we design such a society? And so we would probably want to make sure that whether we were born the richest person or the poorest person, we would have the same rights as anyone else and the same opportunities. What with-- what we do with them is up to us when we're there. And so in that, I have to ask, what is really the benefit to anyone within

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Nebraska of eliminating the split vote? Many people have talked tonight about its-- how it makes us unique and special along with, you know, Maine, but-- and it does. But I just want to iterate that we don't pick our lives. So whether we ended up as a Republican out west or a Democrat in Omaha or like myself, a former Republican now Independent, I didn't decide to do that. It's the result of all the-- my life I have lived and the beliefs that-- I don't choose. It's just the result of the world I find myself in. The Electoral College, I've said it for many years, I would prefer to get rid of it, along with the Senate. And the reason for that is because their institutions are slave history. But we have them and we probably aren't getting rid of them any time soon. So in that, we should work hard to minimize that slave history. And so-- many have said that, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. But I'm an engineer, electrical, but-- and I appreciate that sentiment, but the system is broken. But this is the wrong direction. We should be moving instead towards a more proportional allotment of our votes, as well as switching to a ranked choice style or other system of voting that would discourage strategic voting and worrying about throwing away one's vote so that we can pick our more moderate candidates and hopefully find ourselves back in the center. These bills, each time they come up, just seem like a waste of our time when we could be focusing on something more important to unify us, like perhaps a new flag that we don't accidentally hang upside down. But if this change must happen, it should come from the people of Nebraska through a petition and then through the vote so that we can hear from Nebraskans that Nebraskans-- that, that their fellow Nebraskans who have a dissenting vote do not count if it must be done, for that is exactly what winner take all will do. This system takes us closer to that more elusive perfect union, and we should not abandon it because out-of-state interests would prefer that we do so. Keep our vote split. Enhance it, improve it, don't destroy it. Keep Nebraska just. Thank you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Mr. Rice, for your testimony. Are there any questions for Mr. Rice? See none. Thank you. Have a good evening. And thanks for your patience as well. Good evening.

CAROLE ZACEK: Good evening, everyone. Long, long day. First off, I want to thank every single one of you for this incredible opportunity to actually get to speak. This is just an honor. I will just say that. First off, my name is Carole Zacek, C-a-r-o-l-e-- like Carole Lombard.

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Last name is Zacek, Z-a-c-e-k. But it rhymes with paycheck. So-- anyway, I definitely oppose LB3 as well as LR24CA. To give a little entomology about the word "democracy," demos is Greek for people, and kratos is the word for power. Democracy has been what America has been built on, what Nebraska also has been built on as part of the United States. And equality, equity, and parity are pillars of democracy. So when that is taken away with this winner take all, we all feel voiceless. We do. And at age 62-- I spent five hours waiting. And I'm so grateful once again to get to speak. We all need to have our voices heard. Every voice that you have listened to today has mattered. Every voice you are still going to listen to-- and you guys are awesome for staying-- they all matter. Your voices matter greatly for all of us. So if those voices are not heard because of this, this LB3, where they're just stating that, oh, we should do this winner-take-all thing, it is not fair. It is not fair at all to the people who need to be heard. And for one thing-- I will just also mention one of the-- one other thing is the fact that we have a Republican-appointed governor, not voted for. He was not voted in. He was appointed by the former Republican governor. So for him to really want to be pushing this through, I don't feel that that is fair. It should be voted for by the people, of-- by the Nebraskans as to whether or not we would change to a different system because-- yeah. Many people have stated that, yes, this is-- it makes us special. It does. It makes us unique. Just like the Unicameral. It makes us different. It really creates definitely-- it, it, it's not so much creating anything like more interest in our state. That's not so much it. It just gives everybody a more, you know, engaged sense of-- that their vote matters and that their voice is being heard. So that is all I have. And I really must say thank you to all of you.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony and patience and time. But hold on. We may have--

CAROLE ZACEK: Yeah, I was. Just going to say--

SANDERS: --questions from the committee. Are there any questions from the committee? See none.

CAROLE ZACEK: OK.

SANDERS: Thank you, Ms. Zacek--

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CAROLE ZACEK: Thank you.

SANDERS: --for your testimony--

CAROLE ZACEK: Thank you, everyone.

SANDERS: --and your patience and time. Thank you. Welcome.

KRISTA WARREN: My name is Krista Warren, K-r-i-s-t-a; last name, Warren, W-a-r-r-e-n. I am opposed to LB3 and LR24CA. It's going to be a little redundant at this point, but I've been here almost seven hours, so I'm going to say it anyway. I was raised in reliably red Texas and attended university in reliably blue New York, where I earned degrees in politics and history. I spent two years abroad providing civilian support for the military during the Iraq War. Upon my return, I chose Nebraska as my home and have been a resident of this state for the past 15 years. I've traveled the world. I have traveled all across the nation. So please hear me when I say that the unique allocation of electoral votes is truly one of the things I admire most about Nebraska. Without mincing words, when Governor Pillen says that the current system weakens Nebraska's voice in national elections, I believe he means that it weakens voices that sound like his. There is no evidence that the current system divides Nebraska, but its elimination would likely encourage polarization and fuel enmity, as a large segment of the population would feel that its participation no longer mattered. It sends the message that Nebraska does not value meaningful political debate, does not respect differences of opinion, and does not tolerate dissent. Disenfranchising hundreds of thousands of voters in this way would further erode the democratic ideals that we all should hold sacrosanct. Senator Lippincott further states that a winner-take-all approach ensures rural voices are not overshadowed by large population centers. However, since the inception of our current system, the voice of rural Nebraskans has been well-represented, with four to five electoral votes being allocated to the preferred candidate of predominantly rural counties. Our last victor received just below 60% of the popular vote in the state. However, he was awarded 80% of the electoral votes. Simple math shows us that rural voters are not being ignored. Therefore, one can only conclude that the actual intent of any change would be to silence dissenting voices in urban areas. In this context, changing the rules regarding allocation of our electoral

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votes is the first cousin of political gerrymandering. Nebraska-- we're not going to talk about that because that's about the Unicameral. The current system allows for a more nuanced representation of our citizens' interests and concerns and reflects the diversity of the constituency served by our legislative body. Rather than adopting the less sophisticated system of other states, we should be acting as a leader, and maybe they will follow our example. And I did hear today other people say that it hasn't happened in 30 years. And I would just like to remind people that women had to wait a lot longer than 30 years just to get the right to vote. And even after we got that, we had to wait more than 50 years just to have the right to have a credit card in our name. So sometimes change takes longer than 30 years. So maybe they'll change, maybe they won't. But I do know that bowing to pressure from outside influences about how we do things in Nebraska is beneath our dignity, and I don't think we should stand for it. That's it.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony.

KRISTA WARREN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Are there any questions from the committee? See none. Thank you, Ms. Warren.

KRISTA WARREN: Thank you.

SANDERS: Good evening. Welcome.

HEIDI WARREN: Hello. I'm extremely nervous. I've never done anything like this, so bear with me. I have a shaky voice.

SANDERS: Tell us what you know, your name, and how to spell it.

HEIDI WARREN: My name is Heidi Warren. Not related to her, but Heidi Warren, H-e-i-d-i W-a-r-r-e-n. I am from Omaha, Nebraska. And I am in opposition for both of these. I'm here because I want to make it known I strongly am in strong opposition for both of these. I used to be a Republican, but the party has lost its values and not standing up to a man that, that demands loyalty to him over the Constitution, and anyone that doesn't get in line is a target. We know this is happening because of pressure from Trump to begin with. If, if we want to move to a winner take all, why aren't we fighting for the same exact thing

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for the presidential election and to get rid of the Electoral College for everybody else and let all the vor-- votes be heard? Splitting the electoral vote means the Republicans pay more attention to the state and to work to get our vote and to ensure that our voices are heard. By taking our one electoral vote, it is disenfranchising voters. The split system also helps to motivate both Republicans and Democrats to help get out and vote. When your kids and grandkids ask you, what did you do to stop the authoritarian takeover, what will you say? I am begging you to stop the partisan politics and voting party line and save our constitutional democratic republic. Thank you.

SANDERS: See? Well done.

HEIDI WARREN: Still nervous.

SANDERS: Let me check if there are any questions from the committee. No. I see none. Thank you, Ms. Warren, for your testimony, your patience--

HEIDI WARREN: All right. Thank you. Thank you guys.

SANDERS: --time. Thank you. Please. Welcome.

DYLAN SEVERINO: Thank you. Messed up on my script. I wrote afternoon.

SANDERS: Sorry. Time flies.

DYLAN SEVERINO: It does. Good evening, Chairwoman Sanders and the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Dylan Severino, D-y-l-a-n S-e-v-e-r-i-n-o. I'm policy counsel at the ACLU of Nebraska. And I'm here in opposition of LB3 and LR24CA. In the entire country, Nebraska is the state most representative of its people, bar none. I'm sitting here before you. You are nonpartisan representatives of the only Unicameral in the country, so I don't need to tell you about how important it is that Nebraskans are fairly and equally represented. In 1934, Nebraska rejected the British two-house legislature and became the first American Unicameral Legislature, making each state representative local to address the concerns of all Nebraskans with an equal voice, not elected from the state at large. At the same time, we made our representatives nonpartisan because we knew that party politics only stand in the way of addressing issues. Clearly, Nebraska isn't afraid of doing things in a way that best

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represents the diverse voices of the people who live here. In 1991, we continued on this path when we changed to a split system. Like the Unicameral, the split vote system recognizes that our state has diverse political sensibilities based on Nebraska's regions and that one size does not fit all for Nebraska. This gives Nebraskans the strongest voice and the most direct representation possible within the confines of the Electoral College. And when people's voices matter, they're more likely to vote, which fosters a sense of civic responsibility. This is what Nebraska's all about. We oppose both measures because regardless of the mechanism used, either via legislation or a ballot measure, changing our current split vote system will result in the voices of fewer Nebraskans having an impact via their vote. The current system is right for Nebraska, and the only outcomes of the bill or petition would be keeping it right or silencing the voices of Nebraskans. For those reasons, we both oppose-- oppose both LB3 and LR24CA. Thank you. And I'd be happy to answer any questions.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Any questions from the committee? Senator Andersen.

ANDERSEN: Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Severino, you represent ACLU. Is that right?

DYLAN SEVERINO: Yes, that's right. Of Nebraska, not national.

ANDERSEN: I'm sorry?

DYLAN SEVERINO: ACLU of Nebraska.

ANDERSEN: OK. Great. Do you know what other states the ACLU is advocating the split vote system in at this point?

DYLAN SEVERINO: I don't think it's up anywhere else. So as far as I know, I don't think they're, they're doing with it any-- anywhere else. But to be clear, we're, we're separate entities, so I'm not in like, direct communication with, with everybody.

ANDERSEN: OK. Have you ever heard of any other states that are advocating for this split vote as you are here?

DYLAN SEVERINO: I don't think so.

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ANDERSEN: OK. Thank you.

DYLAN SEVERINO: Yeah.

SANDERS: Thank you. Are there any other questions? Thank you for your testimony--

DYLAN SEVERINO: Yeah. Thank you very much.

SANDERS: --Mr. Severino--

DYLAN SEVERINO: Throw myself--

SANDERS: --and your time and patience. Thank you. Good evening.
Welcome.

ALTON MUMM: Good evening. I appreciate the patience of your-- all, considering the overwhelming amount of pay you get for this job. My name is Alton Mumm, A-l-t-o-n M-u-m-m. I'm President of the Nebraska Alliance for Retired Americans. I will be brief. The Nebraska Alliance for Retired Americans opposes the passage of LB3 and LRC-- LR24CA. We believe electing the president of the United States should be by popular vote and work towards the day that the Electoral College itself was-- which was founded in racism, is done away with altogether. However, with that goal in the distance, we favor the way Nebraska does its electoral system. With the so-called winner-take-all system, states like Nebraska effectively eliminate the vote for president of thousands of Nebraskans. It has been said that we would get more attention from the candidates with that unfair system, but we believe the opposite to be true. We were told that we should do what all the other states do. However, if that is the case, then perhaps a two-house Legislature would make more sense as well. No. We believe in the Unicameral system and that keeping the system for choosing electors that we now have is the fairest way for it to be done.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony.

ALTON MUMM: Thank you.

SANDERS: Let me check to see if there are any questions for you from the committee. See no--

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ALTON MUMM: Say hi to your dad, John.

SANDERS: Thank you. Have a good evening. Welcome.

BLASE ROKUSEK: Hi. Hello, everyone.

SANDERS: Hi.

BLASE ROKUSEK: My name is Blase Rokusek, B-l-a-s-e R-o-k-u-s-e-k. And I grew up in Hartington, Nebraska, Cedar County, very extreme northeast-- like, 15 miles from South Dakota. And I had the opportunity to leave the state when I applied for undergrad. And I've always had a lot of pride in this state. I love this state. Lived here my entire life. And I decided to stay here for undergrad. So I went to UNK and fell in love with Kearney. That's where I completed my bachelor's degree. And then I had a second opportunity to leave the state when I applied for graduate school. And again, my pride in the state and I love how we do everything here, I decided to stay. And I did my master's degree at UNK as well. And then I had a third opportunity to leave the state when I applied to medical school. And again, same thing. I love everything Nebraska stands for. We're able to have, you know, very rural ideas, also urban ideas that all kind of-- we can all live together. And so I've decided to stay here again. I'm at University of Me-- Nebraska Medical Center for medicine. And I'll have the opportunity to leave for residency in a couple years. And so I'm looking for reasons to stay and practice here, and I know a lot of my classmates are as well. So for the record, I am not here on behalf of any student organizations or anything at the University of Nebraska. I'm just as a concerned citizen in opposition to LB3 and LR24CA. So most of what I had had for arguments had been stated very well, I think, over the course of the day. So I was going to kind of just do two quick little points. The first, it seems that any logic for the Electoral College in general would be for smaller states like Nebraska, who are less populous, to have some sort of a say in presidential election. Otherwise, states like California, very populous states, would choose the presidency every year. And so on one scale down within the state, the argument for the district system is for smaller, popul-- or, less populous areas to still have a say within the state, whether-- as, as opposed to doing an entire just winner-take-all system. So right now-- and I know this point's been made before-- right now, we are in a situation where there's more

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population in the rural areas, but that's not going to be like that forever. So it's the same idea that my hometown of Hartington in Cedar County, which has one stoplight-- and that one stoplight doesn't really count because it's on a single-lane road across the Gavin's Point Dam-- in a couple decades, we don't want Omaha making decisions for Cedar County, which-- my, my hometown had 16,000 people, and that's considered metropolis up there. Everybody came there for groceries. And the-- my second point is, which-- I, I was super surprised this came up because I was like, surely nobody's going to bring this up, was the election of 1796. And what-- when Jefferson lost, he sent a letter to the governor of Virginia and asked him to change the system to winner take all. And of course they did. And then John Adams did the same thing to Massachusetts. And those two systems, the Democrat-Republicans, the Federalists, they're nothing-- no, no ties really to our current system now. So I think we can kind of look at it objectively and say that whole business seems kind of sleazy. And in Nebraska here, we don't want to give in to, like, that same kind of underhanded switching just for personal benefit, so. That is kind of the crux of the argument. And the last thing I'll say is, thank you so much for all the-- all your work. I-- like, I should be studying for the first part of my licensing exam right now, but I just had-- it's very important to come today. And I do not envy your jobs. And I-- like, all this pol-- political stuff. I am looking forward to studying again tomorrow. So that-- thank you for everything you do.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony and for being here. I appreciate it. Let's check to see if there are any questions from the committee. See none. Thank you again. And can I get your last name one more time? Ro--

BLASE ROKUSEK: Yeah. R-- R-o-k-u-s-e-k.

SANDERS: U-s-e-k. Thank you very much. Good evening. Welcome.

HOLLY ARNT: Hello. My name is Holly Arnt, A-r-n-t. I came here from Filley, the little village south of here-- not the, not the city. I voted for a Democratic candidate this year, and one of the few things that I am proud of Nebraska for is that I felt like I had a voice even though I'm pretty sure all of my neighbors voted differently than me. I would encourage the rest of the country to follow our example so that other, others from both parties can also feel their vote

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mattered. Because I have a friend in California that doesn't bother voting because she doesn't need to because California's going to go blue. And if we lose this particular style of voting, then I won't need to vote because my vote won't matter. And I don't think that the candidates will care to come here because they'll know, oh, Nebraska's going to go red, so we don't have to worry about them. Let's go to a swing state. The only Democratic candidate to get all of our electoral votes was Lyndon B. Johnson. And since then, it has been a Republican-winning state. Somebody said that the score was 42 to 3, so rural voters are represented. This makes me believe that-- bringing this legislation up again, I know that this has been something that has been shot down multiple times. I believe it's a signal that the GOP is scared. I think that they recognize that young voters are turning away from the Republican Party since MAGA values seem to have replaced conservative values, and those values are very reminiscent of a German political party of the '40s.

SANDERS: Thank you for your testimony. Hold on. Let's make sure there are no questions from the committee. Are there any questions? See none. Thank you, Mr. Arnt, for your testimony. Are there any others?

***CATHERINE TEVIS:** My comments are simple. This bill will cause people to not vote. Takes away our constitutional rights to be heard. Put it to a vote of the citizens of Nebraska if you dare.

***KATHY HOELL:** I am writing in opposition to LB3 to change provisions on selecting presidential electors. Nebraska does not always do things the same way as other states, so I don't see why we need to start with our presidential electors. The current system works because it represents the majority of voters in that district. This proposal is saying other people vote for me, my vote does not count. I see this as a failure to count the people of that district. Therefore, I oppose the passage of LB3.

***JOLENE LANGAN:** Everyone's vote should have merit. And if the results cause a split, so be it. Being a blue dot in a red state shows democracy at work.

SANDERS: Wow. OK. This goes-- we're going to close on the LB3 and L--LR24CA. I believe there's a closing for Senator Lippincott. And while you're coming up, the position comments for hearing record summary

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report on LR24CA: we had 172 proponents, 728 opponents, and 4 neutral. And for LB3: proponents, 414; opponents, 1,369; and 3 neutral. And ADA accommodation written testimony, we have: proponents, 0; opponents, 2; and 0 in the neutral. And one more ADA accommodation written testimony for LR24CA: proponent, 0; opponent, 0; and 1 in the neutral. Welcome back.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you. You folks have pretty much heard everything there is to hear on this subject, so I really don't have anything else to, to say. I can just take questions or--

SANDERS: OK. Are there any questions from the committee for Senator Lippincott?

GUERECA: That's you, John.

LIPPINCOTT: No, John.

J. CAVANAUGH: I mean, you're, you're, you're, you're throwing yourself on the railroad tracks.

SANDERS: Sir Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chair. Thanks for being here, Senator Lippincott. Thanks for-- this was very interesting. And there were a-- there were a lot of really interesting testifiers, and I really enjoyed hearing from everybody. And I won't keep us here long. I just thought you might want to know one of the testifiers was a person from Hamilton County, which I looked up. It's in your district. And she said in her testimony that she felt she was underrepresented in the Legislature. And so I thought that you might find that interesting. Maybe you want to tell her. And so I did take the liberty of looking up-- you weren't here when we did redistricting, but in 2021, we redistricted the districts, and District 34 ended up with 38,230 people. When we do redistricting, we have to be within federal limits. And that-- at that point, I think it was about 40,000 was the number, and you had to be within a certain percentage of that. And so District 34 was one that we went under. District 9, my district, is one we went over. And-- so I guess when we're talking about kind of this conversation you and I had at the beginning about kind of the shift of power or representation to rural, and if you go and you take a look at

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how we did that redistricting, we specifically made-- disproportionately made the rural districts smaller, meaning there's fewer people per district. And the urban districts-- mine has 300 people more. Senator Guereca's has 454 more. Senator Hunt's has 473 more people than the, the standard. And your district, unfortunately, is the only one I pulled, but it has 2,000 fewer people than my district. So I guess, you know, when we're talking about moving representation around and whether or not people are adequately represented, we are attempt-- we have attempted to do that historically and to, to make it so we are not taking another district out of rural Nebraska than we've already had. Right? So I guess-- it's not really a question. I just thought that-- that struck me when somebody came here and said they didn't feel like they got enough representation when, in fact, percentagewise, they're getting more representation than somebody in my district. Although, I do a great job. District 9's great. UNMC's in District 9. But--

HUNT: Now it is.

J. CAVANAUGH: It is-- all of it's in District 9 now because that redistricting. So I guess-- I don't know. I just throw it to you if you have a thought on that subject.

LIPPINCOTT: Yeah. I appreciate that.

J. CAVANAUGH: Cool. Well, thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you, sir.

SANDERS: All right. We'll close now on LB3. Thank you.

LIPPINCOTT: Thank you. Appreciate your time.

SANDERS: And thanks to the committee for hanging in there.

LONOWSKI: Hoo-rah.

SANDERS: The A-Team.

LONOWSKI: Let's go.

SANDERS: All right. Thank you very much.

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