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Urban Affairs Committee  
February 13, 2007

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[LB160 LB607 LR13]

The Committee on Urban Affairs met at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 2007, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB160, LB607, and LR13. Senators present: Mike Friend, Chairperson; Amanda McGill, Vice Chairperson; Abbie Cornett; Ray Janssen; Steve Lathrop; Kent Rogert; and Tom White. Senators absent: None. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: (Recorder malfunction)...the committee members at the very end, I'll kind of adjust the way we do things here real quick. I will introduce myself real quick. My name is Mike Friend. I am from northwest Omaha, District 10, and this is the Urban Affairs Committee, so if you are looking for Education which is what usually everybody is looking for, you are in the wrong room. But we do have an interesting afternoon ahead of us so I wanted to make sure we'll get started. If I could ask you please, everything is transcribed here; if you would do us a favor and shut the cell phones down or at least put them on vibrate so that we don't run into a problem in that regard. Those in the room wishing to testify on a bill should come to the front of the room when that bill is to be heard, and just get in more or less a ready position or the on-deck circle there. All testifiers will have to fill out a green sheet on both entrances. There are some green sheets. If you would fill out the green sheet, place it in the box on the testifying desk, and that will help also, the transcribers. As you begin your testimony--and this is pretty important--if you could state your name and you could spell it for the record, obviously another transcriber requirement, we would appreciate that. If you do not spell your name, I will stop you, or Senator McGill, who is the Vice Chair of the committee, will stop you and we'll force that effort upon you somehow; it won't hurt. But it kind of gets in the flow of your testimony so try to remember that. If you do have handout material you'd like distributed to the committee, Matt Pederson is our page; he would be happy to distribute it for you to the committee members. With that, I'd like to introduce the members of the committee. Please don't take offense. I myself have two bills in a different committee, so senators come and go, and it certainly has nothing to do with your testimony. We are multitasking and what that means is we could have some opening on bills right now in other committees, might not, but I will introduce the members of the committee and we can get started. To my right is Senator McGill; she's the Vice Chair of the Urban Affairs Committee; Senator McGill is from Lincoln. Mr. Bill Stadtwald; Bill is longtime legal counsel for the Urban Affairs Committee, and helps greatly obviously. Beth Dinneen helps greatly as well; she is the committee clerk. And Senator Abbie Cornett, from Bellevue, is here. Senator Lathrop, Senator Rogert, Senator White, and Senator Janssen, like I said, should be along, but we're going to go ahead. Senator Cornett, I know that you're the first up. There's one more point that I'd like to make. I know I don't usually like to put total time restrictions on testimony, but what I am going to do in the interest of time, and I don't think we are going to have weather problems this afternoon but I do want to make sure that we limit testimony, to the best of our ability, to about five minutes. My viewpoint over the years has been that

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if it's over five minutes, we are usually getting into some redundancy that's not particularly necessary. But sometimes it is. The committee is pretty good about asking questions, so if you're cut off, again don't be offended. We know a lot of you have traveled a long way in order to testify, to do this type of stuff, and that is important to us. But I think five minutes is a good time frame. So with that I would ask Senator Cornett...the first bill today is LB160, the second bill on the agenda is LB607, and the third is a resolution, LR13, by Senator White. We will start with Senator Cornett's LB160. Senator Cornett, you are recognized to open. [LB160]

SENATOR CORNETT: Thank you, Senator Friend, and good afternoon, members of the Urban Affairs Committee. I am Abbie Cornett, C-o-r-n-e-t-t, and I represent the 45th Legislative District. Many smaller rural fire departments have difficulty in providing their members with adequate fire equipment to protect their communities. The people who volunteer their time for their communities are to be commended. LB160 would allow a person other than a manufacturer or vendor, to donate equipment to a volunteer fire department or political subdivision, for use by its volunteer department, without being held liable for civil damages for personal injury, property damage, or loss of death caused by the fire control or rescue equipment after donation. There are several people here to testify that will be able to help better describe how this bill will help them. Just a little side note: We did sit down when we drafted the bill last year with the trial attorneys, and they are comfortable with the language in this bill, that it does not affect the liability statutes. I want to thank you for your time and your consideration and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Senator Cornett. Senator McGill, any questions for...? Senator Cornett, you mentioned this bill was...I don't remember this bill being referenced to this committee last year, was it? [LB160]

SENATOR CORNETT: No, it was referenced to Judiciary last year. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Okay. [LB160]

SENATOR CORNETT: It's the same bill. I'm not sure why it was re-referenced. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Okay, all right. Well, I think that those type of points you may never come up with an answer to. [LB160]

SENATOR CORNETT: I was going to say, it's exactly the same bill as last year. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Okay. All right. Well, thank you, Senator Cornett. We will start with proponent testimony. Can I see a show of hands of the folks that would want to testify on this bill, period? Okay. We will start with proponent testimony. Those in favor of LB160 step forward. Welcome. [LB160]

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DALE TEDDER: Thank you. Senator Friend, committee members, thank you. My name is Dale Tedder, D-a-l-e T-e-d-d-e-r. I'm the chief of the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department. The Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department is very supportive of this bill. We feel this is a very important bill for the fire departments throughout the state. It will give them the opportunity to receive some equipment that they may not be able to receive because of budgetary restraints. The larger fire departments get to a point where such equipment can be brought down unusable to them, but still usable to other fire departments. We feel that instead of taking this piece of equipment and auctioning it off, we feel that by sending it out and being able to give it to other fire departments for their use without any liability, is a very big plus to the rest of the volunteers in the state of Nebraska. I'd answer any questions that you may have. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Chief. Are there any questions from committee members for Chief Tedder? Dale, can you go over--and maybe I'm asking to open up a can of worms I'm not sure that I want to open up--can you give me an example of some things that a bill like this would help? I mean, have you run into, have there been liability issues in the past that have cost taxpayers? And maybe that question is indiscreet; maybe it's stuff you really can't talk about. [LB160]

DALE TEDDER: I can just give you from past experience that we've given equipment away to smaller communities around our department, and there is always that liability out there from both our attorney and other attorneys that if something does happen, who is liable for that, the giver or the taker? [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Okay, do you...oh, all right. Do you think that it has hindered...? You know, have you balked and other fire and rescue organizations have balked at the idea of doing business because of the situation that they are in from a liability standpoint? [LB160]

DALE TEDDER: I know we won't give anything else away now until we do get something straightened out as far as the legislation, or a law or something out there that will give us that right to do that. There's just so many things standing in the way now, even if from a piece of firehose. Firehose might have certified and checked out at our department, but given away, it might have failed on a call, it could have hurt somebody. There's all kinds of different things that you want to look at. So our biggest thing is that we just want to make sure there is no liability out there to us before we give anything away. And it's just like buying a used car: When you get it off the lot you don't know what's going to happen. So we just want to make sure there is a protection out there for everybody. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you. Are there any other questions from committee members? Seeing none, thanks for the testimony. The next proponent. [LB160]

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JERRY STILMOCK: (Exhibit 1) Hello, senators, my name is Jerry Stilmock, J-e-r-r-y S-t-i-l-m-o-c-k, registered lobbyist on behalf of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association, and testifying in support of LB160. Thank you to Senator Cornett, once again, for bringing the legislation and the other cosponsors on this committee. As has been stated, the intent of the bill is to provide a limitation on liability for certain donations for this equipment. And what ends up happening is, those departments that have equipment that they are able to replace maybe on an annual or every-other-year basis, right now is either being stuffed in the back of the fire station, or it's discreetly being left out on the dock, and a phone call goes to the neighboring department saying that we happen to know that there might be some equipment back of our loading dock after 9 p.m. tonight after the meeting ends because the donating fire department is concerned of tracing back of liability. So it's really not a good answer to this situation to have that happening, senators. What happened, its origination was back in Texas in the mid-1990s. They have quite a bit of company fire brigades that, once their equipment was used, they were having that surplus equipment. Because of liability purposes though, they were taking it out and actually destroying it. It was not being turned over because of the threat of, whether real or perceived, of liability. So Texas, as the initiator for this type of law, said, you know, this is crazy; we have value-poor--and I'll use the analogy back to Nebraska--we have value-poor fire districts. They are unable to operate. They operate their budget on a shoestring, and maybe their tax levies go for the most basic needs: fuel and insurance. But for protecting their own men and ladies, they don't have enough funding. So it's those types of departments that would benefit from this type of legislation, we believe, so that the haves, those departments that have the ability to replace and turn over their equipment, can take their bunkered gear, pass it on to the have-nots, and the donating fire department would have that protection from liability. That's it. And last year in front of Judiciary, this year in front of Urban Affairs, I'm not sure what the rationale was by the Referencing Committee, but we're happy to be here. You are staffed with a panel that have recognized the necessity and what volunteers serve throughout Nebraska, and with the attorneys that are also on the panel, recognizing they signing on as cosponsors. And as Senator Cornett had said, that the Nebraska Association of Trial Attorneys were involved in the drafting of the language this year, and that same language appears this year. The one last item: There's two portions to the bill. The first portion is the portion that I've been testifying to. The second portion is existing statute. Back in the '80s, what was happening is there was some bad equipment that just wasn't safe to be used. It didn't meet NFPA code, the terminology for firefighting equipment safety. It did not meet that safety standard when that equipment or that clothing, that protective firefighting equipment clothing, was coming into the state. And there were some departments that were being taken advantage of, and the thought was, well, let's draft a law, before my time, before your time, but let's make sure that the equipment coming in from the manufacturers and the vendors is code safe. And that overlapped into what we see today, is we want to hold the vendors and the manufacturers to bringing in equipment that is code safe, but...and

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certainly for that equipment then that is able to be passed down to other departments, we believe that we are going to accomplish a lot of good by allowing that equipment to reach those other departments that even though it's the used equipment from one department, it is far better than the equipment that the have-not fire departments have. And we'd urge the committee to advance this measure to the full Legislature. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. Stilmock. The committee has been joined by Senator Janssen. Hi, Senator. Are there any questions from the committee members for Mr. Stilmock? Jerry, just to make sure, now that you mention it, there was no action taken but this never got to General File last year out of Judiciary. I don't remember us taking any action on it. [LB160]

JERRY STILMOCK: That's correct, yes. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Okay. [LB160]

JERRY STILMOCK: Yeah, it...you know, I think with everything else Judiciary was facing in the short session, I guess is that's what I lay the rationale to. I had several conversations with Senator Bourne, and it was just a matter of timing, I think. [LB160]

SENATOR FRIEND: Okay. Thanks. If there are no more questions then...oh, sorry, excuse me. Senator Janssen. [LB160]

SENATOR JANSSEN: A few comments, Jerry. I remember--of course, I go back quite a ways--after World War II, a lot of army surplus equipment was donated to rural fire protection districts. And at that time our equipment amounted to maybe a raincoat and maybe an old B-24 flight...woolen...it was sheepskin on the inside and leather on the outside. You know, anything was better than what we had, and no one ever brought a lawsuit against anybody. It just makes me wonder if where these lawsuits would come from? Who would do that? Why are you afraid of someone bringing a suit, other than the fact we've got too many lawyers in this state? [LB160]

JERRY STILMOCK: Well, no, I don't think it's too many lawyers, Senator (laughter). Where's Senator White and Senator Lathrop when you need them, huh? No, I think what it truly is, is the devastating loss that a family could endure, and you could all think of those horrific stories. And I think, personally, as being an attorney and seeing things happening, that when there's nowhere else to turn after the most terrible accident, when there's nowhere else to turn, workers' compensation has been obtained. But yet because of the staggering loss to that person, they don't have anywhere else to turn, and it's kind of like suing your next door neighbor in a sense. It's, well, I know Pete, and Pete and I have gotten along for 20 years; I hate to do this, but, you know, Pete, I'm really going after your insurance company because I don't have anywhere else to go because my son, who was in the backyard playing, he was mauled by your dog; I don't

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want to do this, Pete, but we've exhausted our health insurance. Whatever...you see where I'm going with this. I think the "tragicness" of the event is what concerns us, is they may be put in a box where they don't have anywhere else to go, and dad is the livelihood of that family. They have to do something. And by them, the injured party, having to do something, I think the volunteer fire departments and cities and fire districts want that protection. Yes, sir. [LB160]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you. [LB160]

SENATOR MCGILL: Other questions? Nope. Well, thank you for your testimony. [LB160]

JERRY STILMOCK: Okay, thank you. [LB150]

SENATOR MCGILL: Next proponent? Will you hold on? Senator Lathrop has just joined us. [LR160]

GARY TROUTMAN: Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Gary Troutman; that's G-a-r-y T-r-o-u-t-m-a-n. I'm the city administrator in Bellevue, and I just wanted to testify today in support of LB160, and I wanted to just give you a little twist to the testimony. I have been city administrator in Bellevue just going on four years now, and during my first year of my position, Chief Tedder came to me and indicated that he needed to buy a new rescue squad. And I asked him, I said, well, that's fine, but what do we do with the old one? He said, well, normally we go out for bids, and he said we won't get very much money for it. And so I said, well, let's follow procedure, let's go out for the bids, which he did. He came back; the bids were hardly worth anything. So we started conversing about it, and I mentioned about, well, why don't we just give this to one of the other departments, because we maintain immaculate maintenance records on our equipment and the equipment was really in good shape, which a smaller department could utilize. And Chief advised me, he said, well, we can't because of the liability issue. And so when we talked and then we spoke with Senator Cornett last year, the Bellevue Fire Department, along with Senator Cornett, and introduced the bill. But as I just wanted to let you know that from the dollar side, it was our city council's position that if we can help another city, why don't we do that as opposed to really not receiving anything back on the equipment. And I just wanted to testify to that, bring it to your attention that we support this. And I think there's a number of other cities around the state, and I think the league is going to testify to it, that feel the same way, but we've kind of been hindered by this liability issue. And that's...I just wanted to tell that story, so thank you. [LB160]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? All right, thank you. The next opponent. And Senator White from Omaha has also joined us now. [LB160]

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LYNN REX: Senator, members of the committee, my name is Lynn Rex, R-e-x, representing the League of Nebraska Municipalities, and we do strongly support this measure. We have a monthly magazine that goes out and cities will typically put information in there of the equipment that they are prepared to give away and donate if anybody wants it, whether it's computers and that sort of thing. We found that because of the concern about liability, what's occurring is that some of the equipment dealing with fire departments is no longer being put in our magazine. Now, we are not paid for this either. I'm not saying this is a revenue source for us. I'm just suggesting to you that if larger departments, in particular, can help out smaller departments by providing them with equipment that's better than what they have, that's a good thing. And unlike Jerry Stilmock, I am old enough to remember why the rest of this (laugh) is here, because Jerry is much younger than I. And the reason why the rest of the language is actually in the statute is because when the national professional firefighters group changed their standards, there were companies that were coming into Nebraska dumping equipment that they knew did not meet code. And the problem was that some of the smaller departments didn't have the sophistication always to know that it didn't meet code. And we really appreciated the fact that the Volunteer Firefighters Association was so helpful to them in trying to make sure that they were aware of it. But it was important then to have a statute. I would be happy to respond to any questions that you have. [LB160]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? None. Thank you, Lynn. [LB160]

LYNN REX: Thank you, Senator. [LB160]

SENATOR MCGILL: Are there any other proponents here to speak on the bill? Any opponents? Anyone here to testify neutral? Seeing none, Senator Cornett, would you like to close? Senator Cornett waives. We will then move on to LB607. [LB160 LB607]

SCOTT DOLTON: I need to go get my boss. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Okay, you can go get him. I'll take this time to remind everyone, as Senator Friend said before he left, we'd like to limit testimony to about five minutes to keep things moving. How many folks are here to testify in any sort of capacity? All right, thank you. Thank you, Senator. If you're ready to introduce? [LB607]

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you. Members of the committee, my name is Brad Ashford and I represent District 20. I am here today to introduce LB607, which would require any city of the first class with a population greater than 38,000 to have a full-time fire chief and career fire department. Cities of similar populations, such as Grand Island, Hastings, and Norfolk, have a full-time force. Further, Millard does contract with Omaha to provide fire service. North Platte, Fremont, and Scottsbluff have a mixed force, with at least half being paid and the remainder being volunteers. The chief benefits of my bill would be to decrease response time to fires, and, more importantly, to increase the

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level of healthcare available to fire or accident victims. National fire standards suggest a four-minute response time is critical to saving lives and protecting property. A few facts as to why response time is so critical. This information was provided to me by witnesses that will be coming after me, but just to summarize, fires double in size in every two minutes. Flash point temperatures are reached within eight minutes. At flash point, everything in the room ignites, and the survival rate for anyone in the room is zero. Brain damage from oxygen deprivation will result in four minutes. Brain death occurs after six minutes. Obviously, these are horrendous results and are well known to people in the firefighting profession. In a letter sent to my office, and in my conversations with my staff, Dr. Theresa Hatcher, city council member of Bellevue and an MD in emergency service medicine for 19 years, raised several medical issues of concern to her. Under prevailing national standards, if you dial 911, you may select a hospital you'd like to go to. And that apparently is not the case, according to Dr. Hatcher, in the Bellevue area. Secondly, there is a lack of physician-directed collection of medical information by the current fire force. This includes collecting data for the mortality rates of patients, unit response times to accidents and fires, and patient follow-up for emergency calls that did not result in transportation to a hospital. This, in Dr. Hatcher's opinion, is not consistent with prevailing standards of emergency medical care, either in Nebraska or nationwide. And furthermore, there is no guarantee of a paramedic being dispatched to an incident, which is in stark contrast with Omaha and the surrounding areas. Another concern Dr. Hatcher raised to me was the data concerning heart attack survival rates, which is far less in the city of Bellevue. There can be no doubt, according to Dr. Hatcher, that there is a disparity of emergency care between Bellevue and the city of Omaha. Obviously, cost is an issue, and cost is an issue in all of these considerations. Apparently, according to individuals involved, Dr. Hatcher and others, there is a 911 fund which is paid over to the volunteer fire department, not into the city of Bellevue. The city of Bellevue does provide the operational units to the fire force, but this particular 911 fund remains with the volunteer fire force. It has been indicated in the press that approximately \$6 million would be required to staff a career fire department. However, I would suggest to the committee that there has been no recent study or system design of how much such a full-time fire department would cost, and I would certainly support such a study. Finally, due to the explosive growth of the city of Bellevue over the past 20 years, which is obvious to all of us who live in the area, it is my hope that the committee seriously consider moving to strongly encourage Bellevue to act to move towards the current standards of emergency services already enjoyed by their neighbors in Omaha and other cities, by establishing a full-time fire department. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions for Senator Ashford? Seeing none, would you like to stay, or...? [LB607]

SENATOR ASHFORD: I'll waive. Thank you, Senator McGill. Thank you, members. [LB607]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Okay. All right. Thank you. We'll start with proponents then. [LB607]

MIKE McDONNELL: Mike McDonnell, spelled M-c-D-o-n-n-e-l-l. I'm representing the Professional Firefighters of Nebraska. We asked Senator Brad Ashford to introduce this bill for us, as the firefighters across the state of Nebraska discussed what we can do to try to help different communities try to improve their fire safety. And there's no doubt that if you have people that are trained, properly equipped, and put strategically in a community waiting for the next possible emergency medical call, fire, natural disaster, or possibly a terrorist attack, you are definitely going to make a difference in those people's lives. And that's as simple as this bill is. It's to say that we would like people around the state of Nebraska to have the best possible fire protection, and we believe a city of Bellevue's size has got to the position where they now should address the issue of fire protection, the future, and take steps towards having a paid professional fire department. Can I answer any questions? [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? You've got one, Senator? Senator Janssen. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Michael, what is the response time of the Bellevue Fire Department now? [LB607]

MIKE McDONNELL: I don't know. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Okay. Hopefully someone can answer that question for me. Thank you. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you for your testimony. [LB607]

MIKE McDONNELL: Thanks. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Next proponent. Any other proponents? All right, we'll move on to opposition then. First opponent. [LB607]

DOUG KINDIG: (Exhibit 2) Senator McGill, committee members, I'm Doug Kindig, D-o-u-g K-i-n-d-i-g. I'm the mayor of the city of La Vista, and I'm here today to represent the city of La Vista and voice our opposition to LB607. Specifically, LB607 would require any city of the first class with a population of greater than 38,000 people to pay and employ a full-time chief and full-time paid firefighters. Municipalities with volunteer fire department already provide funding for adequate emergency equipment and facilities. The addition of personnel costs would be significant. Unless there is a revenue source

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associated with this measure, this would become a burdensome unfunded mandate. Undoubtedly, such a directive will cause a considerable strain on the financial resources of the affected communities, and most likely necessitate raising taxes. We believe that public safety resources are best determined by local jurisdictions, based on conditions that exist in our respective communities. Population is not the sole factor necessary to determine the type of fire protection service to be provided by a municipality. In La Vista, for example, we consider response times to be one of the primary factors in gauging the quality of emergency services being provided. As locally elected officials, we are charged by our constituents to provide quality and affordable public safety services, which I believe that we do extremely well with a volunteer fire department. I must also tell you that La Vista is currently in the process of hiring our first paid fire chief. The city council and I have concluded that the time is right for our community to pursue this paid position, with the full intention of maintaining our all-volunteer fire department. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate how strongly we believe that local jurisdictions are capable and should be solely responsible for determining and providing public safety services. I appreciate your consideration and would be happy to answer any questions at this time. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Thank you. Are there any questions? Senator Janssen. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Mister...Doug, what is your response time? [LB607]

DOUG KINDIG: Our response time. First of all, I think, Senator, the response times need to be compared...it's not just apples to apples. A lot of fire departments' response times are from when the 911 operator receives that call, and not the fire station. So I believe we've got some other people here today that can give you an accurate number on that. I don't have La Vista's response time specifically compared to the other cities, so. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Okay. I'll keep asking the same question till I get my... [LB607]

DOUG KINDIG: You keep asking, you'll get it, so. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: (Laugh) Till you get your answer. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you. [LB607]

DOUG KINDIG: Thank you. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Next opponent. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: (Exhibit 3) Good afternoon. I'm Mia Martin, and my first name is M-i-a, last name is M-a-r-t-i-n, and I'm a public information officer and paramedic for the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department. And our response times are...they're 6:02 inside

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our fire district, which includes about--I've got it in here--a large part of Sarpy County, so it's not just the city limits. And inside the city limits, it's 5:45. So I hope that answers your question. That's 2006 response times. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Okay. I have a letter from Megan Lucas, who's the director of the chamber of commerce. Do I enter that right now? She couldn't be here due to a family emergency. Okay. I distributed an information packet to all of the senators on the committee yesterday, and I'm not going to reiterate everything that's in there. I'm sure you'll be grateful for that. I hope you had a chance to look at it, and I hope you'll look at it later if you didn't. I was one of the first rescue-only members on the fire department, which we started in 2000. And I was brought on in 2001. I did not want to do the firefighting side of that...of the department, back then. I still don't want to, to be honest with you. I love to be there, in case something happens, to provide emergency care. It was one of the best decisions I ever made. While I was attending paramedic school in 2002, I was given the opportunity to do ride time, which is where you do clinical time in the field and practice your medical skills. And I did it at three surrounding paid departments. And I have to say, there was some operating procedures there that I...are different than ours, but I trusted that those departments knew their communities, knew their demographics enough that I shouldn't judge them for that. And I'm...I just wish we could all have that same opportunity. We know our city. Our elected officials know our city. We should have a decision whether we go paid or not. I have also witnessed our unique tiered response system in Bellevue, which Captain Evers is going to talk about. And I've seen a couple of significant calls where the police actually were so significant in the outcome. We had a code 99 that they defibrillated before I got there, and that guy walked out of the hospital neurologically intact. In fact, he was talking to me on the way to the hospital. And they also woke up two young gentlemen in a home that was burning, just a couple weeks ago, where the smoke detectors didn't go off, and undoubtedly saved their lives. So we have a unique system already set up for public safety in Bellevue. We're very aware of what we need to do down there. As a business owner and a homeowner in Bellevue, I've made a large investment in Bellevue, and I'm concerned about my taxes going up significantly if we are forced and mandated to go paid. I don't know what my taxes would have to go up. I could rework the figures, but we've changed what the budget would be for a paid fire department. That was also in your pamphlet I gave you yesterday. I'm concerned with the previous bill that we just heard proponents and opponents for. You've heard what we're up against as fire departments. Some of these departments don't even have adequate gear. And I'm concerned that if this legislation passes, it's going to trickle down into smaller communities. Why, if it's a 38,000-population city, do the other smaller cities deserve less public safety? So, I think that's all I have. [LB607]

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you. I got confused a little bit. [LB607]

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SENATOR LATHROP: Can I ask a question? [LB607]

SENATOR FRIEND: Yes, Senator Lathrop. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: You just told us response times of 6 minutes, and 5 minutes and 45 seconds? Is that what that is? [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Now, is that from the time a call is received and someone is dispatched, until the first responder, which is, in Bellevue's case, a police officer, arrives, or is that when the fire truck rolls up to the front of the house? [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: I believe right now they can count the first responder. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Okay. So...we've had this conversation in my office. I want to make sure everybody understands that when you answer that question, the way that things work down in Bellevue right now, the call comes in, and they dispatch an officer who's out in the neighborhoods, and then they dispatch the fire department. Is that right? [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: And so when you tell us it's 5 minutes and 45 seconds, that's when the police actually arrive, and they have some ability to provide first responder... [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Oh boy, everybody behind you is shaking their head no. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Oh, are they? [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Maybe I should ask them instead of you. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Is Captain Evers going to come up after me? Yeah, and I know in 2006 our 911 center started to simultaneously dispatch the police and fire at the same time. Before that, there was possibly some lag time as they're entering their stuff in the computers and fielding the call. So I think our response times are going to improve overall in '07. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: You're on the volunteer fire department? That's your

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background? [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Do you know how long, on average, it takes everybody to get to the fire station, because that's really what we're talking about, isn't it? [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Is that the question...is that a question to me directly? [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Well, if you guys get...you have a beeper that goes off, or a siren that goes off. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: And then everybody runs to the fire station... [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: ...in their own car... [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: ...or on foot, or by whatever means. And they arrive, and when the last guy gets there, they jump on the truck and it leaves. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: How long does that, on average, take everybody to get there? [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: We are re-toned...do you understand what that would mean? We're allowed six minutes before our dispatch center will get back on the pagers and radios and ask what our status is. I don't...we could pull those times for you. So I don't know. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: You don't have an idea? Is it five minutes? Ten minutes? Okay. [LB607]

MIA MARTIN: I didn't bring it with me. No, sir. We have an en route time. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Okay. Maybe somebody else will know that. Thanks, that's all I have. [LB607]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Any other questions? Thank you for your testimony. Next opponent. [LB607]

HERB EVERS: Madam Chair, distinguished Senators, my name is Herb Evers, H-e-r-b E-v-e-r-s. I am a police officer in the city of Bellevue, and have been so about 33.5 years. I think I know the state of public safety in the city of Bellevue. I think it's pretty darn good. But today I'm here to explain to the senators and to this committee the tiered response that the city of Bellevue has in emergency situations. First, for Senator Lathrop, talking about the response time and what those times are. What Ms. Martin was talking about is from the time the call-taker picks up the phone until the first unit arrives on scene: the scene of the fire, the scene of the emergency. Fire unit, fire or rescue unit, was the times that she was giving you. The times I will give you are when the first responder arrives, and that, in emergency situations, is about 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Now, let me explain first responder, if I might. We have 85 police officers in the city of Bellevue. Each and every one of them is required to be certified as a first responder or emergency medical technician. I don't think you'll find another city in the state of Nebraska with that requirement. In addition, each police officer is required to be certified in the use of the automatic defibrillator. Ms. Martin testified about that and the police officer saving some lives. Therefore, your first emergency medical and/or fire response is on scene in the city of Bellevue in about 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Pretty darn good, I believe. I don't think you will find that in Omaha. In fact, I know you won't. The Omaha police officers are not trained to the level of first responders or emergency medical technicians. In addition, we have three or four, I don't know the exact number, of paramedics on the police department that are also on the fire department. We have firefighters on the fire department that are on the police department, so we share responsibilities. And one more additional piece of information, fact, I will give you, Senators, is that each police cruiser in the city of Bellevue--and there are about 11 out on the street, in the neighborhoods, 24-7--has an AED in that cruiser; a medical bag, what we refer to as a war bag, which contains a lot of first responder equipment, to include oxygen bottles, CPR masks, various sorts of medical equipment; and a fire hydrant. The first police officer to respond to a fire call spots the nearest hydrant to the scene for the fire department, lets them know where it is, and taps that hydrant with our hydrant wrench that's in the cruiser, thus reducing that time of getting the firefighters into the building or into the house, whatever it might be. And further proof of this, that the fire department and the police department work together well, I'll share with you one story that last year...excuse me, in 2005, two years ago now, our Officer Bob Page was Officer of the Year for the state of Nebraska, as selected by the Police Officers' Association of Nebraska, for his efforts in saving lives at a fire. He spotted the fire. It was at an apartment complex. He rushed in--notified the fire department, of course, first--rushed in, removed several residents who were sleeping. This was in the middle of the night. Joined by a couple other police officers on scene, who assisted him. In fact, two of them got together and pulled a man who was wheelchair-bound out of his apartment, and did all this lifesaving effort, in connection with the fire department, for

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the city of Bellevue and for public safety. The state of public safety in the city of Bellevue, Nebraska, is in very good condition. And I would urge this committee to kill this bill at this level. Questions? [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? Thank you, sir. [LB607]

HERB EVERS: Thank you very much. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any other opponents? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: (Exhibit 4) Senator McGill, members of the committee, my name is Michael Nolan; spell the last name N-o-l-a-n. I'm the city administrator of Norfolk, and in a former life I was the director of management and budget in the city of Bellevue. I know this fire department very well, know the city very well. This bill should not be approved. It's intrusive in the local prerogatives. This fire department works, and it works very well. This community has been very sensitive about response times. It's got a multitude of fire stations deployed throughout the entire city because it's sensitive about that. I don't know what the pretext was for this bill, but whatever the pretext was, it's based on a false assumption. Years ago, the fire chief of Norfolk...the former fire chief of Norfolk and I decided we were going to put together what was known as a combined fire department. We were going to look at how the city of Bellevue recruited their volunteers, and what they did from the standpoint of making the fire service interesting, what kind of training they did, and all the rest of it. We studied a lot of other volunteer fire departments, as well. And we put together a very successful program. The thing that concerns me about this bill, it doesn't apply to Norfolk right now, but it's a very simple process in any subsequent legislative session to take page 3 and change that word "thirty-eight" to a lower population threshold. That's why the bill is intrusive. This fire department works. It doesn't need to have this kind of level of management by the Legislature. I would defy the people who asked the senators to introduce this to show us why they think it doesn't work. I'll show you what happens when you allow local discretion to work. It happens on these four pages that I showed you here. Taking much of the concepts we learned from Bellevue and the city of Norfolk as the absolute best fire rating in the state of Nebraska, bar none, in a community that's got 24,000 people in it. And we're using a combination of paid and volunteers. But in fact, we need to have those volunteers for that fire rating to occur, and those volunteers are an integral part of our public safety response. We train them to a level that's very proficient, along with the paid people. There's absolutely no reason whatsoever that a community of 38,000 people or larger shouldn't be able to use whatever they can to defray their costs and to provide effective service through volunteers. There are a...I don't have the data here, and if I hadn't...if I'd had a little more time to prepare for this bill, I could have easily found the data, but there are a lot of jurisdictions in the United States bigger than Bellevue that use volunteers, and they do it effectively. Bellevue has actually approached their whole concept of public safety, especially on the...what I would call the

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ALS side of the equation, because fire departments are not only just fire suppression units anymore; they are, in fact, rescue and ALS components, where they're responding with paramedics. This department has got volunteers who are trained paramedics, and a lot of them. It's a model for Nebraska. It shouldn't be diminished. So I would encourage you to vote against this bill. I'd answer any questions if you have any. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Senator Janssen. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Mike, I'm on that response kick again. Can...? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Four and a half to five minutes, most of the time. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: What is it? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Four and a half to five minutes, most of the time, and depending of where...we got to have a second station. We deliberately put our second station so that we're responding off arterials. And depending on where the fire is at, we can get there, within the city, in that. But let me tell you why that's not necessarily a systemic way of looking at fire service, Senator. We got a mutual aid area, we have a fire district that we provide service to, as well. It's got 105 square miles in it, and we have a mutual aid area. But, I mean, if...it can go to the end of the earth, if we ended up having to be called from that direction. And the reason why using a simple criterion-like response time is not accurate in every instance is because, you'll see, in our case, and I'm sure this is the case with a lot of paid fire departments, what we have is, we have a response that's a relay kind of response, what we do on ALS, where we go out. There may be a group of people who have got basic AL...or, basic life support services responding, and we're sending out paramedics to intervene with them and bring the person back. We're administering the drugs and putting the defibrillation on them, where they don't have that kind of training. And so response time then is about keeping the patient alive. It isn't whether you can get there in four or five minutes or not. It's about working together with the partners that you have in your mutual aid area to sustain the life of that person. So... [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: How many paid firemen do you have in Norfolk? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: We have, I think...we just added...when we put the second station on, we added five or so on each shift. So...don't hold me to it. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Close. [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: We have...I think we've added 15. We probably have close to about 40 or so now. [LB607]

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SENATOR JANSSEN: Paid? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Yeah. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: All right. [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: But we have 35 reserves. And that program, which is absolutely essential to Norfolk's fire division, costs us \$50,000 a year to support that program in our budget. We would be in a budgetary hurt if it wasn't for those volunteers. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Now, isn't Fremont about the same size? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: About the same size. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: And they are very...they use their volunteers also. [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Yes, they do. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: And I would imagine pretty much the same way Norfolk did. [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: In very much the same way. In fact, most of these fire chiefs know each other, and they go to conferences all the time,... [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Absolutely. [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: ...and they're exchanging these ideas all the time. So this isn't anything new we're talking about here. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Sure. Thank you, Mike. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any other questions for Mr. Nolan? Senator White. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Does Bellevue have professionally paid firefighters? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Bellevue does have some...they do have on their staff, yes. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: How many paid firefighters does Bellevue have? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Well, I'll have to let them answer that question for you because I'm not familiar with how many they have now, with the number of stations they've got. [LB607]

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SENATOR WHITE: How does Bellevue's response time compare to Omaha's? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: Pretty comparably. In fact, I would say this, Senator, that the issue really should be, if we're going to compare Omaha and Bellevue, let's just see how Omaha compares in every instance, including how their ALS service stacks up alongside of Bellevue's, and at what cost, and all the other fire services that they provide. I would dare say they will compare very favorably. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: But you can't tell us what that is today? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: I can't, but I can get the information and get it to you. I just...I feel very confident that Bellevue is going to be able to compare very favorably to Omaha, and probably better in many respects. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: And one final question. You mentioned this bill is a pretext. Certainly you're not indicating Senator Ashford was being less than forthcoming? [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: No, I'm just asking...the person that probably asked Senator Ashford has a pretext for it, and I just...these kind of things, Senator, at a time that everybody is just trying to survive budgetarily, they send the wrong message, and we all are trying to do that. So we all have a little bit of philosophical aversion to having these kind of mandates imposed on us. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Thank you. [LB607]

MICHAEL NOLAN: You bet. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Thank you. Next opponent. [LB607]

ED BABBITT: (Exhibit 5) Madam Chair, members of the committee, my name is Ed Babbitt. I'm mayor of Bellevue, Nebraska. B-a-b-b-i-t-t. I have a letter I'm handing out. I'm not going to read the letter. You can read that. We try to speed up the hearing. I just, this morning, noted a few things down that I thought would express my opinion to the committee. And I'll try not to take much time here. One of the biggest things that's come up in the last two weeks as mayor is people contacting me and saying, wait, didn't we elect you and the city council to take care of these matters to have public safety for us? And they do not understand this bill at all. Talking...the senators of this committee has been very good to talk to us. One of the comments came up, well, you're the third-largest city. That's right. But we also have a fire department that's not broke. It's working. And why do we make a mess of the whole city's finances by working back in? Another comment was made by a senator--and these are good comments; that's how

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discussion gets started and working back through--is, they asked, well, do you think it will be paid someday, department? Probably will in the near future. We've been thinking this for 30 years. We've been watching things. And the question from the senator, a good question: Well, when will you know when it's time? Well, we've been monitoring this all through the years. First, when I first moved to Bellevue, 38 years ago, it was strictly volunteer, what you think as a volunteer fire department. Then, with the volunteers getting overloaded with paperwork, administrative duties, we have two administrative assistants on there. We've added two fire investigators with a K-9 unit, as there's a need. Why are these things happening? Because the city government works with the volunteers. Then, when they came in with the response time and what have you, I think we have something that Omaha doesn't have, or I'm not sure anybody in Nebraska has, is that we have police cruisers with automatic external defibrillators. Every police officer is certified as a first responder to render emergency medical care, and is trained in the operations of an AED. And then, as we went further along, we were concerned about training. We worked, or tried to work, with Omaha for quite a while, having a joint center. Citizens came to me and said, well, why would we build one when we could probably use Omaha's? Well, there were some problems with Omaha moving theirs along. We did work with them, two, three, four years. And then, when it was finally decided they were going to go northwest of their city, we said, we need one; we have volunteers, we don't want to spend the extra time going outside the city. Also, we don't want our equipment that far out of the city for fire responses, for rescue calls. So we built a center, and we're still paying for it. But also, we have numerous other volunteer and paid departments, and I think even Omaha has been using our training center. We've kept up on stuff. We did the job. The citizens are satisfied. If not, they let us know. But they do not understand this, I do not understand it. And I'm willing to answer any questions you might have. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? Senator Lathrop, do you have a question? [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: I just wondered, Mayor,... [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Yes. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: ...do you have an idea how much you'd have to raise the taxes on the folks down in Bellevue if this became law? [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Yeah, as near as I can tell,...and these are just...you know, I'm not an accountant. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: I won't hold you to it, but... [LB607]

ED BABBITT: But first you put together a rough figure, you know, round it off to hundred thousands or millions and stuff. And it probably would be an additional \$6 million.

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[LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: \$6 million a year? [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Our operating budget is, like, \$25 million. So you'd have to probably have a combination of tax increase up to the lid, and then you would have to cut services back. And that's what people don't understand, is, we have four stations, we have plans for a fifth station. Now, if we have to cut back to two or three stations, how is that going to help response time, you know? You know, we just have a limit of what we can go. We also work with eastern Sarpy district, which is about 20 percent of our...where the Bellevue and Sarpy controls are. They're limited, I think, to 10 or 11 mills. They're up to about 9 now. The Legislature would have to raise their authorization, or else Bellevue would have to swallow that cost. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Okay. [LB607]

ED BABBITT: And we're talking about...if you're talking about \$6 million, you can divide that by, I think, each, we call them mills, last year, was about \$217,000. So you're looking more than 25 mills to fund this. So it's something that, if it isn't broke, why are we doing anything? The volunteers are very dedicated. That's one thing we're blessed in this community of Bellevue, is we have people volunteering from youth, churches, helping Offutt, fire, what have you. We have VIPERs in the police department which help out the police department. There's people that just come forward and volunteer to do these things. And I, as one, do not want to discourage this in our community at all. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: I want to go back to maybe the question. And the short answer is, your budget is about \$25 million right now, and this would add \$6 million to it? [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Yeah, closer to \$27 million probably. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: \$27 million? Okay. That's what I need to know. Thanks. [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Yeah. So if we kept the mill levy the same, we'd have to find out what \$6 million do we take out of there? Yeah. [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Okay. Got you. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: How many professional firefighters do you have, Mayor? [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Well, it depends on what you call professional firefighter. [LB607]

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SENATOR WHITE: Well, one that's paid. Like a professional football player. [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Okay. Yeah, I was going to answer you 100. Right now, that would be zero that's paid. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Okay, so there's no...unlike Norfolk, which has a core of...I mean, I use the term "professional" like we do football players, you know. Professional football players are paid. It doesn't mean they're better players than people in college, but that's generally the accepted term. So you have no paid firefighters, unlike Norfolk? [LB607]

ED BABBITT: No. No, we don't. But we have about 100 who probably...well, there's 140, but 100 that are quite active, are trained as well or better, in my opinion, than what the Omaha firefighters are. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Is this a situation where it has to be all one way or the other? I mean, certainly Norfolk has a blended department, with some professional paid firefighters, and other professional unpaid firefighters. [LB607]

ED BABBITT: Yes. Well, they saw the need at the stage goes along. There's towns of probably 3,000 that probably need to have paid firefighters and rescue personnel. We do not need that. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Are there any studies indicating what the mortality rates are for heart attacks or fire, other kinds of problems, inside of the Bellevue firefighting district, versus, let's say, Omaha's, Lincoln's, Norfolk's? [LB607]

ED BABBITT: I don't have those numbers available to me. I do not...I ran for election; I've been in office about 65 days. (Laughter) I did a lot of door... [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: (Laugh) I can relate. [LB607]

ED BABBITT: I did a lot of door-to-door. And do you know? It never came up. There were some comments about, well, should we have a paid fire department? I said, well, what's the problems with...you know, is there a problem? I'm out here to learn what the problems are. And, no, no, no, I just thought, you know, a lot of bigger cities have paid departments. And then they said, well...I mentioned to them what the cost might be, and they said, we're pretty lucky to live in Bellevue, Nebraska. Yeah. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Thank you for your courtesy, Mayor. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any other questions? [LB607]

SENATOR LATHROP: Thanks, Mayor. [LB607]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Thank you. Next opponent. [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: Madam Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Gary Troutman. I'm the city administrator in Bellevue. And that's G-a-r-y T-r-o-u-t-m-a-n. As you can see, I had a sheet of notes here to visit with you about my testimony, but the mayor kind of took all my comments, and that seems to be the standard procedure, being the second guy in the lineup. (Laugh) So anyway, I just wanted to just make a few comments, and I'll make my testimony very short. But as the administrator, it's my job to examine the big picture, and the big picture in city government, of course, consists of, you know, how do we keep the streets plowed and how do we keep the streets fixed, how do we expand our economic development, how do we keep our parks in tiptop condition, how do we keep our sewers working? Just the whole gamut, recreation programs, the whole nine yards. And one area that I have been very fortunate not to have to deal with on a continual basis is the fire department. The volunteer fire department has done an excellent job for the city of Bellevue. And it's not that we do not look at the fire department. We constantly, each year, go through the fire department's stats, and we look at response time and we look at, well, how can we improve this service. And as the mayor alluded to, and Mia, we did, last year...or, two years ago, I'm sorry, took five civilian employees and assigned them to the fire department. And we have two specifically that do constant testing, pump testing, hose testing, making sure the air packs are full, and so that that doesn't tie up the time of the volunteers. And the issue I think a lot of people have, is the fact that when you say "volunteer department," are you saying...for an example, I grew up on a farm, and my dad was a volunteer firefighter, and basically what he'd do is, the whistle would blow in town, he'd leave and meet the fire truck somewhere, and they just had a pumper, old pumper, and a hose, and that was about it. But today, our volunteers are trained equivalent to the paid firefighters. I mean, we put out a service in Bellevue that compares to any paid fire department in the state, and it's very time consuming. And the one issue that we tend to overlook, even we in the city tend to overlook, we have a firefighter that will complete 50 years of service on the Bellevue Fire Department very shortly, and so we do have, in essence, if you want to define it, career firefighters. I mean, these people are dedicated to it. A lot of them are retired that come in and run the squads for us, but they're trained just equivalent to what paid firefighters are. And so it's an issue that...kind of like the old Coca-Cola thing, why fix it if it's not broken, as the mayor said. But we do think that it should be a local issue. It should be an issue of, when our citizens say, Mr. Troutman, we're having trouble getting a squad to our house, or we're having trouble getting a pumper to our house, then it's time for us and the city council and the mayor to say, well, wait a minute, we've got to address that. So far, that hasn't happened. As I testified earlier, I have been city administrator now going on four years, and I've had one complaint in my office regarding the fire department, and that was a complaint that we didn't take this one individual to a certain hospital. And we do, we take our individuals to one single hospital. Plus the fact, we are now very pleased that Bellevue will be getting

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a new hospital. The Med Center is going to build a new hospital in Bellevue, and that, again, is going to be another avenue for us to reduce our response time. The...if I can just check my notes here...one concern I have about the bill is the fact that it's written where it states that we will have a paid fire department and a paid fire chief. And for us to implement a hiring process immediately upon...as I understand the bill, it would be effective 90 days after its passage. We couldn't do it. I mean, we just...the time isn't there. We have to satisfy equal opportunity laws to ensure that our testing procedures are not discriminatory. We need to do work in our engine houses to ensure that we have appropriate sleeping quarters for our firefighters. And it would be very difficult for us to address that. In regards to the growth of the fire department, it has grown over the years. Bellevue Fire Department has a very active recruitment program, and they are constantly, as the city grows, so does the recruitment effort. And we have, as indicated in prior testimony, moved forward. We've stepped forward with programs. We have, for an example, a program for the young people. We received a grant, and it's a smoke trailer, if you will. And I'm sure someone from the fire department can describe it more accurately than I can, but basically, it's for the children to go in, and our people, our firefighters, volunteer firefighters, train them on how to get out of a building. The trailer fills with smoke on its own, and we loan that vehicle out to other departments and other fairs and social activities, for our surrounding communities to utilize. But I guess from my standpoint, we have a very dedicated volunteer department. And I think...I was trying to think this morning what to say, and I thought about, as I was coming down to Lincoln and I drove by the museum on I-80, that, you know, that our firefighters are like my father was, and I'm sure a lot of yours, and grandfathers, that when World War II started, they stepped up to the plate, they volunteered. And we are not...we are very fortunate that we have that ability in Bellevue to have volunteers step forward, and people that dedicate their time and effort to this department. And it's not...it's a very time-consuming process. It's an occupation that is just a tremendous amount of training, and it takes time away from their families, but they are very dedicated and very loyal to the city of Bellevue. And I would just reiterate what Mr. Nolan said. We do feel that we should be the ones to make that decision. And we're not being critical of anyone, of the committee, Senator Ashford, or any of that nature. But if someone come in and said, I want you to build a road here, and we were directed by the state to do it, we might have a problem here. I mean, we may...we need to have time, if that's the case, to plan that in our agenda. And again, not to be repetitive, then I'll close, but we have...I have spent 30 years in city and county government. I've worked for the city of Omaha for a number of years, and I operated and owned a consulting firm, and I worked for cities and counties across this state and in Iowa. And I can tell you that each city is unique in what services it offers, plus the delivery of that service. And what might work in Bellevue may not work in La Vista, or what might work in La Vista may not work in Bellevue. And it's all on the makeup of the community, and what that community decides are priorities. And in Bellevue, the priority of the community has been the fire department. And with that, I'll close my comments, Madam Chairman. [LB607]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? Senator Janssen. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Yes. Maybe this has been said in some of the testimony, but using the National Fire Protection Association standard 1710 as a guideline, how many professional, or full-time...I want to all say "professional," because I think your department is professional. How many full-time firefighters would you have to have, under that standard? [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: It's my understanding we would need four firefighters on a truck. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: On a shift? [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: A shift, yes. And that would include a captain, plus three firefighters. One would be a hose person and one would be an apparatus engineer, and then two firefighters. So it would take four per shift. That would be 12 per engine house. We have four engine houses. That's 48, if my thinking is correct, 48 firefighters (inaudible). But then in addition, we would need a medical director. Currently, because we have a volunteer department, we have a volunteer medical director. And that might add another cost to us that we're not having now. And I think, Senator Janssen, we had originally tried to calculate a figure of perhaps 60 to 65 firefighters, to really man the department properly and cover for 7-day-a-week, 24-hour operation. And so... [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: But you could use the same scenario that Fremont and Norfolk were using,... [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: Sure. Right. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: ...where you have so many full-time, and then the volunteers also. [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: Right. And that has been a practice that a lot of cities have used. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: All right. Thank you. [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: But I would just...one last comment, Ray...or, I'm sorry, Senator...(laugh) I apologize. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: I've been called worse. [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: (Laugh) One thing that a lot of communities are experiencing is the fact that it's difficult to get volunteers. They're having trouble getting off their jobs

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anymore to do the volunteer work. So sometimes some of the communities I've worked with in the past, especially over in Iowa, have had to hire more paid firefighters because of the fact the volunteers can't get off like they used to do. And that's kind of a...just as a point. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Do you suppose there would be a little animosity between the paid and the volunteers, then? [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: In Bellevue, I do not think there is. I think our people, our firefighters, are professional individuals, and their main goal is to get the fire out and get the squad to the location. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Troutman. [LB607]

GARY TROUTMAN: Thank you. Appreciate it. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: How many more opponents do we have to testify? A couple more? Just try not to be too repetitive, and introduce new information. [LB607]

JOHN WESTCOTT: (Exhibit 6) I'm going to be fast. It's getting difficult not to be repetitive when as much has been said as already been said. My name is John Westcott, J-o-h-n W-e-s-t-c-o-t-t. I'm the president of the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department, Incorporated. The handout I gave you is basically what I'm going to tell you. And I'm going to...I apologize, but I'm going to read part of it, because I don't want to leave any of it out. The Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department currently has 146 dedicated men and women ready to serve the residents of the city and the surrounding area, and all who pass through it. These are highly trained men and women, doing a professional job while using some of the finest and most modern equipment in the state of Nebraska. While it may seem to some an insurmountable task to serve a city that is as large as Bellevue with a volunteer fire department, we have done so successfully for many years, providing a very high level of service to Bellevue and the surrounding area. This has not been done by being satisfied with the status quo, but by being a progressive, proactive department. Over the years, many positive changes have taken place. We now recruit military personnel, some of which have prior advanced medical training. We now recruit females, both fire and rescue. We've added a rescue-only program, as you've heard before, as the majority of the calls we have are medical, and this has been a very successful program. We have an active recruitment and retention program, and we're proud of our department. We're proud of our history, and we're equally proud of the advancements the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department has made. We exist to protect life and property. But rest assured, if the time comes that we cannot

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provide adequate service, the pride will not cloud our vision to make changes so we can continue to provide the greatest protection for our community. At that time, we would meet with the mayor and city officials to work out a solution. If our elected officials feel there's a problem, they will advise our department. This would be a city government issue. We feel that only if our local elected officials refuse to address any problems that may exist in our fire department providing the utmost possible service and safety for the community should the state have to get involved. If this bill were truly a public safety issue, should it be directed only at one city, as it is at this time? If it were truly a public safety issue, shouldn't the 29 other first-class cities of the state of Nebraska deserve the same level of protection as proposed in LB607? Should second-class cities deserve less protection for the safety of their citizens? I would think not. And that's basically what I've got. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? Seeing none, thank you. Oh, Senator White. [LB607]

JOHN WESTCOTT: Yes, sir. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Do you know, do the residents of Bellevue, or in your district, pay more for fire insurance than people, let's say, across the boundary line in the Omaha fire department district? [LB607]

JOHN WESTCOTT: I could not tell you what they pay for... [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: One of the things that I'm struggling with is to find out if there is, in fact, a lower level of service on emergency services being provided in Bellevue, versus Omaha, because that's the closest one nearby. And so I guess I'm just seeking any way to get information on that. [LB607]

JOHN WESTCOTT: And the chief can address it more, but I know our ISO rating is good. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Thank you. [LB607]

JOHN WESTCOTT: And that, as I understand, is what they base the insurance off of. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: I appreciate your courtesy. [LB607]

JOHN WESTCOTT: Thank you very much. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: All right. Thank you. Next opponent. [LB607]

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JOSEPH BOCKMAN: (Exhibit 7) If I could pass this on? Good afternoon, Senators. I'd like to thank you for the time, allowing me to speak today. I wear many different hats today as... [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Excuse me. Could I get you to say and spell your name for me? Thanks. [LB607]

JOSEPH BOCKMAN: I'm sorry. My name is Joseph H. Bockman, B-o-c-k-m-a-n. And again I will thank you for allowing me to speak today. I wear many different hats today, as a volunteer firefighter, 41 years-plus. I am a past emergency medical technician, and still hold that license. I am a past director for the Nebraska chapter of the National Volunteer Fire Council; alternate director to the National Volunteer Fire Council; past president of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association; past president of the Nebraska Fire Chiefs Association; vice president of Tri Mutual Aid; and currently serving my second term as first vice president of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association. Served just about on every committee that you can think of that would have anything to do with firefighting and volunteerism and firefighting and EMS. When people have asked me to help, I've always put my hand up and tried to step forward and help out in any way I can. Senators, I could tell you that the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association and the Nebraska Fire Chiefs also oppose this bill, because of several issues. First, I believe it's an issue that should be dealt with by the city, and if there's a problem, the city and its firefighters should deal with it. The last few days, I've been talking to many people, and they've asked me if there's a problem. And then I explain, we do all we can. We train with the best methods that are available. We are currently using all the 1710 standards. We use the latest technology known to man--trucks, equipment, that are kept up and they meet all the standards of 1710. We're an all-volunteer fire department. I can tell you that it does take away from our family, it takes away from our friends, and sometimes work. Most ask me when I have time for my family. I tell them that the fire department is my family. We train every week in some form of firefighter training, EMS, or other types of training that would be of benefit to the fire department. Last year, our fire department responded to 2,671 calls. We have over 100 active firefighters, and I mean active, and EMS personnel that serve our fire district. And our fire district serves about 86,000 people. Our volunteer firefighters are from every part of the country, and are in every job field known to man--police officers, career firefighters, Air Force, military, to farmers, to office workers, business owners. You name it, we have them. They put everything in their hearts and in their bodies to do the best. Then they read in the newspaper that the city needs to have a paid fire department. I can tell you, Senators, it's a slap in the face to read something such as that was in the newspaper, and some of the issues that were brought up there. I feel this issue that was in the paper that talked about fire deaths was over four or five years ago that was in the newspaper, and a fire death can happen any time. It makes no difference if the station is manned or if it's not manned. It happens. We try to prevent this by teaching the public about smoke detectors, safe ways out of a fire, and several

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other programs. Senators, I can tell you that this issue should be left up to our community and the leaders of our city. When the firefighters say it's time to be fully paid, or part-time paid, or whatever, leave it up to our elected officials and our fire department. Thank you for taking this time to hear me out. And Senator, if I could answer a question that you posed to several of the people that gave testimony today? You asked how many professional firefighters we have. And I can't reiterate enough to what some of them have said. A volunteer firefighter is trained, and after a while, like myself, after 41 years, you get so much pride, but we're all professional. You know, different people have different perceptions of professional firefighters. Is it a paycheck, or is it the time that they give, you know? But we're all professional firefighters, Senator. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: Thank you. [LB607]

JOSEPH BOCKMAN: Thank you. Can I answer any more questions? [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? None? Thank you for your testimony. [LB607]

JOSEPH BOCKMAN: Thank you. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Next opponent. [LB607]

DALE TEDDER: Senator, members of the committee, my name is Dale Tedder, D-a-l-e T-e-d-d-e-r. I'm the chief of the Bellevue Volunteer Fire Department; I have been since 2001. I'm also a 33-year member of the fire department. I'd like to just talk a little bit...as I sat out there--and I wasn't going to speak tonight; I thought we had a lot of great testimonies--I sat out there and just took a few notes, and I'd like to talk about just a few of those things. One of the things that were brought up was hospital choice. Bellevue's policy is, if we drive by a hospital, we're no longer an emergency unit; we're a transport service. We will not drive by a hospital. If we have to go to a trauma center, that's a different case. Omaha is fortunate to have two trauma centers that rotate every other day. We will do that. But if...I'm not going to drive by a hospital and we're not going to take one of our squads past one when we are there for that reason--that's medical. Another question was checking of our medical records or our calls. We do review all of our calls. All of our rescue calls are reviewed. Up to just a few days ago, I had employed two nurses that went through our records, and they review our records, and they make sure what kind of procedures we're following. Now my paramedic supervisor does that task until we can bring a third party in. That's checks and balances of what we're doing and how we're doing it. Our ISO rating, that's another thing. And Senator, you had asked about our rating. That's our fire rating. Bellevue just went to a 3, which 0...a 1 being the best. I'm very proud of that rating. We worked very hard, the volunteers worked very hard. That's a 3 function: that's fire, water, and communications. I'm very proud that we're there. With the other communities around us, I know La Vista just went

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to a 3. They're very proud of what they did, too, and they're staffed by volunteers. So the volunteers just show you what they can do. The mayor talked about our training facility. We do have the state-of-the-art training facility, but we also are the training center for all new members of Sarpy County and the city of Ralston. We bring them under one house so we can train them all the same. That was something that we decided to do when we put our training site coordinator in the training site, was to train everybody the same so everybody has the same amount of education and training. And that all starts off with EMT, Firefighter I, and up from there. We do follow the standards. You asked about 1710. As far as staffing levels, sir, it's four people per pumper. I have eight pumpers; that's 32 people. Three shifts; that's 96 firefighters that would take. That's not counting a command staff, and I estimated 10 for a command staff. Medical director would be a paid position, since that position now, we are very fortunate to have a medical director that has volunteered for 27 years. I don't see that happening if we go to a paid staff. We have put some of what I call checks and balances in place. I do have an on-call chief, equivalent to what Omaha calls a battalion chief, that's on duty all weekend and from 8:00 at night till 6:00 in the morning. That way, I'm guaranteed to have a chief on every call. I have an on-call paramedic program set up where I have a paramedic that roams the city. If the paramedic thinks it is a call that we need a paramedic, then he or she will respond. So we have done things, and these are things that we have put into place to assure us that we are what we are, and we are good. And we're the best fire department in the state of Nebraska; I'm damn proud of it. And we worked hard to be there. And this bill here, to me, when the bill first came out, I looked at it, and thinking, okay, what did I do wrong as chief? Let me go back and examine our facts and figures. Let me go look at our response times. It seems like that's the number one issue, is response times. I can take a response time and I can jiggle it and I can massage it and I can do whatever I need to do with it. But let me tell you one thing, the citizens in Bellevue deserve the best, and they're getting the best. And the only thing that they haven't asked for is a paid department. They like the volunteers, and they're very happy with the volunteers they have now. And we're just...we're proud to be there. Here we have 146 members; we have 100 that are very active; and we have a lot of people that they give a lot more time than even I do as the chief. Fire prevention programs, hours and hours of fire prevention. So I could drag this on, but I'm going to stop there for any questions you may have. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Thank you, Chief. Any questions? None? Thank you. [LB607]

DALE TEDDER: Thank you. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Next opponent. [LB607]

LYNN REX: Senator, members of the committee, my name is Lynn Rex, R-e-x, representing the League of Nebraska Municipalities, and we strongly oppose this measure. We do because we think this is an issue where local elected officials need to

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make this determination. And I would submit to you that there has not been an elected official, that I'm aware of, at least, in Bellevue, that's run on the platform that they need to change to a paid department; that citizens are not demanding a paid department. And they're not doing that because they're satisfied with the fantastic service that they do get. One of the fire chiefs this week told me that Bellevue has absolutely one of the best fire departments in the state, paid or volunteer. They are the model. And so I would submit to you that of the 450 totally volunteer fire departments in this state, they certainly are one of the very best, if not the best. There may be a number of departments as good as Bellevue as a volunteer fire department, but I would submit to you, based on what the firefighters tell us, there is not a fire department better. And I think that's important to know. And I think it's important to know because when people run for election, as the mayor said, he went door to door. People aren't talking about that. We have nine paid fire departments in this state. So as senators, when you travel the state of Nebraska, you will find that there will be 450-plus volunteer fire departments in this state that will pick you up off of I-80 or 385 or anyplace else that you go in the state. It will not be a paid department. And these volunteer firefighters put their time, energy, heart, and soul into it, and they do a fantastic job. Now, would everyone love to have more money? Would everyone love to be able to have the perfect fire department? I would submit to you, that just doesn't happen. And in terms of the ISO ratings, we can get that information for you. Omaha is fundamentally self-insured. So I don't know how all of that comes into the mix, in terms of an ISO rating, but we'll check on that, Senator White, and get back to you. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: The question wasn't what Omaha's rating is. [LB607]

LYNN REX: Oh, I'm sorry. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: It's what does a property owner in Sarpy County pay for fire insurance,... [LB607]

LYNN REX: I see. Oh, I see. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: ...versus a property owner across the border,... [LB607]

LYNN REX: Okay. Okay. [LB607]

SENATOR WHITE: ...which might be indicative of what the insurance companies are saying with regard to response times. But that's only because nobody has told us...I mean, I have no idea whether the response times are inadequate in Bellevue, whether they're in fact lower than Omaha, or whether they have higher mortality in transportation or not. Nobody's said anything. [LB607]

LYNN REX: Okay. We'll see if we can find some of that information out for you. But I

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would submit to you that if those were issues for Bellevue taxpayers and basically folks living in the city of Bellevue, that would have been brought forward already. So, again, I would just emphasize that you do have 450 volunteer fire departments in the state, and as people travel across the state of Nebraska, there's only nine cities where you're going to have paid folks there taking care of you, and these other cities do an outstanding job. In fact, on a different bill totally unrelated to this, I was talking to the city clerk of Bellevue a few years ago, and she was talking about the great, the great types of service that they have in Bellevue. And she's from Nebraska City, and they also have a great department there. And when she was in a car accident, it was the Kearney volunteer firefighters that scraped her up off of I-80 and saved her life. So I'd be happy to respond to any questions that you might have. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Senator Janssen. [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: It's not a question, Lynn, but it's probably been six, seven years since I've told this story again, and every chance I get, I'll tell this story. It's probably been 42 or 43 years ago. I live in a small town, Nickerson, population about 400 people. We have a grain storage co-op, and one of the--it was during harvest time--and one of the tall elevators, which was a wooden structure, caught on fire. A belt had slipped on the head house, and caught the shaft on fire. There were approximately three volunteer fire departments who came that morning. It started about 10:00 in the morning. And we had one irrigation well we used for water supply, so we laid hose about three blocks. The city of Fremont sent up a pumper. And when Chief Mordhorst (phonetic) got there, he said, you boys will never save that grain elevator. We worked until 11:00 that evening, and you know that that grain storage elevator is still there? We saved that wooden structure. And if you've ever seen a grain elevator catch on fire, it's like a candle. The shaft goes all the way up, and, I mean, it's just a chimney. But those volunteers saved that. Chief Mordhorst stood there and shook his head. He said, boys, I thought she'd have been down by noon; you saved it. That's what volunteers do. [LB607]

LYNN REX: Well, that's a great story. And it also... [LB607]

SENATOR JANSSEN: And it's true. (Laughter) [LB607]

LYNN REX: And it is true. (Laugh) Thank you, Senator. And it is true. It's a true story. It's a great true story. But I would like to emphasize that that basically happens over and over again across the state, with mutual aid agreements. You've got this mix of the nine paid departments, and volunteers come from the various areas to assist. And the fire chiefs will tell you that whether they're from a paid department or not, the volunteers are trained extremely well, and they do an outstanding job. So I hope you'll kill this bill. [LB607]

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SENATOR MCGILL: Any other questions for Lynn? None? Thank you. [LB607]

LYNN REX: Thank you. [LB607]

SENATOR MCGILL: Are there any more people here to testify opposed to this bill? Any neutral? All right, Senator Ashford is no longer here, so he waived closing. That ends our hearing on LB607. And we'll begin with LR13. Senator White. Okay, I think we can get started. [LB607 LR13]

SENATOR WHITE: Good afternoon, Senator. My name is Thomas White, W-h-i-t-e. I'm here and I'm pleased to be here to introduce LR13. As you know, of course, this would be a nonbinding resolution. This resolution urges public fire departments to read and implement the National Fire Safety Guidelines including those of the National Fire Protection Association. We'd ask that it be applicable to all fire departments in the state of Nebraska. Basically, what this resolution states is that the fire departments in the state of Nebraska should, wherever possible, meet with the safety standards that have been adopted, both on a nationwide level. Primarily this would ask the departments that whenever possible they have four firefighters per truck. Minimum safety requires that you have adequate staffing. Whether a firefighter is trapped inside of a burning structure, whether you have an automobile that is turned over and there are people needed to extract injured people, minimum staffing helps protect not only the public, but also helps protect the safety of those volunteer, or paid, firefighters that we send out. Again, this is more of a consciousness-raising plea, asking the fire departments to review those documents, and wherever possible, to meet their standards. That is the only comments I have at this time. I'd be happy to answer any questions if anybody has any. [LR13]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions for Senator White? Thank you. [LR13]

SENATOR WHITE: Thank you for your time and I will waive closing. [LR13]

SENATOR MCGILL: First proponent? [LR13]

MIKE McDONNELL: Mike McDonnell, M-c-D-o-n-n-e-l-l. I'm representing the Professional Firefighters of Nebraska. I'd like to thank Senator White for introducing this resolution. The National Fire Protection Association is an international organization with more than 75,000 individuals and more than 80 national trade and professional organizations. NFPA's mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by developing the advocating scientifically-based consensus, code, standards, research, training, and education. In July of 2001, the NFPA concluded a ten-year effort to encourage enactment of this standard on the organization and the deployment of fire suppression, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by career fire departments. A technical committee

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comprised of the firefighters, experts, fire, and city managers, and other industry representatives from across North America, drafted the standard in 1999. After two years of research, consensus-building, and public comment and input, the standard was issued. Emergency response is dangerous work for the protection of the firefighters and the victims of fire or other emergencies. 1710 applies the documented and proven science of fire behavior and emergency medicine to the basic resources, requirements for effective fire and emergency service deployment. This application allows a community to determine if the resources allocated for the different types of fire emergencies, medical calls, and other instances, are sufficient to effectively control the incident and protect the lives and property. Money spent to meet the performance criteria of 1710 standard would enhance your community's capability to provide for the public health through the improved emergency medical services, and public safety, through better fire rescue and Hazmat responses. Is there any questions that I could answer? [LR13]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? Thank you, Mike. [LR13]

MIKE McDONNELL: Thank you. [LR13]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any other proponents? Any opponents? Anyone here to testify in neutral? A couple. [LR13]

JERRY STILMOCK: Senators, Jerry Stilmock, J-e-r-r-y S-t-i-l-m-o-c-k, registered lobbyist on behalf of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association, in a neutral position. Just to reiterate what was a part of LB607 and the conversation concerning the use of the word professional, career, paid, volunteer. Because this resolution was heard separately, I felt it important to note that volunteers are professionals. And they are professionals in what they do and how they train and how they treat their job. We've talked about so many different incidents already this afternoon, I'm just going to relate one and that's the devastating wildfires in northwest Nebraska in 2006. They started in Valentine, and a short time later separate incidents started counties away, in Dawes and Sioux County. It was those volunteer departments that traveled distant ways to serve Nebraska in that part of the state, traveling great lengths, sacrificing their family life, sacrificing their work, perhaps pay, and truly Nebraska's volunteers are professionals. And I appreciate you allowing me this opportunity to come up and share that deep and treasured thought of volunteers being professionals, and Senator Janssen, thank you for so noting during the testimony on LB607. [LR13]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LR13]

JERRY STILMOCK: Thank you. [LR13]

LYNN REX: Senators and committee, my name is Lynn Rex, representing the League

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of Nebraska Municipalities. We're neutral on LR13. We think this a standard to which departments should aspire, but we do know that this is one of those things that takes time and it should be decided on a local level. I'd be happy to respond to any questions that you might have. [LR13]

SENATOR MCGILL: Any questions for Lynn? All right, thank you. Anyone else here to testify neutral? Seeing none, Senator White closed. That concludes the hearing on LR13. Thank you, and this ends the hearing for the day. [LR13]

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Disposition of Bills:

LB160 - Advanced to General File, as amended.

LB607 - Indefinitely postponed.

LR13 - Reported to the Legislature for further consideration.

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Chairperson

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Committee Clerk