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Appropriations Committee
February 10, 2016

[LB733]

The Committee on Appropriations met at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, 2016, in Room 1003 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB733 and agency budgets. Senators present: Heath Mello, Chairperson; Robert Hilkemann, Vice Chairperson; Kate Bolz; Tanya Cook; Ken Haar; Bill Kintner; John Kuehn; John Stinner; and Dan Watermeier. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Senator Krist. Are there any other testifiers on Agency 46, the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services? Seeing none, that will close today's public hearing on Agency 46 and take us to our only legislative bill of the day, LB733 from Senator Watermeier. [AGENCY 46]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: (Exhibit 1) Chairman Mello and Appropriations Committee, I am Senator Dan Watermeier, D-a-n, Watermeier, W-a-t-e-r-m-e-i-e-r, representing District 1 in the southeast corner of the state, and I am here to introduce LB733. LB733 would appropriate \$2.5 million from the General Fund in fiscal year '16-17 to the Department of Correctional Services. The appropriation is to be used to recruit and retain quality staff in work force shortage areas. At least one-tenth of the appropriation is to be used for the recruitment and retention of staff within the Division of Health Services, which would include psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses. The department would be required to provide quarterly reports to the Governor and Legislature on how the money was used, the impact on recruitment and retention of staff, and plans for the future use of such staffs. Several years ago when the Beatrice State Developmental Center faced a similar situation, the budget bill was amended to provide \$1.5 million for BSDC to be used for recruitment and retention strategies, including bonus pay. The Department of Corrections is currently facing difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, particularly at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, the Nebraska State Penitentiary, and within the Division of Health Services. In December there were 203 vacant positions in the department, of which 62 were at TSCI, which is Tecumseh, representing 31 percent or almost one-third of the vacancies. The total number of employees at TSCI is approximately 483 employees of the approximately 2,200 employees within the total Department of Correctional Services, representing about 22 percent or less than one-fourth of the total employees. Doug Koebernick, the Inspector General of the Nebraska Correction Systems, recently conducted a survey of employees working for the Department of Corrections. It was sent to 1,035 staff with 527 responding, or a response rate of 51 percent, which is impressive really. In response to the question, "In order to retain employees within the Department, what would you say is the primary change (that) the Department could make to keep people from leaving the Department," 68 percent of the respondents chose salary advancement each year above the hiring wage. The next highest response was improved self-morale at only 4.5 percent. In response to the question, "When you have had coworkers leave employment with the Department, what do you believe was their primary reason for leaving," 42

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percent of the respondents answered salary. The next highest category chosen was job stress at 14 percent. Finally, when asked, "What is your opinion of the Nebraska Legislature and its concern about the employees of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services," and I'm glad they didn't just say Senator Watermeier in that question--they asked about the entire Legislature, 44 percent answered that the Legislature does not value the employees of the department. Another 26 percent answered that the Legislature needs to make a better effort to engage the employees in order to understand their concerns. At TSCI, 66 percent of the respondents stated that the Legislature does not value the employees of the department. I realize that the union has to strive for equity across the board, but maybe we need to make some exceptions, for example, correction facilities or 24-hour facilities. I know that salary negotiations and step plans are to start with the collective bargaining process, but this hasn't happened. I've been told that the department has the ability to give merit raises and bonuses, but that an executive order from years ago may prohibit such action. I also realize that the most recent salary survey does not indicate that there is a problem with salaries. I'm here today to emphasize that there is. I feel that we need to help the Department of Corrections, specifically at Tecumseh, not next year or five years but now. Therefore, I feel the need to bring this topic up before the Appropriations Committee. We need to get the conversation started. It's been almost a year since the riot. And although there are many signs of progress, employees aren't seeing major changes. Correctional officers are still working 12-hour shifts. Overtime is still a problem. There is still a high vacancy rate at 13 percent, high turnover among the security staff at 31 percent, and a stagnant salary plan. I'm not going to micromanage how salaries should be adjusted, as I have full confidence in the department that they would use this additional funding in a very constructive way. In the Department of Correctional Services, LB657 mandatory overtime reduction report, it stated that an agreement can be reached between the Department of Corrections and the bargaining unit outside the contract negotiations period if the parties agree. Salary adjustments outside the contract negotiation period between the union and the state have occurred at least once in the past. On January 1 of 1999, special upward adjustments to the hiring rates for Corrections officers, Corrections corporals, and Corrections sergeants were made. These are a couple of the e-mails that I have recently received from constituents. One said that it had been nearly a year since the riot and it appears that nothing has or is being done to correct the conditions for workers at the prison. Many people in government promised relief for these folks and I am asking you, no, I am begging you, please do something to fix the problem at TSCI. Do something before the conditions deteriorate to the point we have a serious issue at the facility. No more lip service. Show these folks you care, because I know you do. Another constituent says...also wrote regarding the problem plaguing the Nebraska Department of Corrections. Began his law enforcement career as a police officer. He has also worked in offices of county sheriffs as well as TSCI. He knows firsthand the problems associated with retaining employees at TSCI due to salary disparities with other law enforcement agencies. When a local sheriff...a local county sheriff's office made a conscious decision to increase salaries comparable to the largest city in the county, it resulted in a more-qualified and stable work force. Another

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town in the county did not increase wages and, before disbandment of the department, saw a lack of qualified applicants due to the low pay. He compared the hourly salary of TSCI with that of two rural county sheriff offices and starting pay at TSCI was several dollars lower per hour. He began work at TSCI in 2013, along with 16 other new employees. None of them are still there today. That was in 2013, along with 16 other members. His message to me was that the state of Nebraska is not paying attention to Corrections officers for what they deserve. He emphasized that if you want a good pool of qualified applicants and you intend to retain them as long-term employees, you have to pay them what they are worth, which should be at least equal to that of law enforcement on the outside. Their jobs are just as important, just as risky, and just as stressful as law enforcement outside the wire. In summary, I am asking the Appropriations Committee to consider the dire need for the additional funding to adjust the salary structure within the Department of Corrections, particularly at TSCI. I appreciate the direction that Director Frakes is taking in making changes within the agency. There have been many new and innovative approaches taken on recruitment. However, although progress has been made within the department, salary issues have been left untouched. This major piece of the puzzle affects so many other pieces. It is time to pick up that piece and start working on it. I have a letter from the Inspector General of Corrections that I will distribute to committee members, Mr. Koebernick's office, his support for LB733, based on his experience working with the state facilities, and gives us some examples of how the money could be used. I'd be happy to answer any questions if I can. I really do want to say that I do believe there is a trend changing, even though the numbers haven't changed. I've been down there and toured probably 10 or 12, maybe 14 times (inaudible) and I know a lot of people that work there. And there is some concern yet and that's because they're just generally concerned. I mean they went through a fearful time. And I think it's clear from the survey that Inspector General had handed to us that it's serious. So that's why I'm here today. I appreciate it. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Senator Watermeier. Are there any questions from the committee? Senator Bolz. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: I'm interested to know that there's a precedent with BSDC. Something like this has been tried before. Can you tell me more and can you tell me what the outcomes of that (inaudible)? [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: That's a good question. You know, the outcomes I don't know. I just know it was a number of years ago right after the issue they had down in Beatrice. It's not unusual to do it but, you know, I don't know exactly how it would have to work. And if you want the outcomes issue, I could do some more digging into that and find it out, so. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: It might be (inaudible). [LB733]

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SENATOR WATERMEIER: Yeah. And you know even the issue in Nebraska, as Mr. Frakes had alluded to, 2.9 percent unemployment is zero. And in my district we see it all the time. They come down there, they're trained, and they do leave to other places. Even the footprint of that facility has grown much, much wider since when it was first built. I remember very well when it was built and we thought maybe Syracuse would have a few employees down there, but they would build in Tecumseh. Well, Johnson County actually received very few new housing projects because of it. The footprint simply got bigger. And then the footprint is from Beatrice, Lincoln, Omaha, even into Kansas, Missouri. And it's ironic. There's businesses south and east of Tecumseh that indirectly suffer because the pool that they would like to have for manufacturing is drawn up as well. That's all the benefits or responsibility we have to take for having zero unemployment. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Senator Bolz. Any other questions from the committee? Senator Watermeier, you mentioned an issue that Director Frakes also mentioned which I know the Legislative Fiscal Office is going to look into it for me as well, as an issue surrounding an executive order that no one has been able yet to show what this executive order is or why it's still, quote unquote, on the books but not rescinded in regards to the ability to allow a state agency to provide retention or recruitment bonuses, knowing that it happened a year before Senator Cook and myself and Senator Haar were elected in 2008 when they did the BSDC recruitment and retention bonuses and there was not really an issue brought up in light of giving the executive branch, particularly a code agency, the authority to utilize funding to do these bonuses. Do you have any more information you could provide us in regards to what is this mystery executive order and, to some extent, why, if it's really a concern or an issue, it's not been rescinded or how long it's been on the books, so to speak, knowing that it appears this was done eight years ago by the Legislature and by Governor Heineman? [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: I don't have a good answer for it, and it's strictly an excuse as far as time goes. I knew I needed to get the bill dropped and this all happened by December-January time frame. The survey was done actually on the fly as we did all this as well. But I also know that I can do a little better and follow up with it. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. I do see my friend Lauren Anthonie from PRO in the back of the room, and I'll make sure I grab before the end of the hearing to see if she can help us track down that executive order information as well. So with that, any other questions from the committee? Senator Stinner. [LB733]

SENATOR STINNER: I just want to make a statement. This might be a good case study for the cost of turnover to an organization, and at some point in time, I don't know if it's Performance Audit or some other legislative staff, look into what that cost of turnover is. (Inaudible). [LB733]

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SENATOR WATERMEIER: You know, in all...go ahead. In all fairness, I think we need to let the exit interviews work as well. And they're putting those things in place. [LB733]

SENATOR STINNER: Right. [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: And all those things that they're doing will all add up. I just got to talk like Senator Mello. (Laughter) But they'll all add up, you know, and little by little they'll make a difference. And it is frustrating for me to think back to Mother's Day last year. I got a call, the place is on fire. It's on fire. I look out my window, I can see it. I was scared I could. But I went down, drove around. Of course I didn't want to interfere. I was a couple, three or four miles away, and it got my attention real fast. And believe me, I'm down there every chance I can, every chance I get to go in and visit. And I would encourage all of you as well too. You could do it right in your own district. Tell those members that we value them because clearly they don't think we do. And you know, how much of this step we can take forward, you know, I don't want to cause a political problem by doing something we shouldn't be doing, but we need to step up here and do something if we can, so. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Senator Stinner. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you, Senator Watermeier. [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: Can I just sit here? [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Yep. We'll first take proponents for LB733. [LB733]

MIKE MARVIN: (Exhibits 2 and 3) Good afternoon, Chairman Mello, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Mike Marvin. I'm the executive director of the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Local 61, the union representing the majority of state employees. First, I would like to thank Senator Watermeier for introducing this bill. Senators, while we are in support of this bill, I do need to say that we have some concerns. This money is needed to help retain employees, experienced employees. This bill calls for recruitment and retention. The Department of Correctional Services has no problem hiring employees. They have a problem retaining employees. Last calendar year they hired over 600 employees. There may be a problem hiring mental health employees--I don't really have the breakdown of numbers on that--but not other employees for the most part. You have heard TSCI has a problem hiring because of their location. This is not true, in our opinion. Just ask how many employees have been hired down there since the time that it came on-line. You'll soon see that we just have a major retention problem. They're not able to keep those employees that they hire. We want this money to go where it's needed and that is retention, not recruitment. I want to talk about staff shortages and

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the impression that TSCI has a hard time attracting people because of its location. I submit that that is not because of its location but for how they have treated employees over the years. Now let me interject there that in the last year, due to Director Frakes, I think the employee treatment has gotten much better, but there is still the aftermath of how they were treated before. I want to show you a place that's had similar problems for almost as long as TSCI. That's the Grand Island Vets' Home. GI is a MSA at this point in time. They have a large work force, but their overtime numbers and their inability to retain staff rivals that of TSCI and has since the mid-2000s. The location does not mean that much. You can go back, you can look in the Omaha World-Herald, you can look in the Grand Island newspaper, you can search them and you can find that there are articles going back to the mid-2000s on that. This staffing shortage, while Senator Watermeier has talked about TSCI, is in all of Corrections as a whole, just not TSCI. The Nebraska State Penitentiary has an enormous amount of overtime and staffing shortages. You look at the overtime numbers of all the department's facilities, and I have attached the LB657 overtime reduction report for your reference. There is a problem throughout the department. Again, the department has no problem recruiting. They have a problem retaining staff. And I would urge you to make sure the primary intent of this bill is to retain employees. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions. And I may be able to answer some questions about the BSDC bonuses. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you for your testimony this afternoon, Mr. Marvin. Are there any questions from the committee? Senator Bolz. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: Good afternoon. Please do, if you have additional information about the BSDC (inaudible). [LB733]

MIKE MARVIN: I cannot remember all of the details of how it was to be awarded out but there was a problem with retaining staff at BSDC and the staffing shortages and mandatory overtime. The Legislature at that point in time put forth an appropriation, and I can't remember the exact number of dollars, and the intent of that was to retain employees, to keep them from leaving. There was no objections raised at that point in time that there was an executive order out there. There was none of those kind of things that were brought up. Unfortunately, because I think a lack of direction and intent from the Legislature, strongly worded intent maybe, the money didn't get used the way it was supposed to get used. Most of that money was used to hire temp staffs and bring in temp agencies. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: Another question while I have the mic, I'm struggling just a little bit with how this process would work in relationship to the more traditional negotiation process. And I just...I want to make sure that that opportunity for employees to negotiate remains as strong as it

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should be. And I just wonder if you have a comment about the interplay of the two people.
[LB733]

MIKE MARVIN: What happened with BSDC was State Personnel and employee relations and HHS got together. They developed a plan, this is how we want to give the bonus money, the retention bonus money. They submitted that plan to me. I looked it over to see if I thought it was an objective plan and not merely subjective that I like this employee so I'm going to give them money, that there was criteria that had to be met so that it was distributed fairly. We all came to an agreement on that and that was what was supposed to happen. Didn't. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: My last question is I hear a sense of urgency and believe it. I just wondered is the...and I understand that we must respond to the staff, but is there an alternative sense of urgency or an alternative approach in terms of this population of BSDC, I'm sorry, of Tecumseh? Should we make urgent changes in the way that Tecumseh, in the population Tecumseh is serving, versus or in conjunction with salaries? [LB733]

MIKE MARVIN: Combination. You know, there is no simple answer. You know, and I think you have to look at both the census of the inmates there and who they are and why they are there and the money. Now with that I might say Director Frakes, when he testified earlier, made a very valid point. If you throw all this money at Tecumseh, he's just going to have a problem somewhere else because everybody who can will move to Tecumseh and the problem will move from one facility to another. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: Thank you. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Senator Bolz. Are there any other questions from the committee? Mr. Marvin, I've got one and I guess to some extent it's the question, obviously, I asked Director Frakes knowing that this bill was coming afterwards. And he mentioned it in a reply in regards to looking at really, to some extent, there's the view maybe from the administration that this should just be solved through maybe the collective bargaining process that starts with NAPE/AFSCME this summer. The question I've got is, is something...should we not be considering both options? Should we not be considering LB733, in light of what Senator Watermeier just walked us through the details of the Inspector General's survey in regards to...and not knowing what Director Frakes, if he has a separate survey of employees, that expressed the number one issue that causes them concern and why they leave is because of their wages. And in light of also allowing you and the department and Bill Wood, the collective bargaining director on behalf of the state, to figure out what would happen long term in regard to your collective bargaining contract? [LB733]

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MIKE MARVIN: Absolutely, a combination of both. You have a problem that this money will help in a short term, but it is not a long-term solution. That has to come through the collective bargaining process. So this money would help until such time as a new collective bargaining agreement could go into effect, which would be in July of 2017. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions? [LB733]

MIKE MARVIN: May I say that we've also offered to sit down and negotiate early at any point in time if they are willing to. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Okay. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Marvin. [LB733]

MIKE MARVIN: All right. Thank you very much. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Other proponents for LB733. Are there any opponents for LB733? Is there anyone here in the neutral capacity on LB733? [LB733]

SCOTT FRAKES: (Exhibit 4) Good afternoon, Chairman Mello and the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Scott Frakes, S-c-o-t-t F-r-a-k-e-s, and I'm here today to testify in a neutral capacity on LB733. LB733 proposes to appropriate \$2.5 million to the department for the purpose of enhancing the staff recruitment and retention efforts. I thank Senator Watermeier for introducing this legislation as I know he cares deeply about the staff in the department who work hard every day protecting the citizens of Nebraska. And I really...we've walked around together. I've seen how much he cares. I share this sentiment and I have prioritized recruitment and retention efforts as I fully realize staffing issues are of critical importance to our success in transforming NDCS. A number of initiatives are underway. These include the hiring of a full-time recruiter and expansion of the department's recruitment efforts through targeted advertising, social media, job fairs, and other community outreach. I am testifying in a neutral capacity today, not because I do not support efforts to improve staff recruitment and retention but, rather, because I struggle at this time with how to utilize these funds in an efficient way to permanently address this complex issue. Staff compensation is a condition of employment subject to collective bargaining. I cannot increase compensation unilaterally; it must be negotiated. This problem is not unique to my agency. Compensation increases for one bargaining unit have a cascading effect on other positions and agencies. Issues such as progression or performance pay should be addressed statewide as part of a comprehensive solution to this issue. I'm hopeful that the upcoming contract negotiations will begin to resolve the compensation issues. I'm committed to working with Senator Watermeier and this committee through the biennial budget process to develop a long-term strategy to

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comprehensively address the department's staffing needs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Director Frakes. Are there any questions from the committee? Senator Bolz. [LB733]

SENATOR BOLZ: With your past experience in Washington and your knowledge of other states, is there any other strategy that you're aware of that worked to help relieve some of the pressure on the staff now? I mean do you have an alternative to address the issue? [LB733]

SCOTT FRAKES: No. Continuing the efforts that we have underway, we are making progress. We have seen some slowdown in the turnover rate. So recruitment, I think Mr. Marvin said it very well, recruitment is important as you're trying to fill vacancies; retaining staff is how you solve the problem and that's changing the culture of the department that is not retaining staff in the way that we should. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Any other questions from the committee? Director, you heard me pose the question to Mr. Marvin, which is whether or not this is simply a long-term issue that could be solved through collective bargaining or as Senator Watermeier's bill starts to push that long-term issue up to the short term in regards to addressing what we know are immediate concerns. I just heard Senator Bolz's question. How does not...how does providing more...how does not...how does what LB733 does, providing funding to increase wages at the Department of Corrections, how is that not going to be helpful in regards to dealing with the short term as you're entering into a long-term collective bargaining process, which wouldn't take effect in theory till next biennium essentially? [LB733]

SCOTT FRAKES: Because today it's not clear to me how I could use those funds. So again, I still do not have a clear answer on this concept of bonus pay. And the collective bargaining process, while it's true we could open the contract, we did just open it. It just came to life in July so it's a brand new contract. And to go back to the table prematurely, in essence, I don't think would be beneficial for everyone. We're, you know, on the heels of starting the negotiation process for the next contract. So I don't have a better answer for you today. I think that there's a compensation issue that needs to be addressed but I don't want to do it piecemeal and I want to do it in a way that is beneficial to state employees and not just one group of employees. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: I can appreciate that. I guess one thought process is that, obviously, I could request an Attorney General's Opinion. Even knowing that there's a number of attorneys that work in state government that I assume would have figured this issue out well before today's public hearing, I'll make sure I request an Attorney General's Opinion to help give clarification to

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the department and to the Legislature what we can and can't do when it comes to providing pay increases or appropriations to deal with retention or recruitment purposes. The question I've got, though, is maybe there's a cynicism side of what I'm asking on this question, which is this issue didn't just occur overnight. It wasn't just last May and Mother's Day that we decided, there was riot and all of a sudden Correction employees said, gosh, we're not, you know, we're not making enough money, we've been leaving the department for years, in regards to why, when I first got on this committee, we saw hundreds of jobs being vacant every single year. And that's how the department has been able to balance their budget my entire time in the Legislature. So the question is there's a cynical side of me thinking that we keep saying we're simply going to deal with it through the collective bargaining process, but to some extent I've heard through all my Special Investigative Committee work that that just never seems to occur on the executive branch side; that every year they go to the table there's never a...never a genuine effort to try to address the issue of increasing salary or pay for the purposes of recruitment and retention, mostly retention purposes. How is this going to be any different in your perspective? I know you're not the one who does the collective bargaining. Bill Wood does and just...he is the administrator who oversees collective bargaining for the state. How is it going to be different this go-around than it has been the last ten years in the sense of that ten-year process that's been festering, festering, festering to the point where we find out that 68 percent of the employees in the Department of Corrections who reply to a survey say it's the number one reason why they leave? I mean it's overwhelmingly the next...I think Senator Watermeier said, the closest issue was 4 percent in regards to organizational culture, so to speak, or working. I mean how is it going to be any different this go-around than what's been done in the past? [LB733]

SCOTT FRAKES: What is different now is the problem is recognized. The problem has been acknowledged. Now the next phase is to figure out the right solutions to that problem balanced against, as we know, all of the other challenges we have. There was a lot of call it deferred expenditures, cost-cutting measures, efforts to get through the economic turn...downturn. I said that right, downturn. And today we've got a backlog of issues in this state that have to be addressed. Compensation is certainly one of those. But I know that it's not an issue that is being shoved to the side. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: Are there any other questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you, Director. Is there anyone else here wishing to testify in a neutral capacity on LB733? Seeing none, Senator Watermeier, would you like to close? [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: Senator Haar just reminded me I shouldn't, but I have to. [LB733]

SENATOR HAAR: No, that wasn't... [LB733]

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SENATOR WATERMEIER: Oh, I thought you were saying everybody was tired. Now I lost my train of thought. Thanks, Senator Haar. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: He does that, it's fine. [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: It was brought up that this is going to put pressure on the rest of the system. Just keep in mind this bill talks about every Corrections employee: NSP, Omaha, Hastings, Lincoln, and Omaha, all the Corrections. So we don't have this idea that we're going to just help Tecumseh and not help anybody else. I really appreciate the issues that we have here. It all comes...it's not just a single issue. If you think about unemployment, that's part of the problem. And how difficult it can be to manage bonus incentives because you would also have this risk, if you had a hiring incentive, now all of a sudden you have a compaction issue where you've paid somebody so much to come in and work here, the ones up above, it's compacting. That's an issue. And it does come back to one of the big things is our zero unemployment, because what you have, I think why it's so relatively easy to recruit people to come here is because they're jumping from \$10 an hour to go to \$14 an hour, \$15, whatever their starting rate is. As soon as they get in there, there's another place to go. That's what the expense of zero unemployment costs, is that it's easy to ratchet up and go find a better job when the people above are begging for you to come. I just have to share, too, something that I've probably not told to very many people in this body, but when I was out of college I went to work for Cargill. And in Cargill, I went to work in Seattle, Washington. And under me, I managed longshoremens and teamsters. And that was a worldly experience for a teenager to do something like that, and those experiences have never left me. And I have appreciation for that work force but I have more of appreciation for how hard it is and how difficult it is to manage these things we're trying to do. And I appreciate where Director Frakes is going to go because inside of that, involved in the negotiations, that is not going to be easy. I just say it's such a long-ranging variety of a lot of reasons why it's difficult. And I would have to tell you that Senator Chambers is absolutely right. He told us this was going to happen. When we built Tecumseh, he said, you're not going to get people that can go down there that far to work. He wasn't necessarily talking about the caseworkers and the front-line workers. He was talking about the psychiatrists, the psychologists, the guys that make a lot of money and they're living in Lincoln and Omaha and it's going to be difficult to get them down there, if not expensive just to rotate them there and transportation. So we've had warning from this and maybe didn't heed it. And when I say that, that was in the '80s when that all happened. So it is really quite a complicated process. Tecumseh, I would tell you, is still glad they have the prison, but the growing pains of that is pretty expensive as well. It really is. And the footprint obviously is getting bigger and bigger on how far they reach out. So I digress a little bit. I just want to give you that, share that history on there, because I have an extensive history inside the teamsters and the longshoremens and that was quite an experience for me, so. [LB733]

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SENATOR MELLO: Thank you, Senator Watermeier. Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing none, thank you, Dan. [LB733]

SENATOR WATERMEIER: Thank you. [LB733]

SENATOR MELLO: That will close today's public hearing on LB733 and will end the Appropriations Committee hearings for the day. [LB733]