

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, in Room 2102 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Kathy Campbell, Chairperson; Sara Howard, Vice Chairperson; Roy Baker; Tanya Cook; Sue Crawford; and Merv Riepe. Senators absent: Mark Kolterman.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. We'll call to order the public hearings of the Health and Human Services Committee. This afternoon, we are covering gubernatorial appointments. And our first appointment today is Mr. Michael Bailey whose appointment is to the Board of Emergency Medical Services. Mr. Bailey, are you still on the phone?

MICHAEL BAILEY: (Exhibit 1) Yes, I am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good. Thank you so much for your patience and waiting. What we try to do in these hearings, Mr. Bailey, is to give you an idea of who is here, first of all, so you kind of know. I'm Kathy Campbell and I serve District 25 which is in Lincoln, Nebraska. And we'll start over to my far right, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR BAKER: Senator Roy Baker, District 30, Gage County, part of southern Lancaster County.

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Senator Sue Crawford, District 45 which is eastern Sarpy County, Bellevue, and Offutt.

SENATOR HOWARD: Senator Sara Howard. I represent District 9 in midtown Omaha.

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Joselyn Luedtke. I'm the committee legal counsel.

BRENNEN MILLER: I'm Brennen Miller, committee clerk.

SENATOR COOK: I'm Senator Tanya Cook, District 13 in northeast Omaha and Douglas County.

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Merv Riepe. I'm District 12 which is Millard and Ralston.

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Senators. I will remind everyone in the hearing room, if you have a cell phone, please make sure that it's on silent or turned off. And we will start. Mr. Bailey, we usually start with these hearings and let the appointee tell us a little bit about themselves. So if you would go ahead, tell us about you.

MICHAEL BAILEY: Well, I guess, I'm Mike Bailey from Ansley, Nebraska, or actually Westerville is what my address says but I'm out by Ansley. I guess I'm a 44-year-old gentleman that has started a couple businesses in a small rural town out here and then I got into EMS and I kind of moved up through all the different branches of EMS as far as first responder, EMT, and currently a paramedic on a volunteer ambulance squad out here in Ansley. I've also had time to work with a hospital in Ord, a Valley County hospital, where I serve as a paramedic and then also work their ER. So I've got a...had a chance to get out and get some experience there. I've been an EMS instructor for probably the last four years and have a lot of passion towards teaching out here in the rural areas, trying to excite people, because it's really tough for us to get volunteers on a lot of these...a lot of squads out here. So that's kind of just a little bit about me. Is there more you'd like to know? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. But is this correct, Mr. Bailey, that you work for the Valley County Health Systems? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: Yes, I serve as a PRN so I work as needed part time for Valley County Health Systems out of Ord, Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent, excellent. How long has Valley County Health Systems been around? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: You know, I feel it's been around for quite a while so I couldn't probably tell you how long. I've only worked for them for two years, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, okay. Oh, and then you also run the Bailey Crop Service. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: Yeah, I started...I guess I started my own company in the ag sector working because I was selling feed corn for Pioneer and getting into GPS and planters back in about 1994 and then I have grown an agronomy business that I helped a young gentleman take over and turn into his own business. And then I just recently the last three years started another technology company, AGcurate Technologies that we do GPS type of work and things like that that we've moved out of Bailey Crop Service. And I've got another young gentleman that I'm

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

kind of helping with that. It just seems to me it's kind of nice to help some of the younger people have roots or something that's kind of theirs out here. And I've been fortunate to have a pretty good business that I've been able to help them to develop businesses of their own. So that's kind of been what we did on the business side. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: You're sort of a one-man economic development agency. (Laughter) I'm impressed. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: We have had some success at that. We have. And I think it's important in our small communities that we find ways to do things like that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Could you tell us what made you interested in serving on the EMS Board? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: You know, I've probably been on the Trauma Board, the Trauma Advisory Board for Region 3 two and a half years and I've kind of liked actually learning more about the EMS system and being able to help influence, maybe, some changes that are going to happen out there. Tim Hoffman has kind of been one of my mentors along the way and he's the one that approached me about sitting on the EMS Board. And I would say probably in the last two years I've really grown and had a lot more interest in probably some of the policies and procedures and scope of practice that we serve with as EMS and maybe helping to educate people out there in the field but then also helping to try and clarify them. So doing that, I've got to learn a lot more about the rules and regs. And so when he asked me to think about volunteering and doing this, I thought, you know, I think this is something I would definitely be interested in because I think EMS is definitely young and developing into something a lot bigger. And I think we're going to have to be looking and changing and adopting new things along the way to make it get there and especially to be sustainable out here in some of these smaller communities. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Exactly. I do worry about that in terms of making sure that we have good health coverage across the state. EMS is certainly a part of that. Excellent. Any questions from the senators? Senator Crawford. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Senator Campbell. And thank you, Mr. Bailey. I'm just going to follow up on...I'm glad to hear that you are interested in really watching those rules and regs and that you...and I was also pleased to see that you are an EMS instructor because I do believe that our ability to recruit and train is going to be key. And so I just thought I'd ask if you had a particular...insights from your work as an instructor in terms of what the board may need to be...to do and/or something you'd like to tell us as members of the Health and Human Services

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

Committee that we may need to know in terms of what will help us better recruit and train people in the rural communities for EMS work? [CONFIRMATION]

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Could you hear that all right? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: I didn't quite catch...I caught the first part of it but I couldn't quite catch the last part. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: I'm sorry. I was just asking, from your experience as an instructor, EMS instructor, if you had comments for us as Health and Human Services Committee members and/or points that you hope to make to the board about what may need to be done to do a better job of training and recruiting. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: Okay. It's...recruiting is probably one of the biggest challenges, I think, out here for us, is being able to put together larger classes out in the rural areas. It seems like we've got to, a lot of times, take them and force them to drive a lot farther in order to get big enough classes. So I think that's always a challenge for us. The other part of your question, I think you asked about was...what was the first part? [CONFIRMATION]

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Do you want me to just... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: I think the question was, with...from your work as an instructor, are there things that the board may need to do or that the Legislature could do? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: Yeah. The one thing that I think that I would like to look into--you know, this is a pretty simple thing--but, like EpiPens is something that our EMTs can administer out here and as instructors we train them to do. The cost of those EpiPens are significant to a lot of these smaller squads. They expire. And they'll spend somewhere in the vicinity of \$300 to \$600 every six months to a year on those products that usually outdate on them. And the product Epinephrine is relatively cheap, somewhere in the vicinity of \$2 to \$3 for that same dosage. And I think there's some new packaging styles that aren't in the rules and regs and aren't allowed to be used by our EMTs but that could be...and I think there's some other states out there like Washington that's doing that. I think if we were to look at implementing something like that out here, we could save a lot of our rural departments a significant amount of money. And some of the areas don't even carry those...that particular EpiPen just because of cost. And, you know,

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

that's taking away the ability to provide quality healthcare out there to anybody that might be in that particular area. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions? Mr. Bailey, we're going to let you go today. Thank you so much for your...oh, sorry. Did you have a question, Senator Howard?
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: No. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, Senator Riepe. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Mr. Bailey, I have a question. Do you have any efforts out there to raise some local funds to provide for local support which, along with not only the contribution that buys in some ownership...have you tried that or have you made any effort or do you see any opportunity? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: I'm not sure I heard all of that, but I think you were asking if I've had a chance to work to try and raise some local funds... [CONFIRMATION]

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: ...or money out there. Is that correct? [CONFIRMATION]

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: We...one of the things that happened that I guess I forgot to mention up front was I do serve on the Rural Fire District Board for Ansley out here. And we went through a grant process and we've had to do a lot of fund-raising to help put in our new fire hall and to fund some of our equipment and the things that we get. So I think a lot of these departments do, do that, and whether it's through pancake feeds or whether it's through soup suppers of benefits and things, there is the ability to raise money. I do think a lot of people out there really do

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

appreciate what the ambulance services have done. And so it seems like we're able to gain money when we need it because we're limited on what we can tax as a fire district to be able to ask for because of the mutual aid agreement that we're in with our mutual aid organization. So we can't raise our levy at all. And so we have to look to other means like that to come up with the money. I also helped with an EMS conference in Ord. And, you know, one of the things we did there was we went out to a lot of businesses and solicited funds from them in order to keep that conference free so that all the participants that came and got their continuing education hours, they got to do that with no cost and it was actually sponsored by people out there that...and businesses out there. And there's...you know, what I've found in going out and doing that and talking to people was, there's a lot of people out there that will say, you know, I can't do this job of what you guys do going out and helping these people and seeing the things that you have to see. But I can help out by giving some funding and supporting somebody out there so they can get the education to do that. So I definitely think there's opportunities out there to raise funds in EMS. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. With that, Mr. Bailey, we will let you go. Thank you very much for your service. And if at any time you think we need some information, be sure to get back in touch with us. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BAILEY: Okay. I appreciate it. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Our next appointee today is Michelle Hynes. And Ms. Hynes is a reappointment to the Foster Care Advisory Committee. Good afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: (Exhibit 2) Good afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Would you go ahead..and I should have had Mr. Bailey do this but I did not. But for the record, could you spell your name for us? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES It's M-i-c-h-e-l-l-e and then H-y-n-e-s. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. And you have a...you are here at a reappointment so tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got interested in the foster care review. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

MICHELLE HYNES: Okay. I'm a longtime northeast Nebraska native. I grew up in Crofton and went to school at Midland Lutheran College for English and journalism and then to the University of Nebraska for law school. I spent six years working in the Panhandle. I lived in Gering but when you live in Gering, you cover the entire Panhandle with a legal career. So we started doing some court appointment work. I did a lot of guardian ad litem work, was involved with helping to create a CASA program in that area, worked with the domestic violence agency, several other various community organizations, was a...actually was a firefighter and EMT for a while, did quite a few different things out there and finally decided that it was time to move back toward home. And I worked for IBP which is now part of Tyson as a corporate counsel for two years and decided I'm not a corporate attorney and was able to find a job working for a juvenile law center in Sioux City, Iowa. So while it's in Woodbury County, my clients are placed all over the United States. I've had children that we've actually helped to place all the way up to Canada. Last week, I had a child of mine on my caseload just placed in Minnesota with family. So it's been something I've been interested in for a very long time. When I started college, I originally thought I was going to be a social worker. And the day I filled out the paperwork, I wrote down English instead. So this has always been an area of interest for me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Interesting. You had the responsibility, you and your colleagues, of really kind of setting up the new procedure and going forward. And so tell us, how has that gone? How do you feel? What more needs to be done? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: It's gone very well. I'm actually at times surprised with how much we were able to accomplish because the five of us work very well together. Trying to interview a new executive director was the first big hurdle. It was trying to get five of us from five different backgrounds figuring out, how do...what do we want to put in the job description? How do we want to advertise this? How are we going to handle the interviews? So there was...we very quickly had to learn how to work together. And the Foster Care Review Office has made a lot of changes, you know, both internally as far as getting decent offices--we needed some upgrades...just so many different changes that they've done. But it's been incredible to see how much was done in such a short period of time. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Well, I commend you and your colleagues. I think you've done an exceptional job and particularly in selecting Kim. She has just done a great job in working with senators. And we were working on a problem five minutes before I came in the room. So we continue to do that. But you are to be commended because you were given the responsibility to sort of start from ground zero all over after a lot of controversy. And I think you've just done an excellent job. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions from the senators? Senator Howard. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Thank you for your willingness to serve. I do have a question. You're currently practicing as an attorney? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: In Iowa? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Okay. And so there's no conflict between your work... [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: There's no conflict. Because I'm employed by the state of Iowa, I cannot practice outside of my job. So I will...and so at this point my Nebraska law license, I actually let it go inactive due to the cost of keeping it active and I don't need it. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: It's really expensive, yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Yes. So I don't need to be...have it active at this time. I do get sent from my office, because I'm the only one who has a Nebraska background, and we are right on the state line of Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, I'm usually the one who gets sent to...one of our clients also has a criminal case in Nebraska. I will get sent to go sit in the back of the courtroom to see what's going on and bring back information since I have more familiarity with the process. And the advantage we've had for both Foster Care Review Committee and for my job is, because I go back and forth like that, there is actually much more cooperation now between Dakota County, Nebraska, and Woodbury County, Iowa. It has helped. I'm able to see the positives and negatives in each state and build relationships. So there's been no conflict at all. It's only been a benefit for both areas. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: Great. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Campbell, thank you. Obviously by your interest in continuing to serve, you found it...some gratification on that. Can you describe to me both what was your most

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

gratifying contribution and also maybe at the same time your most concerning disappointment?
[CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: I think one of the things, in addition to having Kim be hired as the executive director, one of the things that the committee has done and helped oversee with Kim is changing the format for the questionnaires and other things that the local boards do, because since I serve on a local review board, I am able to see what the thought process is in the office as to what we should change to get better information and then I get to see it in practice. There are days I am frustrated when I'm sitting at a review board meeting that I don't always like the changes we put in effect because I can't write the answers I want to on the forms. And anyone who sat with me on a review board meeting knows that I want to have it exactly...the most succinct way to put what the concerns are. And then the forms don't always handle that because we're dealing with people and they don't fit nicely into check boxes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Is that because of your English background or your legal background?
(Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Both. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: I'm picking on the Chairman a little bit. She was an English major, so.
[CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Both, and I've had a review specialist, says that she also does not like the journalism background because I do tend to proofread as I'm going. But that is always going to be a frustration because when you do work with children and with people, things don't fit nice and neat into any of the boxes we have on a form. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Sounds like the Legislature. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Exactly. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Any disappointments? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Not really. I enjoy working with children. I always have. I do a lot of volunteer work for...my daughter belongs to the International Order of Rainbow for Girls and she just recently transferred right before Christmas to the Lincoln assembly. So I'm down here quite frequently. So you get to see girls in a different...because at work, the problem I've always had is, I see the bad side. And so working with that group of teenage girls who are very interested in

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

volunteer work, you see the good. So we're constantly trying to encourage them and trying to get them focused into different areas of volunteer. So when I...I can't really think of anything that has really disappointed me with being on the committee. I think just that I don't always like some of the changes we've made. But that's just from a more practical standpoint for me.

[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Have they done a call of the house? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: It's a...are they having us check in? [CONFIRMATION]

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: No, that...they're working on the deficit appropriation bill.

[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, okay. All right. We're not checked out. So that's why we...people are talking about that. (Laughter) Other questions that you might have? I think it's very interesting that you've served on a local board in both Gering and where you are now. That would be very interesting to see the difference. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: There's a lot of difference. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yeah. I would imagine. Exactly. Well, we appreciate your service obviously for this year and the terms that you've been on it. It's...and much appreciate you're willing to be reappointed. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: This is a lot of work for kids in Nebraska and we really appreciate it. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHELLE HYNES: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you for coming today. Our next nominee is Sheree Keely. Good afternoon. We're going to ask you to do the same thing, Ms. Keely. Spell your name, please.

[CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

SHEREE KEELY: Sheree is S-h-e-r-e-e, Keely, K-e-e-l-y. Give some background?
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Sure, go right ahead, tell us about... [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: (Exhibit 3) Yeah. I have a master's degree in social work from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I've been in the mental health field for the last 33 years. I'm currently working at CHI Health. I've been a clinician and I'm now more on the administrative side of things. So I've seen both sides of our work. I'm also on a couple of boards in Omaha. I'm on the Project Harmony board of directors. And then they have the Connections board so I'm an...I'm on their advisory board which is working with kids in the schools, getting mental health treatment for them. And then I also am on the Rights to Passage (sic) board of directors which is the Uta Halee organization... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, sure. [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: ...yeah, that came in, yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Absolutely. Well, thanks for all your work, too... [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: You're welcome. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...having spent the year as the five of you putting this all together. Any comments about what you think you have left to do here in putting... [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: Oh, I think we have a lot left to do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good, good. [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: I...some of the things I feel that we've done...obviously, we needed a leader and we have a great leader in Kim. So we're very excited about that. I think she's really set up some training for the boards which I think was pretty loose. And so she's got some of that going and I think the boards are excited about it. At least that's the feedback we're getting. Some of the advocacy stuff that she's focusing on, being able to go to some of the hearings, really figuring out how to organize the management team and the...so that they can actually participate in some of those hearings, and then just getting involved in policy development, and then obviously the data. The data has kind of been the number one thing that's been our challenge. I...we're

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

definitely moving in the right direction but we are not where we need to be, so continuing to get the data so that, you know, bodies such as yourselves can make decisions based on, you know, information that you trust because you didn't feel like it was trustworthy before.

[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions, Senators? Anyone have a question? Your...on working with Project Harmony on their board of directors, that must give you a really interesting picture, and then sitting on the Foster Care Review Office... [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: Right. Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...I would think that that would tie it all together pretty much for you, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Well, we appreciate very much your service and coming today and apologize that it's short but we only have a short time here (laughter) to do this. So if at any time there's information that you think senators need, we'd really appreciate your e-mailing us or giving us a call. [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: Absolutely. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you so much. [CONFIRMATION]

SHEREE KEELY: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. And our last appointment for the day--and I've got it right here--is Jeremy Fitzpatrick for the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Good afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Good afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We'll ask you to go ahead and spell your name for the record. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Sure, Jeremy, J-e-r-e-m-y, Fitzpatrick, F-i-t-z-p-a-t-r-i-c-k.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And tell us a little bit about yourself. [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: (Exhibit 4) Sure. I am 44. I'm a lawyer in Omaha. I'm married to my wife, Brooke, and we have two children, our daughter, Claire, and our son, Quinn. (Phonetic) And I arrive here today in being involved with the commission from personal experience. My son, Quinn, when he was born three years ago, had bilateral mild to moderate hearing loss, so in both ears he has hearing loss. And Quinn hears but he misses about 36 percent of sounds and some of the most important ones like the letter S and things that are critical in the English language. And so Quinn is an incredible success story. He had hearing aids very early, he's right with his peers, he's doing great, he's a very verbal child, all indications, and things can change, but are that he is headed to a very successful life, hopefully. And that really, I think, was a component of two things: (1) public health and also private health. On the public side, Quinn getting tested in the hospital was just critical for someone like him because we might not have known for a long time that he had hearing loss because he does hear without hearing aids. He's worn hearing aids since he was three months old. So that act of the Legislature in mandating testing is something, and the fact that he got testing is something that will influence Quinn for the rest of his life. And that public aspect is critical. And there's also a private aspect...and the work of the commission, of course, also right with that. And then on the private side, there are groups like Hands and Voices Nebraska which is a group I'm involved with that is a support group for parents who have children born with hearing loss that kind of helps you get back on your feet a little bit when you have them sort of taken out from under you a little bit. So what my wife and I decided early on was we really benefited a tremendous amount, and Quinn did, from the support that we'd had. And we want to make sure that keeps going. And I think the commission does a great job and my interest in being involved in the commission really stems out of that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. You know, in the time that I've been in the Legislature, I don't think that we've had a parent serve on the commission. I could be wrong. But that's a very interesting perspective. And so how old is your son? [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Quinn is three now. He just turned three in April and again is, as I said, really is doing great. He wears hearing aids. He's...some children do a little better than others but Quinn is great at wearing hearing aids. And they've helped him tremendously. He has had...they say that Quinn has full access to language with his aids. And really, he's tested right where you would expect a three-year-old to be regardless of hearing issues. So he's doing great.
[CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Very talkative at three. [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Yeah, he...yes, he is. Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: It sounds like he has a good parent. [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Well, he's got a great mom and he's trying to do with the dad and, you know, we come along that way. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: But that's terrific. I appreciate that you're going to bring that perspective to the commission. That's just excellent. [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions from the senators that you might like to know? Mr. Fitzpatrick, I think this is your first appointment, correct? [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: That's correct, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good. And the term...three years? Is that correct? [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: I think so. It runs through 2018, I think, or... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Is that right? I'm looking at Mr. Wyvill. It's three years. Okay. Excellent. Anything else that you might want to share with the committee? [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Not now, but I'm sure we'll have the chance to talk in the years going forward. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Well, at the end of the commission...at the end of the hearing, we'd all like to see a picture of your son if you have one. [CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Oh, excellent, great. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I assume you've got a picture with you. [CONFIRMATION]

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
May 12, 2015

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: I do, I think. I know it's in my phone. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good. Anything else, Senators? Oh, Senator Crawford, I'm sorry.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Just a comment: I really appreciate you coming and telling us about the impact of the legislation on your life, that important public health aspect. So I think that's...it's just valuable for us to hear that. And I appreciate you bringing it to the testimony here and appreciate having you on the board to watch those laws as well as the rules and regs because, you know, those also impact people's lives, so I appreciate that perspective. Thank you.
[CONFIRMATION]

JEREMY FITZPATRICK: Thank you. Yeah, I would just say that I think that work is...it's really conservative work. It's maximizing human potential which is obviously something we all agree on doing. And that law is one way that really does make a difference in people's lives, I think.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent, excellent. Yes, we do need to hear that. Thank you, Senator Crawford. If there aren't any other comments, we'll close the hearing for the day but we'll stay to see that picture. (Laughter) Thanks, Senators. [CONFIRMATION]