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Transcriber's Office

Health and Human Services Committee
February 03, 2016

[LB684 LB802 LB818 LB866]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 3, 2016, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB818, LB684, LB866, and LB802. Senators present: Kathy Campbell, Chairperson; Sara Howard, Vice Chairperson; Roy Baker; Sue Crawford; Nicole Fox; Mark Kolterman; and Merv Riepe. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon, and welcome to the hearings of the Health and Human Services Committee. I'm Kathy Campbell, and I serve as the senator from District 25, which is east Lincoln. And we're awfully glad you're here. Today we have four hearings on our schedule. But before we do that, we'll do some preliminary guidelines and introductions. First of all, please check your cell phone, or whatever you have that may make noise, and make sure it's turned off so it doesn't bother anybody. You do not need to have your testimony written or handouts but, if you do, we would like 15 copies of that. And if you need some assistance for extra copies, you can see one of the pages to my far left. If you are testifying, we need you to complete one of the orange sheets on either side of the room, and write as legibly as you can. And as you come forward, you can give that sheet to the clerk. Elice is over there. And if you have handouts, one of the pages will take them from you and hand them out. We use the light system in the Health Committee so that the first bill hearing and the last have a fair shot at the time allocation. So you will start with the green light at five, and it'll be green for a long time. And it'll go to yellow, and that means you only have one minute. And it'll go to red, and I'll be trying to get your attention. So we'll keep that in mind. We'll start with introductions today, and I'll start at my far right. Senator.

SENATOR FOX: Senator Nicole Fox, District 7, which is south Omaha and downtown Omaha.

SENATOR BAKER: Senator Roy Baker, District 30.

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

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Joselyn Luedtke, committee counsel.

MERV RIEPE: I'm Merv Riepe. I'm the elected representative from what's Omaha, Millard, and Ralston.

ELICE HUBBERT: I'm Elice Hubbert. I'm the committee clerk.

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: And Jay and Caitlin?

JAY LINTON: I'm Jay Linton, and I'm a senior ag economics major from Dalton, Nebraska.

ASHLEE FISH: I'm Ashlee Fish. I am a business administration major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and I'm from Seward, Nebraska.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I think we have all the introductions. We will start with LB818, Senator Kolowski's bill that changes provisions relating to immunity when submitting a complaint under the Children's Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act...long title. Welcome, Senator Kolowski.

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Good afternoon, members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Senator Rick Kolowski, R-i-c-k K-o-l-o-w-s-k-i, and I'm here today to introduce LB818. LB818 is intended to harmonize the abuse and neglect reporter liability provisions in Nebraska law. The two longest-standing statutes are the Adult Protective Services Act and the Child Protection Act. Both of those statutes provide immunity to reporting child abuse or neglect, except when making a maliciously false report. The recently passed Children's Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act, 2013, provides a blanket immunity to those individuals reporting child abuse in violation of the act. LB818 changes this act to the same language as the previous two reports. LB818 harmonizes the three statutes to provide immunity to criminal or civil liability except in the case of making a maliciously false report. And with that, I'll stop and take any questions you might have or to anyone following. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [LB818]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. A quick question, was this based on a hypothetical situation or a real case that you came across? [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: My understanding, these are all real cases that have existed and having maliciously filed reports followed up on by the different agencies here. [LB818]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Senator Howard. [LB818]

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SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Thank you, Senator Kolowski. Do you know why the word "maliciously" was used instead of "intentionally"? It's a legal question usually if there's intent. [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: True. I'm...not writing that particular section of the report, I would translate it personally as it was more harshly and vindictively done, rather than just a lighter term that you used. So it's very malicious in its act and wanting to see people hurt and confused and discombobulated by the system. [LB818]

SENATOR HOWARD: Okay, thank you. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Other questions? Senator Kolowski, this bill, or the idea for the bill, was submitted by Morgan Kelly, correct? [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I believe that's correct, yes. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And was...oh, sorry. Was that the language that he used and suggested? [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I believe it was. I can check with my staff if it's correct. Yes, it was. Thank you. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And the legal counsel is nodding; everyone is nodding here. [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Um-hum. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So that's how this piece of legislation came about, okay. Any other questions or comments? Thank you, Senator Kolowski. I know you're going to stay for closing. [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: I will. I'm good; I have another bill in another committee I'll be presenting, as well. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I know. [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB818]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. We'll take the first proponent. Okay. Anyone here to voice opposition? Anyone in a neutral position? We do want you to know this is exactly what we had expected, so don't be nervous. We do have letters. And those are important for the record. Elice? [LB818]

ELICE HUBBERT: (Exhibits 1-3) We have a letter from the Nebraska Association of Homes and Services for Children, a letter from Youth Care and Beyond, and a letter from Morgan Kelly of OMNI Behavioral Health. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: All supporting the bill, Elice? [LB818]

ELICE HUBBERT: All supporting the bill. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. I think Mr. Morgan...or Mr. Kelly had thought about testifying, but then, very late, sent a letter, so obviously became detained or for the weather. Any other comments? Would you like to close, Senator Kolowski? [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: (Inaudible). [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Kolowski waives closing. That's why I had made the comment that Senator Kolowski was our favorite senator today (laughter), probably with the shortest bill we're going to hear this afternoon. So thank you, Senator. [LB818]

SENATOR KOLOWSKI: Thank you. [LB818]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Our next bill is LB684, Senator Bolz's bill, to change provisions relating to exemption from an adoptive home study as prescribed. Senator Bolz, welcome. [LB818]

SENATOR BOLZ: (Exhibits 1 and 2) Thank you. I am Senator Bolz; that's K-a-t-e B-o-l-z. And I hope to be your second-favorite senator today (laughter). I have a bill for you which was brought to me by a grandparent. This fall, Mr. Holloway, who will be testifying on the bill, came into my office to discuss an issue that he was facing related to the adoption process for his biological grandson. He wanted things to be settled as quickly as possible and to take care of his family. He suggested that in his case, and perhaps in other cases, the judge might be appreciative of the opportunity to waive the home study requirement, because he is the child's grandfather. This would eliminate the associated costs and the time that it would take to complete the home study. Judges can already waive the study for grandparents. The amendment being passed around

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reflects my original intent with the bill, with some improved language. And the intention is that the home study could be proactively waived at the discretion of a judge, if the judge has reason to do so. A home study has benefits, to be sure. It can check to make sure a home is safe and appropriate, and it can provide education to adoptive parents. However, each case is different, and this bill would provide a judge the opportunity to use the information they have available to choose what might be best for the child and the family. Scenarios in which a home study might be waived might include a family that had previously had a kinship placement with the child and the associated assessment, or if the child and his or her family had previously cohabited with the grandparents; those might be just cause for waiving a home study. I think that this bill is a small step towards simplifying the process for some families. And it places the discretion in the hands of a judge. If the judge has any reservations or concerns, the bill leaves in place the requirements for background checks. And the judge could always say that a home study is appropriate in any given case. I would also note that families can access educational resources and materials, for example, our own state-funded Right Turn organization, which provides postadoptive education and support services. So I'd request your support for the bill, and I'm happy to answer any questions. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Thank you, Senator Bolz. Can you tell me, on the agencies, are they generally in agreement, support? [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: I think you'll hear some comments from some folks today, and I don't know whether they chose to come in with some concerns or whether they might speak from a neutral capacity. I think there is, maybe, a bit of hesitation about the idea that doing away with a home study might miss an opportunity for an educational component for some families, and I don't dismiss that. That's, you know, something that this committee, I'm sure, will think about and decide upon. I think the heart of the bill is a decision about whether or not there might be some cases in which a judge could use his or her discretion to waive those requirements. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: This may be somewhat underlaid, I don't know. Are adoptive, like particularly grandparents, required to take some childcare program? I mean, once you've skipped a generation, things are different. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Are they required or recommended to take some kind of a course to... [LB684]

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SENATOR BOLZ: I guess my response to that is that each family is different. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: So in the case of a grandparent who wants to adopt a grandchild who had previously been in a kinship-care placement with them, they have previously done an assessment and may have voluntarily participated in some of those activities. Other scenarios might be different. So I guess it's...I don't mean to dodge your question, but the answer is, I think it's family by family. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Depends, huh? [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Howard. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you, Senator Campbell. And, Senator Bolz, you and I had had a conversation earlier today about this bill. And I was hoping you could just put a few things into the record for us, specifically about how...and you discussed it a little bit with Senator Riepe about LB684...how it interacts with kinship and those initial assessment home studies potentially creating a duplication of efforts for families. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: So the statute relating to foster care for relative homes talks about the rules for licensure, the rules for kinship, the rules for adoption; those things are different, according to the appropriate process. So our statute exempts kinship homes and relative homes from licensure, but encourages licensure if that's in the best interest of the child. A nonlicensed kinship home or relative home would still require an initial assessment that focuses on safety, protection, and health, education, those kinds of things. And so, I guess to be more clear, you know, foster homes and those processes, those would all remain in place under this bill. Licensure would all...foster home licensure would all remain in place under this bill. The processes for kinship placement would all remain in place under this bill. But for certain families that are ready to adopt a grandchild, it would waive the home study requirement. Am I sufficiently responding to your question? [LB684]

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SENATOR HOWARD: Yes. And just to make sure that we have it in the record, this doesn't remove any criminal background check requirements for family members. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: That's correct. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Perfect, thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. A question I have...in the hospital business, oftentimes we have to intervene if a family doesn't believe in blood transfusions and yet the physicians feel that it's in the best interest of the child. Does that play into this in any way that...of religious issues...that you might be putting a child at harm? I'm thinking if you had a hemophiliac child, you certainly don't want to put him into a home that... [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Sure. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: They're probably going to have to have blood transfusions. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: And I'm not sure that a home study...and maybe somebody else on the committee would be able to respond to that better. But I'm not sure that a home study would identify that type of issue. But again, this maintains the judge's discretion. So if, in the case file, there is some sort of history of not keeping a medically fragile child warm enough because they can't pay the heating bill, that might trigger a judge to make the choice that a home study would be an appropriate decision. But if there's nothing in the case file and everything is as it should be, according to the judge's discretion, then this process could be waived. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Is this a social caseworker that's building this information for the judge? [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: It's a good question. I mean...the case file contains, I think, a lot of history and information about the family. It probably comes from the caseworker; may come from other interactions with the juvenile justice system or the child welfare system. I think it's pretty extensive. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: So he's not sitting down in a ten-minute interview and...bingo...making a call. He (inaudible) being a judge. [LB684]

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SENATOR BOLZ: I don't believe so. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Senator Bolz, would you like to clarify the difference between an initial assessment and a home study for an adoptive placement? [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: You know, you may have some comments to clarify that more than...you may know that more intimately than I do. I know that the initial assessment is a little bit more streamlined than a home study, because the time frame is more quick. You know, an initial assessment is trying to find a quick solution for a child who might be in a crisis, whereas a home study is a little bit more focused on the child's permanency. But I would welcome any additions on the record, Senator Howard. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: No, that's great, thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Bolz, would this be in a hearing before the judge that he or she would make the determination? Or is it just a review by the judge? I'm assuming it would have to be in a hearing. Senator Howard is nodding over here just in case. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: I'm just thinking that through. I'm trying to think of a scenario in which there wouldn't be a hearing and I can't think of one. But I'll have my staff just double-check that. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And there may be some people who are testifying behind you that can clarify that. But my assumption would be that this would be a hearing, so anyone with standing in this case could step forward and make comment to the judge. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum, um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And that may address many of Senator Riepe's questions. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: There are other people watching this case than just the grandparents and the judge. [LB684]

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SENATOR BOLZ: Certainly. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Will you be...you'll be staying, because you have the next bill. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Yes, okay. Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We have you locked in here. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Senator Bolz. Our first proponent. Good afternoon. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Hi. I hate talking in front of people. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, you'll be just fine. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: I don't have anything...oh, that. I'm sorry. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We need you to state your name, for the record, and spell it. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Rene Holloway, R-e-n-e H-o-l-l-o-w-a-y. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay, you go right ahead. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: My husband and I, as Senator Bolz said earlier, approached her about this bill. This last year we adopted my grandson and learned a lot. And one of the things that I was kind of amazed to hear is that we needed to have a home study. Now in my case, my grandson has either lived in my physical home or within a couple blocks of me his entire life. And he was 16 when we adopted him. And so, you know, it's just being a little shortsighted. And when I started contacting home study places, again, I was really kind of crazy, because the minimum wait time to get somebody in your home is like 90 days; six months is a more realistic...or is what we found with the four places that we had contacted to come and do a home study. And they're expensive; the range that we found was \$1,200 to \$3,000. Now that being said, my husband and I had already had criminal background checks done, both local and federal. We had had the sex offender checked on. We...there's another background check in there someplace. I

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think there was three things we had done. A friend of our attorney's works for social service. She had sent us the forms that were required for a home study; we had all those completed. The homework, where we sent all that...the home study person, I'm sorry, we had sent all that information to, and then she just dropped contact with us. We tried: I sent e-mails; I left phone mails...voicemails, I'm sorry. And our court date came and went without any contact back from her, so we had to pay our attorney additional fees to go in and get a continuance for us. Plus, you know, it just drags it out. Our attorney had to get involved. But what really kind of bothered me is the judge said that this happens all the time. That needs to be corrected. But for grandparents that are involved in their grandchild's life as much as I...I mean, I've been making his health decisions, his education decisions, extracurricular decisions, since birth, because my daughter just wasn't equipped to do that. His biological father has never been in the picture; owes \$50,000 in back child support. And he's, you know, he's 16. So in my thought, and what we thought we would be able to do, being ignorant of the law, is, can't the judge talk to Clarke and look at our references and all the background stuff that we've had done and determine that, in our case, you know, a home study probably would not need to be done? And I first kind of was thinking, what grandparent really needs a home study? But when I talked to CEDARS...a social worker from there...I understood why they're necessary. And, you know, again, you just kind of don't always think outside of yourself, and so it was never our intent, when we asked Senator Bolz to sponsor this legislation, that there would be no discretion. I believe that the judge needs to meet the family and the child and then make a determination, just as they would with a stepparent, because with a stepparent, the judge can say yes or no for a home study. And I think the same thing should go. We spent a total of two hours with our caseworker; wrote her a check for \$1,200. We had to get our own references. We had to do all of our own legwork. She sent the report to us to proofread...and there were...she even had my husband's name wrong...and so I had to correct, you know, what she found in the study. And I'm not saying that it's not a good process; I just think in our instance, and in a lot of instances, you know, she came into the home and it's just there's such a connection. She only spent like 15 minutes speaking to Clarke during her whole home study time. So I just think...I'm hoping, you know, that that's what happened, and that's why she only spent two hours with us. So that's our story, and that's why we asked for this legislation. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Sure. Mrs. Holloway, you probably can answer my question and that...was the final where you had a hearing before the judge and he or she reviewed all the material? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yes. We, I mean, after we did our home study, we went in to meet with the judge, and she reviewed all of it. And I would never be a proponent for not doing the background checks and the income verifications and, you know, to make sure that the child has, you know, adequate resources from the adoptive. But it just became financially hard as he got older, you know; there's more expenses as they get older. And I've always financially coparented. That's

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about the easiest way to say that. But, you know, we have college coming up and it just, you know...that's why we just decided to make it official. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I think it's just commendable of you to do that. Kids need a sense of permanency. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: When the grandparent steps forward, that's very special. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So thank you. Did you have a question, Senator Howard? You don't have to have a question, because I think Senator Riepe has a question. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: I do. How long had your grandson been placed in your home prior to your adoption proceedings? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: When he was born, he came home to my house with his mom. His mom is my daughter. And they lived with me. And then, you know, they lived in a little house behind us...like, I mean, literally, you walk across the yard and there they were...but I kept him while she was at work. Then she went through some stuff and she needed to get her act together, and he came and lived by himself with me. And that's just kind of, you know, when the...that's just kind of how...our situation is kind of a little different like that. But there was never an official placement. My daughter has always signed...there's like a six-month thing...she has always signed that for me when it came to, you know, when we would go into a new school or something, they weren't familiar with our relationship. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: So then you were a kin placement for him. Did they do an initial assessment when they placed him with you formally? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: He was never placed with us officially. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Okay, officially. And then, when did they terminate her rights? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: She terminated them voluntarily. [LB684]

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SENATOR HOWARD: How old was he then? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: 16. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Okay. And then the adoption proceedings were shortly after that? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah, um-hum. Yeah. And see, and my husband and I did that, too, ourselves. We went and got the parental rights from the biological father, as well as my daughter. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: And they didn't do notice for the bio dad? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah, they sent them to... [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: They did? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: You know, we had the paperwork, and he signed off on them without a problem. I think he thought that got rid of the \$50,000 debt. He was surprised (laughter). [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We're going to go to Senator Riepe's question. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. And I'd ask you to correct me where...if I get off base here. I think you said that it was \$1,200 to \$3,000 of a cost to you? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah. We actually paid \$1,200. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: But when I called to get estimates for the home studies, to find out how long it would take them to do them and the price, that was the range that we received: anywhere from \$1,200 to \$3,000. [LB684]

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SENATOR RIEPE: The other question that you mentioned, I think, was something like 90 days. Now your grandson was able to be in your home during that period of time. Okay. That was my concern, is... [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: In my case, he was. Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: I wanted to make sure they didn't set him aside. That would be pretty disruptive. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Well, I think that had it not just been our unique situation, then, you know, he may have had to remain in the situation he was until the home study was done. I mean, I don't know, because...but that would be a concern, if that were the case. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: It sounded like they were sensitive to the situation and adjusted accordingly. Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Can I ask, who did the home study for you? [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah. Adoption Consultants. And she was very nice. And, you know, I don't mean to...I don't want to bash her. I'm just thinking that, you know, when a social worker comes on and just sees that the situation is kind of like, you know, like ours was, then there's a tendency...and then that makes you feel a little worse about writing the check, that you're doing all the legwork and getting everything done, trying to make everything go as fast as possible. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I know. I was just... [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I could tell Senator Howard had the same question. [LB684]

SENATOR HOWARD: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions or comments, Senators? Thank you, Mrs. Holloway. [LB684]

RENE HOLLOWAY: Thank you. [LB684]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent for the bill. Okay. Good afternoon. [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: Good afternoon. My name is Clarke Chandler, C-l-a-r-k-e C-h-a-n-d-l-e-r, and I am her grandson. And it was really time consuming when we were trying to get it...the home study...done, because we had got all the paperwork filled out like six months prior to even getting like a phone call back from it; so it was pretty difficult. And one of the main reasons was for financial, so I could get a car. But I ended up...I went and got a job and detasseled and bought my own car, so, got that taken care of. So that was interesting. But when we finally got it done it was a lot better because we actually started getting the benefits for it. So I was easier to get like school clothes and stuff and be able to go get another job. I actually went and applied for like a year-round job. I actually work at Walmart. So that's interesting. And it just helps out a lot, because when she came for the home study, she sat down and asked me a bunch, just standard questions about like what I do in school and how it affects...how my grandparents affects my life and stuff. And then she just asked my grandparents all the questions. And when she sent back the results so we could send it to...for the judge...we sat down and read it. And she got some of my extracurriculars incorrect, so we had to go back and like correct what I did in school, like she said I played football...do not play football...so that was just, it was kind of fun. We reread it, because it was just some goofy mistakes. That probably happens a lot. But with the home study, it was...kind of seemed pointless, because I've, like she said, I've been with them my almost entire life. So, yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions? Senator Riepe. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: I maybe have more of a comment than a question. You're a very bright-eyed and hardworking young man and I'm impressed with that. And if I had to say it to you, instead of looking like Clarke Chandler, you look more like Clark Kent (laughter); he was Superman. So thanks for being here today. [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions? So just before you leave, tell us, what kind of car did you get? [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: I actually bought a five-speed Chevy Geo Prism, '96. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And it gets you to and from that job, I bet. [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: It does. [LB684]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Absolutely. And what year in school are you? [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: I am a junior. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: At a Lincoln high... [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: Seward High School. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Ah, Seward. Good. Any other questions? Thank you so much for testifying today. [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And good luck with the job and your education. [LB684]

CLARKE CHANDLER: Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB684]

BUB WINDLE: Chairperson Campbell and members of the committee, my name is Bub Windle; that's spelled B-u-b W-i-n-d-l-e. I'm a registered lobbyist here on behalf of the Nebraska State Bar Association. The bar association supports the bill. The bar association, and we've spoken to Senator Bolz about this, it may actually be the language you have in front of you, simply requires that there be a showing of good cause, that the discretion of the court to exempt grandparents and step-grandparents married to the biological grandparent can be waived, if there is a showing of good cause. This is, in part, to account for the importance of the home study and the fact that oftentimes this is the information that comes before the court. So it would give the court the information it otherwise would lack, if this is exempted, so that the court can make an informed decision regarding whether waiver is proper. It also recognizes the importance that this process has, not only to educate the court, but also to educate the family, and so err a little more on the side of requiring a home study and a showing of good cause, but, as we've heard today, also recognizing that in some cases exemptions are appropriate, that this can be a costly endeavor, and that this can be an endeavor that ultimately delays the process a little bit. So we support the bill with that amendment. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And that phrase is in the amendment. [LB684]

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BUB WINDLE: Yeah, thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Other questions, Senators? Or comments? Senator Crawford. [LB684]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairwoman Campbell. Thank you for your testimony and your explanation. Could you give me an example of what showing good cause would look like? [LB684]

BUB WINDLE: Yes. [LB684]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: What kinds of things could be presented? [LB684]

BUB WINDLE: Yeah. So I think, as we've heard today, if there's a long-time relationship where there's a kinship placement, those sorts of the things, the types of showings that may be required or may be sufficient under the current law, with respect to stepparents, may be the same sorts of things here, so the long-standing relationship, the placement, those sorts of things. [LB684]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Excellent, thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Windle. [LB684]

BUB WINDLE: Thanks. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Okay. Anyone in opposition to the bill? Anyone in a neutral position? Good afternoon. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: (Exhibit 3) Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Karen Authier, K-a-r-e-n A-u-t-h-i-e-r. I'm chief executive officer of Nebraska Children's Home Society. We're a statewide agency, nonprofit agency, with 11 offices in eight cities across the state. And we provided an array of children and family services since 1893, and that includes pregnancy, parenting, and adoption, foster and kinship care, permanency, in-home intervention/prevention services, mental health services, services to at-risk youth, teen pregnancy prevention, and early childhood programming. We are licensed as a child-placing agency by the state of Nebraska and accredited through the Council on Accreditation. I would like to, in a neutral capacity, underline the importance and the significance of a home study in the adoption process. And thank Senator Bolz for proposing an amendment to the original language, which would add the requirement

that a home study for grandparents adopting their grandchildren be waived only through a judge's decision. While I believe that a home study for grandparents generally is ill-advised, the amendment will at least provide judicial oversight for the waiver. Because of our concerns regarding the implications of those decisions, I think it's important that the committee understand the role that the home study plays in the decision to adopt. We have a long history of experience working with grandparents who are parenting their grandchildren through both formal and informal kinship care arrangements. Sometimes grandchildren are placed with the grandparents through the child welfare system, and that is a court decision. At other times, the arrangements are informal, with grandparents assuming responsibility for their grandchildren for a variety of reasons, including illness, substance abuse, incarceration of a parent. We offer a grandparents-raising-grandchildren program at our north Omaha location and provide home studies at no cost for grandparents who adopt their grandchildren, and that's statewide. Through the Right Turn program, which is our collaboration with Lutheran Family Services, we do provide services to families who adopt. And there's an array of services that are available to those families through Right Turn, if they're experiencing challenges in their role as adoptive parents. The Right Turn data, which has been collected for six years now, continues to show that one of the top reasons that adoptive parents consider dissolving an adoption is their lack of preparation for their role as adoptive parents. Our long history of working with grandparents who adopt grandchildren gives our staff unique insight into both the blessings and the challenges of moving from a grandparent to a parenting role. And we have awareness that the adoption of a grandchild typically takes place in a context of a complicated set of family dynamics. When grandparents decide to adopt, they are making a decision to initiate a legal process; however, they are also making a decision that has significant interpersonal and emotional implications. The home study provides an opportunity for individuals to explore that decision, with attention to both the practical and emotional realities unique to their current situation in the future. The home study is also, of course, an assessment of the grandparents' ability to provide safety and permanence for their grandchildren. And while most grandparents are capable of providing for their grandchild's well-being, there are situations when a home study may raise concerns about risks involved for the child. Unfortunately, some believe that the home study is simply a technicality or an unnecessary requirement that simply involves completing background checks. Others may raise concerns about the expense of a home study. As stated earlier, we provide those services for free. And we did inquire with some other licensed adoption agencies and found that all of the agencies we talked to either will reduce or waive fees for grandparents, if that's indicated. So it's my hope that the committee consider the importance of the legislation to the well-being of children who cannot live with their parents for a wide variety of reasons, with understanding that adoption is more than a simple legal process. We did have a situation just very recently where a grandparent, who had been parenting her grandchild as a single parent for nine years, was required to have the home study, thought it was just a part of one of the hoops she had to jump through, and came to us afterwards and expressed gratitude. She said she didn't realize how helpful that process would

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be in her thinking through some of the changes in that lifelong role that she would be playing. So if you have any questions, I'd be happy to (inaudible). [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Ms. Authier. Senator Baker. [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you. I'm reading what you handed out, that you offer a grandparents-raising-grandchildren program... [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: ...and provide home studies at a (sic) cost for grandparents who adopt their grandchildren. Is it necessary for grandparents to go through your raising grandchildren program before you do the home study? [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Do we... [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: Do you require they go through your program before you do a home study? [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Oh, no. No, we do the home studies. We offer the services. [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: Okay. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: And we're looking at replicating the grandparents raising...grandparent program at other places, because it's been so helpful to those individuals. But we do...we would refer all of them to Right Turn if they're interested in that. There's no requirement that they go through other services. We offer a lot of educational opportunities for people though and can direct them to other resources. Sometimes they need help with some very basic needs. [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: My second question would be the timeline. You know, if you received a request, how soon would you respond and complete a home study? [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Well, that is...there's no absolute answer for that. It does depend a little bit on where it is and people's schedules. But... [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: Two weeks? A month? [LB684]

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KAREN AUTHIER: Yes. And then the completion of that is somewhat dependent on...sometimes we need information back from the individuals on whom we're doing the home study. And so there it's not the...from beginning to completion could vary just depending on what kind of interaction we're getting and response we're getting from the family. But... [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: So it could be five or six months? [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Hmm. I can't imagine that it would be, no,... [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: All right. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: ...unless the grandparent were saying, we want to hold, we want to think about this a little bit longer. But, no, it would not be that long. It would be...it could easily be a month, depending on how many appointments were needed, etcetera. [LB684]

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. I briefly read this, very quickly. And as I read it, it looks like it might be more of an opposition position than it is a neutral. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: No, I'm really not opposed to Senator Bolz's bill. I think that I like the bill the way it is, so I'm not in favor of the bill necessarily; that's why I'm testifying in a neutral position. I think that that's your job, to take a look at whether this is a good step, in terms of changing state statute and regulations. But I think that the judicial oversight does give an option. I would hope that it wouldn't be used terribly frequently, because I do believe in that home study process. But I'm not opposing the bill. [LB684]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay, just curiosity. Thank you. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Ms. Authier, does it make it, the amendment, stronger with Mr. Windle's testimony, a showing of good cause? I mean, it seems to me that puts in an element here that has to be entered into a record of what is the good cause. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum, um-hum. [LB684]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: In the situation of Mrs. Holloway who, essentially, was with that grandchild from birth, that, to me, it would show good cause rather than just automatically given. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Yes. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I mean, I think that strengthens the amendment, I'd have to say. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Yes. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I'm somewhat puzzled, and I know that you can help. How many of the agencies are there that do home study for fee? [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: I think we're the only ones who don't charge any fee. There is a cost, of course, to providing a service. So we raise funds to do...we don't charge for anything related to adoption. Other agencies would...there are...the agencies I know that provide that service and are willing to either reduce or waive fees would be Lutheran Family Services, Child Saving Institute, and Catholic Charities in Omaha. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Now some of those...we're statewide...some of those agencies serve only more limited areas. Lutheran is pretty much statewide. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I'd just like to put in a plug here for your comments in here about Right Turn. I had the opportunity to go to the Right Turn seminar, annual conference...I'm not sure what I'm saying...annual meeting,... [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Yes. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...and sat at a table with a grandfather who was in the process of adopting. And Right Turn had all these seminars for grandparents and people and helping them through this process. And I was really impressed with how much help that organization can give... [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. [LB684]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...to a grandparent. And he had a grandchild that had numerous difficulties. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Yes. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So he felt that he was doing the right thing. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Yeah. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: He was proceeding, but I don't know that he would have without the help of Right Turn. So we don't publicize that enough. Anyway, Senator Fox. [LB684]

SENATOR FOX: Yeah, just a question here related to your paragraph here on Right Turn. It said that...you say here that one of the top reasons adoptive parents consider dissolving an adoption is their lack of preparation for their role as an adoptive parent. Does this happen very often with grandparents? [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. Well, when you think of all of the grandparents who adopt, I wouldn't begin... [LB684]

SENATOR FOX: And it's not in there. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: ...to say that it's... [LB684]

SENATOR FOX: A large number of them. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: ...a high percentage of the total number of grandparents who adopt. When you look at the number of adoptions that disrupt...there with the legislation that led to Right Turn, there was a finding that there were a number, a high percentage, of the old, under the old safe haven bill, children who were returned that were adoptive placements. And so, out of that, Right Turn was born. And then we began realizing that a lot of the clients that we were working with were relatives and, especially, grandparents. And I think that's not surprising. I'm a grandparent. If my grandchildren...if my children weren't able to care for my grandchildren, I would feel it my responsibility to step in. And, as I said, it's a blessing and a challenge. And that's what our grandparents tell us. It's a blessing that they're there for the children. But they also...the thought of raising my grandchildren, some of whom are babies, in an era that is very different than the era I raised my children...I think you just have to think it's not about are people

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capable or not; it's about what are those challenges that they are going to face in that new role that they're taking on and what that does to relationships with other people in the family. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: It may be time to go back and do a briefing on all the bills that were in LB603, all the components of it, which came about, again, as Ms. Authier said, from the safe haven special session. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Then the next regular session, when all the senior members were freshmen, there were numerous bills. And basically, what we did is we folded a number of those bills into LB603... [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...and put into place a lot of components to try to answer the safe haven conundrum that the state faced. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So it may be time to bring them back, because Right Turn has grown significantly from its original mission, from LB603 to what it is now. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. Yes. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And BHECN came out as a part of that. I'm trying to think. I'm missing...I'm looking at Sarah Helvey. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: I don't (inaudible). [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I'm missing a couple of other components of LB603, and we had a special committee for two years which followed all that and had them bring in information. [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum. [LB684]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: So it might be time to bring back those organizations. The Helpline came out... [LB684]

KAREN AUTHIER: Um-hum, um-hum.. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...as a part of that for mental health needs of parents across the state...and probably wise to at least give you all, on this committee, an idea going forward. You're going to need that information. The old-timers come back, Ms. Authier. Good to see you. Thank you for your testimony. Anyone else in a neutral position? Okay. Senator Bolz. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: I'll be brief and just stay here for the next introduction. I'll just say I want to be clear that this bill isn't a discernment about whether or not home studies are good. I think the consensus from all of us is that home studies are good. The bill is about whether or not, in certain cases, a judge might use his or her discretion to waive that step for a specific family in their specific circumstances. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I think that your amendment probably drives home that point very well. Items for the record, Elice? [LB684]

ELICE HUBBERT: Nothing for the record. [LB684]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. We have nothing for the record, and we will move on to Senator Bolz's next bill, which is LB866, adopt the Transition to Adult Living Success Program Act. Senator Bolz, go right ahead. [LB684]

SENATOR BOLZ: (Exhibit 1) Well, thank you, Senator Campbell. And I am still Senator Bolz; that's K-a-t-e B-o-l-z. Late this summer, I was sitting in a coffee shop, and I received a call from a longtime friend and colleague in the human services field. She was concerned about a young woman who had faced many challenges in her life: She had a learning disability, an unstable home environment, and was ultimately placed in a treatment facility as the result of some interactions with the criminal justice system. So this young woman was about to turn 19, and she couldn't return to her previous home with her elderly grandparents. She wasn't eligible for the Bridge to Independence program, because she was not, at that point, in foster care, in spite of her unstable history. So my colleague and I, through several e-mails and phone calls and referrals, did our best to help this young woman. But it, to be frank, was challenging and frustrating. And it was challenging and frustrating because this young person did not fit neatly into any of our existing programs. At nearly the same time, I began serving as a legislative member of the Nebraska Children's Commission. And so one of the things that I took special interest in was the

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Children's Commission's work on transitions for young people. One of the recommendations of the Children's Commission is to develop case management and crisis assistance for youth aging out of the juvenile justice system in an out-of-home placement, such as a treatment center. And this bill reflects a version of the Children's Commission's recommendations. There is currently a similar program, called the Preparation for Adult Living Services program, that is run in Nebraska for foster youth, using mostly federal funds. So there is precedent for this type of approach. The Office of Juvenile Probation reports that in 2015, 34 youth aged out of the system on their 19th birthday, after having been in an out-of-home placement for three months or more. And that's the population that we are focusing on, young people who have been in a shelter or a treatment facility and who turn 19 in that facility after spending a significant amount of time in the out-of-home placement. The program would offer intensive case management until the age of 21, would provide assistance and support in navigating the path to adulthood. The caseworker and the participant would work together on a transition plan. And eligible participants would be able to request crisis funds of up to \$1,000 per year, per participant, for critical needs relating to food and shelter and other needs approved by the caseworker. The bill proposes that the program be housed in the Department of Health and Human Services because of the precedent of the Preparation for Adult Living Services program. Further, I think, from a policy perspective, it's useful to have a program serving young people who have been in the juvenile justice system that is different from their history, that is run through the Department of Health and Human Services. I want to just point out briefly that I think this bill fills a gap, because you, as HHS Committee members, are very familiar with the Bridge to Independence program, which supports young people transitioning to adulthood out of the foster care system. You also are, likely, quite familiar with some of the reentry services and programs that this body has worked on in the past few years. We've strengthened our reentry initiatives in the corrections system to provide more case management, more risk assessment, more efforts to connect people with community resources, as they were turned back to their communities. What we have yet to do, and what this bill does, is fill the gap for young people who honestly fall between those two populations. They are still young people. And I would argue that the state has taken some responsibility for their well-being. At the same time, they've had some history and need some support in reconnecting to the community. So I think this is a good approach to fill a gap in our existing systems, but maintains consistency with some of the other strategies that we have moved forward as a body. The last thing I want to say is a thank-you to the Department of Health and Human Services who, in spite of the snow day yesterday, we were able to put our heads together this morning. And I want to tell you about two things that came out of that meeting. The first is, probably tomorrow or the next day, I'll have a little bit of technical language that cleans up and creates some more consistency with existing programs within the Department of Health and Human Services. I think that that suggestion is reflected in a neutral letter that you have received or will receive from the department. So I'm happy to work with them to create some more uniformity. The other thing I just want to note is that you eagle-eyed HHS committee members will probably notice that there is a discrepancy or a difference between the legislative fiscal note and the Department

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of Health and Human Services' fiscal note. And that is in response to a couple of different things. And I know you'll read the fiscal note. But the simple explanation is that the legislative fiscal note looks toward some of the work that was done by the Nebraska Children's Commission through a consultant, called Mainspring, that looked at uptake rates for these kinds of programs. And the legislative fiscal note is, in part, different, because they assume a lower participation rate than the department does, because they look to Mainspring's expertise on that, and because there are some differences. There are some young people who are ready to move on, and they choose to do so, and they're ready to turn over a new leaf and move forward and don't choose to participate in programs such as this one. So that is, as quickly as I can do it, a rundown of what we're up to and where we came from. And I'd be happy to answer any of your questions. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions the senators have? Just...I just want to make sure. In the bill itself, an out-of-home placement, at least I know when we've had conversations with the Office of Probation, oftentimes means different, I mean, when we were trying to make comparisons. But the out-of-home placement would be with a foster home, obviously, if that's available, would be in a shelter...and, Jeanne, I'm watching your face...in a shelter or a detention facility. Would that be accurate? Or a YRTC. Is that correct? Any one of those placements would suffice. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: So I think the question that you're asking is, what types of placements are included in out-of-home placements? And if we need to add some specificity to the out-of-home placement language, I'd be happy to do that. But the Mainspring consulting outcomes that I have in front of me include, in the definition of an out-of-home placement, a therapeutic group home, a psychiatric treatment residential facility, a short-term crisis stabilization center, enhanced shelter care, shelter care, independent living, agency-based foster care, relative kinship or foster care, respite care, group homes, substance use therapeutic group homes, and substance use halfway houses. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And I think that language, in terms of understanding the Office of Probation, because to some extent they do have people in detention, they have people that may be slightly different. And I just think that when we look at this project, I would guess that the numbers put together by the Fiscal Office and the department took into account all the options that would be in the Office of Probation. But we just need to check, because if that's a total of the youth, we just want to make sure they fit that definition. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum, right. So, yes, detention is on the list. It's number one and I blew past it. [LB866]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Staff secure...I'm trying to think what it is. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: But I guess, not to get too much in the weeds, but the information I have from Mainspring, which is what I received from the Children's Commission, which is just what I've been working from, indicates that there were, in 2014, 312 individuals who were in out-of-home placement at the age of 18. But the bill adds a little bit more targeting to that. So it's not just someone who is out in out-of-home placement. It is someone who is in out-of-home placement for more than 90 days of their most recent 180 days, so, you know, in the time frame coming up to their 19th birthday, and that they do, in fact, age out while in that placement. So what I'm trying to communicate to you, colleagues, is that we have done our best to target this bill to those most in need of this kind of assistance, those young people who have not found a different path prior to turning 19. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Senator Kolterman. [LB866]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Yeah. Thank you, Senator. Senator Bolz, I'm reading the fiscal note, and it's really confusing to me. Part of it is because it's so small, I can hardly read it. But as I look at this, there's...would you...we're looking at...first of all, they say they need roughly 17 people in the department to make this happen. Could that be (inaudible)...14.67? I got...maybe I could read it here easier. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Well, I guess if you're asking me to walk you through the fiscal note a little bit... [LB866]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: (Inaudible), because it...because some of it deals with the Bridge to Independence in the explanation, and some of it deals with what you're trying to do here. And I just don't...how do they fit? How do they fit together? I guess that's my question. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Okay. So I'm hearing a couple questions there. The first is, Bridge to Independence is dedicated to young people in foster care. [LB866]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: That are in the system currently. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: That are in the foster care system. [LB866]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Right. [LB866]

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SENATOR BOLZ: And this is for young people who are in the juvenile justice system, so, you know, young people, as Senator Campbell referenced, who might be in a required treatment facility or in detention. The fiscal note references a couple of things. One is that there is a population of young people that this bill would serve. That population is young people who age out of the juvenile justice system while in an intensive treatment center. And there are some differences of opinion, I would say, on what the scope of that population is. What I have in front of me is that there are about 300 kids in out-of-home placement at the age of 18. Only a percentage of those would qualify for this type of program, because only a percentage will age out and will have that ongoing intensity of services. So that's the first consideration in the fiscal note. The second consideration in the fiscal note is, of those kids who are eligible, what percentage would actually take advantage of the program. And I think that's something that you see a difference of opinion on in the fiscal notes. There are some who would say absolutely everyone would take advantage of this program. There are others who would say we can look at national trends and see that it's not, you know, quite as close to 100 percent as it is, maybe, closer to 60 percent, which is the consultant's recommendation from Mainspring. I think there's some give and take there, to be frank. You know, no one can quite predict exactly which populations will take up this bill. The other related costs are the cost of case management. And we're not talking about, you know, a high school counseling session here. We're talking about sitting down with a young person, helping them understand what their Medicaid eligibility may or may not be or how to navigate their own health insurance, what nonprofit agencies are available, what is important for them to think about if they start, if they decide to pursue a lease for an apartment, what their credit score is, all of those things that come with adulthood that have some intensity. So the estimate is based on a similar program, and the estimate is about \$1,400 for the cost of case management for a year. And that's a trained social worker's time. The other cost is related to the crisis funds. So, you know, this is a population that has a history. And there's no saying that that's not the reason that we should pay extra attention to them. And that history might lead them to needing some assistance with the down payment for an apartment or to get a car repaired so they can keep going to work. Those are the kinds of things that I could predict those crisis funds would be paid for. So I don't mean to talk on and on at you, Senator Kolterman, but that's my best description of what some of the considerations in the fiscal note are. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Crawford. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairwoman Campbell. Thank you, Senator Bolz. I have a couple questions. Would juveniles in the program be required to continue supervision and probation as a condition of their participation? [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: So these are young people who are aging out at the age of 19. [LB866]

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SENATOR CRAWFORD: Okay. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: So if they had other histories, other issues, that is separate from, you know, the idea that they are turning 19, in an out-of-home placement, and needing the next step in their life. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Okay. Okay. And then the second question, I was just wondering the logic behind creating a new program versus having these youth enter and opt into the Bridges program,... [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...which I think was part of what was discussed earlier, was... [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: ...we should allow them to enter the Bridges program. The bill, I think, creates an entirely new program. I wonder if you would just speak to that choice. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: No, it's a good question. And if I can pull that apart just a little bit,... [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Sure, absolutely. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: ...it's a program that is new to the state of Nebraska, but there is a precedence under the Preparation for Adult Living Services program, which currently serves foster kids through federal funds. So I don't disagree that it is new, but it is built on a model that we know has a great deal of success and is running in the state. But to answer your...I think the heart of your question, which is why not just have these young people participate in the Bridge to Independence program, I think that the Children's Commission would like to see that happen. And I actually would be a proponent of it myself. I think that that would be a good step forward for this population that's not currently being included. What I would argue is that this is a good intermediate step. All of the things that would be achieved through LB866 could build towards providing a Bridge to Independence type program for young people in the juvenile justice system. But prior to taking that step, this is a good intermediate step. It's a little bit more cost-effective. And there are some questions to be determined about the eligibility issues related to providing a full-blown Bridge to Independence program for youth in the juvenile justice system. And I think those things need to be hammered out and decided before we move forward with

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that type of approach. In the meantime, this is something we can do and something that would create a foundation for that vision, if that's the will of the Legislature. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [LB866]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Senator Bolz, thank you. In looking at the fiscal note, exactly what that is, this seems like that will be a difficult lift in this year's...are there other agencies or organizations that can pick up that General Fund request? [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. So you're referencing the cost of the bill. If we are concerned about the cost of the bill in this fiscal year specifically, one way we could address that fiscal note, and it wouldn't be my preference but it would be one way to move forward, is the bill as written grandfathers in young people who are currently 19 and 20 and have met the other criteria of the bill. So those young people would be brought into this service, and we'd be able to help them right away. If we, instead, created an operative date of July 1, 2016, we wouldn't grandfather in that population, but we would be able to work with kids moving forward. And that would be one way to bring down the fiscal note in what is a difficult fiscal year. I'd prefer to be able to serve those kids. And I think this is a fair reflection of what the cost of the program might be, moving forward. [LB866]

SENATOR RIEPE: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: But your...I don't mean to keep talking too much at you, Senator Riepe, but your other question about public-private partnerships, what I would say is that there are public-private partnerships embedded in the idea of this bill. So with case management, a young person could connect with a housing program that provides assistance for young people. It could connect with a sliding-scale fee doctor. It could connect a young person with a place to get mental health treatment for free. So I think that the idea that there are philanthropic agencies that could help these young people is embedded into the bill, even if it's not reflected in dollars and cents on the fiscal note. [LB866]

SENATOR RIEPE: My concern gets to be, as generally liking to work with pro formas, you know, you're talking 5, 8 years down the run. And "could have, would have, had have been" types of things make me very nervous, as opposed to the real dollars that get expended. With a leap into the net that the money will be there, I'm more cautious than that, because I'm a fiscal conservative. I'm a finance guy, kind of. [LB866]

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SENATOR BOLZ: I'm not sure I entirely understand your question, but I guess I don't make any bones about the fact that I think that this will be the cost of this program. [LB866]

SENATOR RIEPE: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: The dollars and cents reflected in this fiscal note will be expenditures from the state. And you'll hear some good testimony, or a least receive some written input from the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation today, about the cost of recidivism. And I understand that that's hard to project and may not fit your rubric for financial analysis. But I do think there's some potential cost savings in our criminal justice system, based on the recidivism statistics. [LB866]

SENATOR RIEPE: I'm reminded that our fiscal section does not allow us to do dynamic forecasting. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Certainly. [LB866]

SENATOR RIEPE: So thank you very much. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Yep. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Bolz, this is not a question that's going to be easily answered, so maybe it's just your staff takes it down. But somewhere I would like someone to do a history of the Bridges program in the sense of what...how many staff people...I'm going back to Senator Kolterman's question...how many staff people did we put in the budget? What was the actual participation rate, because we know that the first year, maybe the second, was far less than we anticipated? And are those staff people still there? And since we're going to put this in the department, then do we...would the trend tell us, or the numbers, that we need 16 positions? And I'm not sure I...I don't have all the math to put that together, but somehow we have to know what was used and over a period of time. And the department may say, are you kidding me, we've got so many cases now with the number we have. And that would be fine and dandy. But I think we need to have that, because that's a major cost to this, and it is the case management. And you'd have to have that. The second thing is that... [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: And...could I... [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Sure. Oh, go ahead now. [LB866]

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SENATOR BOLZ: Would it be okay if I responded to that quickly? [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Sure. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: To the credit of the Department of Health and Human Services, they have provided me some information. And one of the things that I think is relevant to share is that in 2015 there were 34 youth that would've met the specific criteria of the bill, and they project that upcoming eligible youth would be at 125, which is about 150. If you take only a percentage of those young people, even if you take 80 percent of those young people, you've got 100 or 120 kids. If we decide that we don't want to grandfather in young people and, instead, want to have a date certain, I think that that would change the fiscal note to reflect a period of ramp-up, and maybe a more fair analysis of the needs for caseworkers. Does that help? [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: That would be...whatever you can put together. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I do know, from just a preliminary discussion with Liz Hruska this morning, that there would be a significant drop in the fiscal note if we grandfathered a date and we set a date, rather than bringing everybody in. To answer Senator Riepe's question, that would greatly lessen the dollars. But somehow, I think we need to be able to be very clear about what's being used and what will be needed. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So any further questions? Did that get at your question, Senator Kolterman, in a way? [LB866]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: It's a lot to think about. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I just want to make sure we get the data, the right data. Will you be staying, Senator Bolz? Good. All right, we will proceed with our first proponent for the bill. Good afternoon. [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: (Exhibits 2-5) Good afternoon, Chairperson Campbell and members of the committee. My name is Juliet Summers, J-u-l-i-e-t S-u-m-m-e-r-s. I'm here representing Voices for Children in Nebraska. Navigating the path to adulthood can be difficult, even for those young

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people who have every advantage. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB866, because we believe our systems should ensure that every child has the support they need to succeed. This bill is the result of the work of a broad community of stakeholders representing input from service providers, lawyers, probation officers, DHHS caseworkers, judges, young people in our juvenile system, and others. Focus groups were held across the state to gather widespread and diverse opinions on the question of a possible program of extended supports for young people aging out of the juvenile justice probation system. More than 80 youth, at various levels of involvement in the system, and more than 40 adults from across the state participated in focus groups. A task force, drawn from the Bridge to Independence and the Office of Juvenile Services subcommittees of the Nebraska Children's Commission, synthesized the focus group input and, with facilitation and fiscal analysis, as mentioned by the national Mainspring Consulting group, drafted the final recommendations that were then approved by the Children's Commission and presented to the Legislature in December of 2015, in that report. You received a huge stack of paper from me, and I apologize. But one of the things you have in there is the portion of the report and recommendations where this bill is coming out of, as well as summaries and synthesis of the focus group input, demographic information about participants, participant responses, what they do, what role they play, and what they thought about these questions. As one of the two cochairs of this subcommittee, or task force, I would be happy to answer any questions about the process and the recommendations and how we reached that. Jeanne Brandner, with juvenile probation, will be testifying after me. She was the other cochair and can answer more direct questions about numbers of youth who would be affected. So what we learned through this lengthy process is that there is broad consensus in the stakeholder community supporting a voluntary program of extended supports for young people who are aging out of the juvenile justice system, and particularly those who have spent significant time in out-of-home placement. And they may be leaving that placement at the age of 19, because jurisdiction cuts off automatically. But they might not have a supportive family or home to return to, to help them bridge that transition into adulthood. We heard from probation officers who had to drop off young people at homeless shelters on their 19th birthdays, because there was nowhere else to take them. We were shown photos of babies by young men in the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center at Kearney, who were desperately hoping to be good fathers upon release but expressed how little they knew about how to support themselves, much less a family. Meanwhile, we heard stories of hope and possibility about the successes of the Bridge to Independence program and expressions of disappointment that this special program is available for some youth who've been touched by our system, but not for others, and when in all ways that matter many of these youth look exactly the same. LB866 represents a combination of the commission's two primary recommendations aimed at providing extended voluntary support for those youth who need the most help transitioning out of the juvenile justice system and into successful adulthood. Youth who are aging out in out-of-home placement, and Senator Bolz went through the list that was examined by the task force and by Mainspring Consulting, and who have been in that placement for three months or more, are the ones who are most likely to face challenges as they

shift from the structure and the supervision of a formal court process and placement and institutionalization to the sudden independence of legal adulthood. By providing a voluntary program with intensive case management and critical needs funds to be drawn on, those young adults who lack parental support and face homelessness will have an identified professional they can turn to for assistance and a means of emergency support to keep them off the street and on track to a brighter future. LB866 would benefit our communities as a whole, by offering stability, guidance, and a transition plan to young people who might otherwise flounder. I would like to take a little time to raise two points for possible amendment for the committee to consider, which are based on feedback of the stakeholders and the formal recommendations of the commission, as well as get to some of the questions, I think, that you were asking Senator Bolz at the outset. So the first would be a recommendation to permit case closure, not just on the 19th birthday, but between the 18th and the 19th birthday. So stakeholders across the board, as we went through this process and spoke to people, were very concerned, didn't want to see juvenile justice cases or placement orders artificially lengthened for the purpose of accessing a later voluntary program. Setting eligibility at 19 does run the risk that some people, who may no longer need that formal court supervision but would benefit from voluntary extended services, judges may decide to artificially keep them on probation formally through the nineteenth birthday in order to get access to that. So an amendment opening up the program to young people who are in placement for the allotted amount of time, but whose case closes between 18 and 19, would ameliorate that concern. And just to further confuse Senator Kolterman, who's not here, I've attached to my testimony a further fiscal analysis for you, which you will see differs substantially...I think that word doesn't even express it...from the Mainspring analysis that was done in the fall, but also, of course, the legislative fiscal note that you have today. And that's based on the second, in part, on the second recommendation. My time is up, so you have it written in front you. I would welcome any questions about anything I've said or not yet said. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: For the...oh, sorry. Ms. Summers, for the record, can you describe the second item? [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: Yes. So the second item is to clarify language in the bill to make this a contract-for-service model rather than an in-house program in the department. And this is something that was tossed around in conversations with Senator Bolz, and we ran up against timelines in this short session and Bill Drafters. I think contract, making a contract-for-service model is what the Mainspring assumptions and the commission recommendations were based on, given that we have excellent programs in the state doing exactly this work, like PALS that was referenced. There are some other organizations. I think Jacobs' Place, through Omaha, for boys in Omaha, does work like this. Making it a contract-for-service model is how that dollar amount of \$1,449 per year was reached. That's based on the actual cost of a PALS worker per child for a year. And so I think it would be more cost-efficient, because it's drawing on resources

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we already have in our state. And then also, as the senator said, I think there is hope still among stakeholders and throughout this process of taking that next step in the future to open Bridge to a subpopulation of this group that really needs the even greater breadth of services. And I guess my fear...I speak only for myself and Voices on this point...is that creating a second in-house program in the department different from Bridge might rule that out, as opposed to a contract-for-service model with organizations that are doing this good work but currently they don't have the resources to extend it to juvenile justice kiddos. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Questions. Ms. Summers, do you have any comments, in terms of the number of people, the question I asked Senator Bolz? [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: Yes, I do, Senator Campbell. So I've been part of some of these conversations. What I can tell you is, the actual number from probation, based on the language of the bill as it is currently written, who would've been eligible had the program been in effect in 2015 was 34. So we know, if we take grandfathered-in young people, we know we've got 34 eligible for 2015. And my belief is that it's a similar number from 2014. So that puts us at about 70 who would be eligible. And then I think there's a difference of opinion, as Senator Bolz mentioned, about the question of an uptake rate. So what percentage of eligible young people can we reasonably expect to actually opt into a voluntary program and take advantage of these services? And that's where there is room for disagreement. I think the department's fiscal note looked at 90 percent, because that's what is the current Bridge to Independence uptake rate. But I think there are differences between young people coming out of a juvenile justice probation docket and their interest in continuing to be involved with a state program, even if it's voluntary. And then also, if you look at national averages of uptake rates for extended services, on average, young people coming out of juvenile justice cases who are eligible for extended services, only 35 percent of 19-year-olds and 22 percent of 20-year-olds actually opt in. So that's what the numbers that I have offered you are based on. And I think the Legislative Fiscal Office came down somewhere in between. I don't have an explanation for the difference between that 34 in one year, so 70 in two years, compared with the estimate of 150; I don't know how we got there. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: If I can remember from the Bridges program, part of the thing that the department brought forward is that in any program that they have, not just Bridges but any program, they have to be ready to serve everybody who may step forward. And so, in order to give the Legislature a fair idea, if they served all those people, that's the fiscal note. The Legislative Fiscal Office tries to take a more, "what do we really think is going to come," the participation rate. I was also asking, I guess, and I should have been clearer, in terms of the number of staff. Do you think that a contracted, contract-for-service model would need less staff people? And you don't have to answer now. You probably want to look at the fiscal note and take the whole thing. But I am interested to see if you think that might be less. [LB866]

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JULIET SUMMERS: You know, Senator Campbell, I don't think I have an answer for you this second. But I will say that in the work that was done building the commission's recommendations, Mainspring did look at average caseloads for those PALS workers and then based their assumptions off of, you know, what the additions would be to those caseloads, what additional staff would need to be hired. So I don't have it at this second. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Is that in here, in your attachment in that? [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: That should be in...it should be in either the attachment that looks like this, which has the full report. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay, that's all right. [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: Or there's an attachment that says Mainspring methodology and fiscal analysis on it. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: And option 2, at the top, it may appear in there. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay, that's fine, as long as Senator Bolz and her staff have access to all that, that they're going to want to look at the numbers, because it just might make a difference in how the fiscal note comes out. Anything else? Thank you for your testimony. [LB866]

JULIET SUMMERS: Thank you. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Good afternoon, Chairperson Senator Campbell and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Jeanne K. Brandner, J-e-a-n-n-e K. B-r-a-n-d-n-e-r, and I work for the Nebraska Supreme Court Administrative Office of Probation. I am the deputy administrator overseeing the juvenile services division, and I am testifying today in support of LB866. A great big thank-you to Senator Bolz and her staff for the proposed legislation and her support for Nebraska's youth. There are at least 30 years of research that focus on the increased risk of delinquency associated with child maltreatment. Many juvenile justice youth here in Nebraska begin their system involvement with the child welfare system with abuse, neglect, or permanency issues. Regardless of which system a youth ends up in, it is

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us, as adults, that need to ensure children, their families, and the communities in which they reside are set up for success. This legislation is an example of such support. The case example that Senator Bolz used in opening her testimony, I had the opportunity to work in depth with this young lady as she transitioned out of our Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Center without that permanent family and support. And she, too, had a history in the Health and Human Service system. As the task force came together to make extended services and support recommendations for juvenile justice youth, I was pleased to see the support and collaborations of professionals in the field coming together to do what is best for youth. During this work, I said, over and over again, we are really only talking about a select few number of youth across the state. The numbers you've heard talked about today are a wide range. However, as the bill looked at youth that have been aged out on their 19th birthday that have been in placement for 90 of the last 180 days, it really was that handful of 30 youth that we were talking about. These youth often fall within that gap of 18 to 19, as Juliet mentioned, and oftentimes lack the familial support and meaningful relationships that greatly assist them to transition to adulthood. It was my hope, as mentioned by Senator Crawford, that these youth would have access to the full Bridge to Independence program. However, as Senator Bolz mentioned, this does fill a gap and provides us a foundation where we can start. Those of you who were here might recall that the original Bridge to Independence legislation had included status youth, but they were ultimately removed due to fiscal constraints. In Nebraska, we must continue to improve outcomes for youth who transition from out-of-home placements and return to their communities. As we have heard in testimony on other juvenile-related bills this year, these youth aren't miniature adults. And while the physical differences are obvious, the psychological ones are not, particularly as youth appear more sophisticated than in previous generations. However, regardless of which system a youth is involved in, it is our job to respond to them in developmentally appropriate ways, hold them accountable, and provide resources for them to overcome these barriers. When a youth exits the juvenile justice system, even when that exit is successful, it does not mean that all of their barriers to successfully transition have been removed. This bill would certainly support some of those barriers for a few youth that we are talking about. Thank you for your support and consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions that you might have. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions? Senator Crawford. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairwoman Campbell. And thank you for your testimony. So when the youth that we are talking about for this program, and they are aging out, exiting, does that mean that there's no longer a role for probation and no longer a role for any judges? Are they leaving the system or is there still some connection to the system as they would be going through this? [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: That is correct, Senator Crawford. There is no longer a role for probation in this. And if passed, they would have the opportunity to voluntarily participate in this

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extended support for them, but there would no involvement with the courts or with a probation officer. [LB866]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Other questions, Senators? Ms. Brandner, I have a couple questions, and you touched on one of it, and that is that a number of these youth, down into the 30 numbers, do not have any outside family support. And I just want to make sure. Do you think that should be a criteria? [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: That's a very interesting question, Senator, and it's definitely something that we grappled with and something that, with our original recommendation, that's the language we moved forward. However, as we began to look at that further and further, and I don't have a law background, but clearly there is not a legal obligation for any parent, after their child reaches 19, to provide further for them. And so when we attempted to input some of that safe-and-stable family language in there, we kept coming up against this, that parents really don't have an obligation. Now those of us that are parents and grandparents and have nieces and nephews and things like that know that that is essentially an imaginary line. But there are some families that take that to heart. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And I asked that question because I was struggling with that when I talked to Liz Hruska this morning. And I keep trying to come up with that, because aging out of the foster system, we have a fairly good idea. But someone could have come into the probation system and, not that they don't need a lot of help, but... [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...they could come in later. And we don't have quite the same idea about them. So I appreciate your struggle, because I have had the same one. I just don't want the taxpayer to say, look at...you're providing this program, and they really do have people who could help them. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Yes. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I want to help those who just really don't have any help, you know. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Yes. [LB866]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: And so I struggled with that. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: That's a great clarification. And that's, in part, why we looked at the last 90 of the preceding 180 days, because it is probation's goal, for those youth that do have stability and families, to get them back to their communities prior to them aging out, have some of that reentry work, have some planning to go on. So we thought that looking at that criteria for out-of-home placement meant that the reason that the majority of those youth were staying was that they lacked somewhere to go. And so, while there may be a couple in there, Senator, that, as you mentioned, maybe were in detention or maybe were in there to finish out their treatment and it truly took until their 19th birthday, but the majority of kids that have that family and community to return to, that is our goal, to do that prior to them reaching age 19. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And that's a great explanation; thank you. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: You're welcome. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: What do you think is the significant difference between Bridges and this program that you're not...that these young people would be getting versus what we offer in Bridges? I'm going back to Senator Crawford's question. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Yeah. That's a great question. And essentially, it comes down to, I believe, and because I'm not as familiar with that program, is the monthly stipend for the Bridge to Independence youth, and Cassy or somebody behind me maybe can correct this, but it's around \$700 and some a month, per child. And this program that we're looking at for juvenile justice youth doesn't have a monthly stipend to provide some stability in housing, but it does have that critical-need fund, one time, of \$1,000 per year. So I would say that is the critical piece. And then there's also the Medicaid piece. Bridge to Independence youth are eligible for Medicaid services, Medicaid eligibility up until 21, I believe, and so that would be an added cost, as well. And so that's why, when talking about some of the uptake numbers...will kids want to participate in this? Yes, some kids. But is it as enticing as what the full-fledged Bridge to Independence program is? Maybe, maybe not, and so that's that uptake rate, why there's some questions there. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Because actually, at that point, if they're aging out at their 19th, boy, unless they're pregnant, they wouldn't meet a category of Medicaid. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: That is correct, Senator. [LB866]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: I do see some smiles on faces back there who think I'm going to go...but, that is, they would be left out of and gaining healthcare. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Yes. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. I think that's my question. Does anybody have anything else? Thank you, Ms. Brandner, and I appreciate any other comments that you might have, as you think about the questions. [LB866]

JEANNE BRANDNER: Thank you. Thanks. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB866]

BRITTANYA ALLEN: (Exhibit 6) Good afternoon. Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to speak on this LB866. My name is Brittanya Allen, B-r-i-t-t-a-n-y-a A-l-l-e-n. I speak to you as a former state ward and a juvenile justice youth. I am here today to support LB866 and hope to provide you proof that the bill would be helpful. I had help, and the bill would grant youth with no one and nothing similar support. I have been in child welfare and juvenile justice system off and on my whole, entire life. Today, I stand in front of you as a college student and follow my dreams. I have been in several placements and, around 17 years old, I received my first ticket and was placed on a diversion program. I would like to share three reasons why I support passage of LB866, the first reason being I had the opportunity, as a youth, to access emergency funds. The second reason is because life isn't easy. And lastly, it took a large number of people to help me, very large. The first reason I support this bill is because I had the opportunity, as a youth, to access the emergency funds through a lot of people. Shortly after one of my parents was granted custody, I was kicked out of their home. I turned to the other parent for help, and they took me in. But they struggled with getting my needs made. It was through my diversion class that I had met and started going to Project Everlast. I had told the leader of the Project Everlast of my struggles. And through them, I got what they called a needs-based fund. I got some of the things I needed, like clothes and hygiene. And this year I even got to pay off my car. Had it not been...had I not been able to access this, I would have had to been stuck in between a rock and a hard place, choosing between my car and paying for college. I was able to use these resources, because I had often...because I had been involved in child welfare system also. Not all youth have the opportunity. Not only did this help me slowly get back on my feet, they continue to encourage me to reach for my goals. So they encouraged me to go to college. I had help with this, and this bill, LB866, would give access to help for other struggling youth. The second reason why this bill should be granted passage is because, for many youth, life isn't easy. I speak for myself and many other youth when I say life is hard to manage. For me, I struggle managing family dynamics, school, and work. Having services that included a

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support person, like a case manager that would help provide me through the Transition to Adult Living Success Program, helped me gain control of things. It made a huge difference for me to know that I didn't have to struggle to make it where I needed. I had people, like my regional support worker, that helped set me up with other people and other connections that work for Mid-Plains Nebraska. Those people viewed my welfare case and helped me set my life in motion. College applications, checking my credit, setting up a filing system for my banking, and managing money were also in the areas that they helped me with. I had help with this. I had help, and this bill would give access to help for other struggling youth. My last point is that it took many people and many services to get me where I am today. I have successfully chased my dreams. I continue to follow the path of success. I was able to chase my life goals and still do, because I have someone to turn to with questions. And I still ask for help. I look to my family and support groups for guidance, and even if their advice didn't work, they wouldn't give up on me. I had help; LB866 would give access to help for other struggling youth. As we have seen, LB866 invests in young people by giving them case manager and access to an emergency fund, which could help break the cycle of system involvement in families. As a youth that has been there, done that, I ask you to remember my story and those of youth similar to me when voting. Thank you again for the opportunity to share my opinion. It means a great deal, and I would be happy to answer any questions. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Ms. Allen, for your testimony. Questions from the senators? You have pretty thorough testimony here. So, thank you very much for coming today. Our next proponent. [LB866]

SARAH HELVEY: Good afternoon. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. [LB866]

SARAH HELVEY: (Exhibit 7) My name is Sarah Helvey; that's S-a-r-a-h, last name H-e-l-v-e-y, and I'm a staff attorney and director of the child welfare program at Nebraska Appleseed. And as most committee members are aware, Appleseed was a strong supporter and very involved in the creation and implementation of the Bridge to Independence program. Nebraska is one of I think it's about 22 states that has taken the option, under federal law, to create a program like Bridge to Independence, based on research showing that these types of programs can improve otherwise poor outcomes experienced by this population where, for example, more than 50 percent experience homelessness and less than 2 percent finish college. I was glad that Jeanne Brandner mentioned some of the history of the original bill to create the B2I program, LB216, introduced by Senator Amanda McGill in 2014, and that that originally did include this population and then was removed due to budgetary constraints. I also wanted to note that when that amendment taking out the juvenile justice population was added there...was removed, there was also an

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addition to task the B2I advisory committee with developing a specific recommendation to, quote: expand or improve outcomes for similar groups of at-risk youth in the future. And that's what this bill came out of and, as others have said, we think represents a first step in providing supports and improving outcomes for this population. So it's a bit of unfinished business. I also want to note, as other have stated, that these are very similarly situated populations. Often it may be just the way that their cases were filed or proceeded that makes young people ineligible for the existing program. My written testimony provides a little bit more information and cites some research, explaining the ways that trauma and lack of support for both groups can lead...can make that transition to adulthood even more difficult and can lead to poor outcomes for both populations that can just be devastating to reach the age of majority and have those services end abruptly. But, on the other hand, we know that connecting young people to these services can make a difference. And we've seen some really positive early outcomes from the Bridge to Independence program. And I have to say, we advocate a lot for public benefits programs and those basic supports, but we've really seen an impact that the Bridge to Independence program and the independent living services have, that the case management, the people, those supportive adults to help make those transition, that that piece can really make a difference. And that's a key part of LB866. So we support that. We also support that the LB866 requires a collection of data and an evaluation of the program's efficiency in achieving those goals. We think that will be important for the Legislature to consider taking additional steps to improve outcomes for this population in the future. And so we want to thank Senator Bolz and the committee for your commitment to older youth in both our child welfare and our juvenile justice systems, and respectfully request that you vote to advance LB866 out of committee. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions for Ms. Helvey? Ms. Helvey, were you sitting out there, wanting to answer any question I ask? [LB866]

SARAH HELVEY: Yeah, I mean, I can give you a little bit of numbers on the Bridge to Independence program. I think, from the annual report the department provided for 2015, there were about 146 youth currently in that program. That's a point in time; that's not a collective...how many young people have always been in the program. But it was, for a while, pretty consistent around 100. And then, I think, after the legislation last year allowed guardianship to youth and some other changes, it went and moved up to 146...was the point in time of that annual report. I believe there are about 11 independence coordinators for the Bridge to Independence program but that...and then supervisors as well. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Why do I always know that you're going to know the numbers? Thank you, Ms. Helvey; that's very helpful. We'll be sure to share that information with Senator Kolterman. [LB866]

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SARAH HELVEY: Okay. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Anything else, Senators? Thank you, Ms. Helvey, very much. [LB866]

SARAH HELVEY: Thank you. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. [LB866]

CASSY BLAKELY: Good afternoon, Senators. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. [LB866]

CASSY BLAKELY: (Exhibits 8-11) My name is Cassy Blakely, C-a-s-s-y B-l-a-k-e-l-y, and I come before you on behalf of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, where I am their youth policy person. We ask you to support LB866, as we believe it's an opportunity to provide a positive pathway to a number of Nebraska's most unconnected young people and, thus, reduce the burden on the adult system and improve the lives of these young people. And I'll highlight a few things, and I'll try not to repeat too much of what the other folks have said and do more to answer any last questions that might be sitting on you. You also have received, via e-mail, a fact sheet about the cost savings that Senator Bolz referenced in her introduction, via e-mail yesterday afternoon, about 4:00. And I can resend that to you all, as well, if need be. You'll also notice, attached, a number of letters of support from community partners and young people supporting the bill, as well as an explanation of what I'll talk about here next, which is first that Nebraska Children, as you may know, utilizes Collective Impact, through community collaborations, to enhance outcomes for young people, children, and families. The work that does that around older youth is called the Connected Youth Initiative and exists to really support and connect community resources for young people 14 to 24, who are unconnected from traditional supports. We typically think about that within the Connected Youth Initiative as young people who have had contact with the child welfare, juvenile justice, and/or are homeless and runaway. And we see those populations of young adults that are really disconnected from those traditional supports. We have built this model utilizing Project Everlast efforts in Omaha, as well as that of the Panhandle Partnership, which looked at addressing homeless or runaway youth and, over the last three years, have looked to expand that in future communities. And through some federal dollars, we'll be looking at enhancing that into new communities over the next five years. Intensive case management and an emergency fund like that outlined in this bill are key components of that existing structure. And the goals of LB866 and the Connected Youth Initiative are similar, and that's ensuring that young people have access and ability to connect to the existing community resources in a way that allows them to stay in their communities. LB866

provides an avenue for juvenile justice young people to connect into that network, where, as Senator mentioned in her introduction, is a gap. So there's opportunity for young people to connect through child welfare. And we're working on developing networks for the homeless and runaway youth. But there is no case management navigation for young people who are juvenile justice involved or formerly juvenile justice involved. As four other testifiers have mentioned, there's a direct correlation, and that's supported here by a piece of research from Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform that really parallels the juvenile justice population and the child welfare population, showing that the trauma, especially the trauma of out-of-home placement, amplifies their disconnection from family relationships and prosocial supports. This bill's integration of a positive person to guide them helps to reconnect that, so that they can overcome the statistics that place them at a disproportionately high rate to commit crimes as adults and enter our adult system. A survey done of that transition system that I mentioned, as well as that's outlined in the handout in your packet, found that, of the young people we surveyed, 19 to 21, who had involvement in juvenile justice system, only 32 percent of them were currently enrolled in education, and 62 percent of them were employed, compared to 56 and 67 percent of their child welfare folks, respectively. And the interesting thing to note about those statistics are those are young people that are connected into a support system. And so you can imagine, for the young people that are disconnected, that haven't connected at all, that those numbers are disproportionately smaller. The last thing I want to offer is that we also endorse the move to opening that case closure at 18, between 18 and 19. We would hate to see young people artificially maintain the microscope of the juvenile justice system in their lives unnecessarily. No youth wants to enter college or apply for a job or try to get an apartment with a probation officer or having to explain that to any of the folks involved in the process. It could further inhibit their transition. And lastly, I'll just close with a short story about a young lady I spoke to last week about this bill, who was in the child welfare system from age 2, lost both of her parents...they're deceased...left YRTC just before our change where all youth left on probation. She left on parole. Her case closed just too soon for Bridge to Independence. And this program would be an opportunity for her to not fall through one more gap, as she has throughout her case, and continues to struggle to be successful. So with that, I will yield to any questions, but I really hope you'll consider advancing LB866 out of committee so that we can ensure that these young people have an investment similar to the one we've given their counterparts in the child welfare system. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions, Senators, or comments? We should probably note for the record that attached to your testimony there's a letter of support from the Nebraska Children's Home and from a member of Project Everlast and the Panhandle Transitional Youth System. [LB866]

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CASSY BLAKELY: Yes, which is one of those community collaborations I reference in my testimony. And then Nebraska Children's Home Society is a partner, as well, those collaborations in the Omaha area. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. [LB866]

CASSY BLAKELY: Um-hum. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. [LB866]

CASSY BLAKELY: Thank you. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Anyone else? Okay. Those who wish to oppose the bill? Anyone in a neutral position? Okay. Senator Bolz, we are come full circle. While you're coming up, do we have letters for the record, Elice? [LB866]

ELICE HUBBERT: (Exhibits 12-14) We have a letter of support from the Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association, a letter of support from the National Association of Social Workers, the Nebraska Chapter, and we have a technical letter from the Department of Health and Human Services. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Senator Bolz, do you have the technical letter? [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: I don't have it in my hands, but I'm sure... [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: No, I mean...but you have a copy. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: I'm sure I'll find a way to get a copy. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay, okay. Go right ahead. [LB866]

SENATOR BOLZ: I'll be brief. I think the only thing I want to communicate to this committee, as you make your discernments about this piece of legislation, is that I think it hits a lot of the criteria that are important to me as I think about policy. It has the support of the stakeholder community and the people working in the field. And that's been done in a very diligent way. It has a research and evidence-based grounding and support. There's a model program and precedent for an approach like this. And I think it builds towards a future vision, not only of how

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we might be able to better support youth, but also about how we could bend the curve, in terms of recidivism and costs in our criminal justice system. So for me, this legislation hits a lot of the right notes. I appreciate your questions and thoughtfulness about the fiscal note and how this package comes together. I think one of the great things that I can say, and I thank everyone in the room and the folks at the Department of Health and Human Services who I guess, or I would bet, are watching via streaming, that there are some really good thinkers and some good minds trying their best to figure out what a fiscal impact for this bill, with a couple of different moving parts, looks like. And I'm committed to making sure that we put together the right matrix of information, so that we do that correctly, so that we can support those policy goals that, I think, have been illustrated today. So I'll leave it there. Thank you for your kind consideration. [LB866]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions, Senators, or comments for Senator Bolz? Thank you very much. We will take a five-minute break for people to leave and (recorder malfunction). [LB866]

BREAK

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Since many of you have come and were not here at the beginning, I'm going to remind you to turn off cell phones, please. Make sure that nothing makes noise. And when you come forward, you can give Elice the orange sheet if you're testifying today. How many testifiers do we have? Okay, I'm going to caution you to not be repetitious then, because there's a lot of people who want to talk. And we use the light system here. So you'll have five minutes total, four on green, one on yellow, and when it gets to red, I'll be trying to get your attention, okay? All right. Senator, let's start out with your bill to create the Health and Climate Resiliency...I got that out...Task Force. Hi, Senator Haar, welcome. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: (Exhibits 1-5) Hello, Chairwoman Campbell. I brought a Diet Coke along, because my throat is a little sore from shoveling snow for an hour this morning. And I'll talk about that later, in terms of climate change. First of all, this bill is not a debate on climate change. Quoting from the President in his State of the Union Address, "Look, if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You will be pretty lonely, because you'll be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world who agree it's a problem and intend to solve it." And I'd add, you'll be debating the majority of Nebraskans. And you're going to be hearing about this later from Randy Cantrell from the extension division. And then I have one other quote, and it's from the student seminar on climate change that I held last Thursday. And I did pass out that article from the Journal Star. It's not really about me; it's about the students who participated in that seminar. And this is from Reuben Erickson, a student in the Lincoln Public Schools science focus program where, by the way, they spend most of their day at

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the Lincoln zoo. And he said in that article, climate change is "really a pressing issue that's going to affect us," meaning the 15- to 25-year-olds at the seminar, "a lot more than Senator Haar and those making decisions. We need to take up the mantle." And, yes, it's going to affect those young people much more than it's going to affect me. I'm 73 years old, shortly, in March. So what I'm going to do is give you a brief history of the bill before us, just two minutes on climate change, a primer, and then we're going to go into the round tables. And I'll tell you what that's about. And we'll culminate with an outline of LB802. So I look forward to hearing the testimony today, especially from the young people, and we have some here, who will be alive in mid- and late twenty-first century, who will see not only the negative effects of climate change, but also help create the opportunities for the future. So a little history on this bill...two years ago I had LB583, which provided duties for the Climate Assessment and Response Committee, the CARC Committee, created in 1991, mainly to say, what's the weather going to be like next year for agriculture? And it required a long-term strategic report to the Governor and Legislature on how Nebraska should prepare for climate change. And then when the request for information went out, because the word "cyclical" had been inserted into the bill as a compromise, it said potential contractors and vendors should consider cyclical climate change to mean a change in the state of climate due to natural internal processes and only natural external forces, such as volcanoes and solar variations; in other words, don't include anything about humans. And the reaction in the media was really pretty neat, from my standpoint. Omaha World-Herald immediately had an editorial saying: State climate study may go begging for scientists. Lincoln Journal Star editorial said, "Do climate study the right way." And then finally, on November 6, the Lincoln Journal Star announced that UNL will conduct its own climate change study. And I'm really very proud of our university, because there was some political risk in producing this climate study. And they did it anyway. So they produced this report in September of last year. And if anyone didn't get this and you'd like to have a copy, I have just a few. And I'm going to quote, real quickly, it's from the beginning of the study. It says this is "the efforts of the faculty and staff of UNL to produce this report using the full body of knowledge available from the scientific literature." It's our hope "the report will be highly useful in planning how to successfully address the needs of the state of Nebraska and its people in the decades ahead in the face of increasing climate variability and change." And this was the forward by Dr. Ronnie Green, who is vice president of agriculture and natural resources. So then, if you take out the slides, these slides I passed out that are stapled together, because where we're going with this doesn't make sense without just a tiny bit of climate science. These ten words, "Five Truths About Climate Change (in 10 words)," came from a presentation at the Heuermann Lecture series: "It's real." "It's us." "It's bad." "Scientists agree." And, "There's hope." And then, "Addressing climate change is a moral issue now and for future generations! But, we must act NOW." The next one is just real simple. Weather is different than climate. Weather is what happens today or yesterday and created those big drifts in my driveway. Climate is the variation of weather over a long period of years. Climate is what you expect, weather is what you get, from Mark Twain. And then the third page from this report is the projected changes in Nebraska's climate. The average temperature, if we

do something about it, the low-emissions scenario will be 4 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit by the last quarter of this century. Climate change is already...there's all the extra CO₂ in the atmosphere. We will see 4 to 5; these young people will see 4 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit. If we don't do anything, by the last quarter of this century, Nebraska's temperature, average temperature, could be 8 to 9 degrees above where it is now. Under both scenarios, the number of high-temperature stress days is expected to increase substantially, little change in annual precipitation but an increase in the intensity of severe weather events. Soil moisture is projected to decrease by 5 to 10 percent by the end of the century, because of increased temperature and reduced snowpack in the Rocky Mountains...that's where we get our water. And then the chart at the bottom, again, just shows these projected temperature changes. They're all in this book. The next page is from the CDC, and I first saw this...it was presented at one of the round tables we're going to talk about by Dr. Ali Khan, who is dean of the College of Public Health at UNMC, was assistant surgeon general of the United States at one point, and is very concerned about climate change. And as you notice...I'll not go through this whole thing with you, but it's really interesting right now we're talking about the spread of mosquitoes and the Zika virus. And the warmer your climate, the more likely you are to have these mosquitoes. All these are potential threats to human health from climate change: air pollution, change in vector, ecology, increasing allergens, water, food supply, extreme heat, severe weather. The next page shows why we chose to focus this bill on human health and quality of life. And I like the quote at the bottom and it's, "Health depends on everything all the time." The next page are the sectors of Nebraska's economy that were identified as being affected by climate change in this study. It's one of the pages in this study. And it's just about everything in our environment and the things we care about and, finally, for all future generations and for the planet. So it started out with this study and then...this study ends, by the way, with another quote, "Action now is preferable and more cost effective than reaction later." Then, as a result of this study, the university did a follow-through and produced this report, which you got, and they held what they called round-table discussions, where they brought stakeholders together from each of these eight areas to discuss climate change. And we have a couple of those stakeholders, the leaders of those stakeholder groups, here today that will talk briefly and then more in detail about the health impacts in this stakeholder summary. So this is a great follow-up to the study that UNL did, because it talks about specific things that are going to be impacted by climate change in Nebraska and potential solutions and things we need to be planning for by stakeholders in each of those groups. And then, finally, our focus of LB802 is on health and climate resiliency. And again, health depends on everything all the time. You'll hear briefly from some of the leaders of the round tables, winding up with health, which is the focus of LB802. And in every section of the stakeholder reports are these words: "adaptation," which means climate change is happening, we're going to have to learn to adapt; "mitigation" means how can we prevent some of these negative impacts; "education"; and then "policy steps" brings it right to the door of the Legislature. And I gave you a copy, as well, of the outline of this bill. And basically it forms a task force of state senators to spend a summer...and, by the way, my staff will do the work on this. Since I'm being termed out, this is their summer assignment, to

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work on this. And so you may have noticed that there is a fiscal note that says if we have somebody else do it, it's \$50,000 to \$100,000. If we do it in my office, it's going to be done by the staff. It will be done by the staff. I'm more than happy to work with the committee for little changes here and there, if we need them, or whatever. I would like to invite you to the lunch tomorrow, you and your staffs, to the lunch: pizza and climate change, tomorrow in 1126. And I will be presenting...it's actually, Sara, what you saw, and Reverend Kim Morrow, who's going to testify, who's been working with UNL on climate change. And then we're going to have a real, live climate scientist. Climatologist Dr. Clint Rowe, who's one of the people who helped write this initial report, will be there to answer questions. So in conclusion, I would like to give a quote from Claire Hinrichs, a sophomore at Lincoln High School's international baccalaureate program. She's going to testify later today. But she's quoted in the article, saying, "We wanted to get something real done," meaning coming to this summit, "not just talking about how much climate change totally sucks, but what's the most pressing issue, what needs to be done." And after spending last Thursday...we had 65 young people, ages 15 to 25...at the youth climate summit, it gives me hope for the future, because young people get it. They understand. So, committee members, Claire expects us to act. A large majority of Nebraskans expects us to act. And future generations expect us to act. So thank you very much for your attention. And if you have questions, I'd almost soon you wait to the end and listen to the testifiers. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Sure, sure. We can do that. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you so much. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Thank you, Senator Haar. Our first proponent. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: I'll get my stuff out of the way. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And we'll ask you to state your name and spell it for us. [LB802]

GLYNNIS COLLINS: My name is Glynnis Collins, G-l-y-n-n-i-s; last name is Collins. Good after... [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I do need...I'm sorry. For the transcribers that listen, they need to have you spell the last one even if it says. [LB802]

GLYNNIS COLLINS: Oh, sorry, Collins: C-o-l-l-i-n-s. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. [LB802]

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GLYNNIS COLLINS: You're welcome. Good afternoon, Chairperson Campbell and committee members. I represent Audubon Nebraska, whose members, staff, and volunteers work together across our state to make sure that birds, wildlife, and habitats are healthy for them and healthy for us. And Audubon cochaired one of the roundtables you have heard about. Audubon Nebraska strongly supports LB802, that will create the Health and Climate Resiliency Task Force. As you know, Nebraska is blessed with abundant resources, human and natural. In order to thrive in the face of changing climate, which is the biggest challenge of our generation and the generation that follows, we must be proactive in safeguarding those resources for future generations. We thank Senator Haar for his leadership in looking to Nebraska's future. We believe the proposed task force is a smart and sensible next step towards mitigating and adapting to climate change. Drawing on expertise from agriculture, business, public health, and natural resources sectors to develop a strategic plan, the task force will assure the future health and well-being of Nebraska's people and economy. Thank you very much for your consideration. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Any questions, Senators? Okay, thank you very much. [LB802]

GLYNNIS COLLINS: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB802]

KIM MORROW: Good afternoon. My name is Kim Morrow, K-i-m M-o-r-r-o-w. I am a minister and the executive director of Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light, a nonsectarian, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to facilitate the faith community's response to climate change. I also work as a climate change resource specialist at the University of Nebraska, but I do not speak in any official capacity on behalf of the university. Today I'd like to speak to you about the moral case for supporting this important bill. In the seventh chapter of the book of Genesis, the relationship between the natural world and the living beings who inhabit it is thrown into great upheaval. A flood, the likes of which no one had ever seen before, washes over the earth. Everything in sight perishes. Only Noah, his family, and a select group of species is able to survive, thanks only to God's grace. When the waters finally recede, and this environmental catastrophe is reckoned with head-on, God says these words to Noah: I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood. And never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. These words are a reminder to us that, from the beginning, God established a covenant with all living creatures that included the protection of the natural world, upon which all life depends. Today that sacred covenant is at risk of being broken, because of the harm we have knowingly and unknowingly

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inflicted on the environment. Climate change has become the most pressing moral issue of our time. Its effects will bring suffering to multitudes of people. Despite this, climate change is often discussed as if it is a political issue, as if it is something one can have an opinion on, as if it is something one can choose to take action on or not. But I am here today because climate change is a human issue. The environment around which we have built our lives is changing. And if we do not face it wisely and proactively, people will suffer. Last September, we gathered a group of faith leaders for one of the round-table discussions on the implications of climate change for the faith community. You can read about that day in the report you were given. The faith leaders that we assembled agreed that climate change is an urgent moral issue, that Nebraska churches will be negatively impacted by it, and that the time is now for cultivating faithful responses to it. They emphasized that we are partners with God in creation, and that we have a moral obligation to protect the natural world and our brothers and sisters who will suffer. As Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical last year, "We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it." After working on climate change in Nebraska for almost six years, the issue I have frequently encountered in those in positions of leadership is fear, not fear of climate change impacts, but fear of conflict, fear of alienating supporters and funders, fear even of losing one's job. To be covered by this kind of nebulous fear in the face of this kind of threat is unacceptable. Real leadership demonstrates a sense of shared responsibility for others and for the world. The Bible implores us, over and over again, to fear not, but to trust in the truth of God's promises and to stand up for love and justice. Today I ask you to show the moral leadership that your elected positions require in this most crucial of times. The lives of thousands of Nebraskans will be affected by climate change. With the Health and Climate Resiliency Task Force, we will be able to gather the key stakeholders from our state to wisely assess our climate risks and to make recommendations to protect our people. I ask you to vote yes on LB802. Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Reverend Morrow. Questions or comments? Thank you for your testimony. [LB802]

KIM MORROW: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. [LB802]

DAVID CORBIN: (Exhibit 6) Hello. I'm Dr. David Corbin, D-a-v-i-d C-o-r-b-i-n. I'm appearing today, representing the Public Health Association of Nebraska. I'm an emeritus professor of health education and public health from UNO. And the Public Health Association of Nebraska is affiliated...a state affiliate with the American Public Health Association. I serve as the Nebraska affiliate representative to the governing council of the American Public Health Association. I am currently an adjunct professor at Creighton University, teaching a course called "Energy Policy."

I want to, since you all have the testimony that I have, I'm not going to read it all to you. But I do want to highlight some things that are on it. And I've given the references at the end. But there have been some major reports and studies that have come out from the middle of last year to now, relating specifically to public health and climate change. The one that the American Public Health Association...and by the way, all of these reports recommend that policies be made on the local and national level and that planning should be a part of it, which is what this bill would allow for. So American Public Health Association passed a policy and they, as you can see, called upon national, state, and local agencies to develop climate change adaptations, things that you've heard about already. The American Academy of Pediatrics, who takes care of the children in our country, came out with a report entitled, "Global Climate Change and Children's Health." And they made their same, similar recommendation to advocate for local, national, and international policies and for planning. You've already heard Senator Haar talk about the two reports from UNL. In both of those reports they talk about the need for policies and planning, especially, from my perspective, related to public health and climate change. And, by the way, it's pretty hard to talk about air, food, water, without talking about public health. Internationally, The Lancet has probably the most extensive report of all. It's one of the most respected medical journals in the world, and I think they, as I recall, they had over 300 or between 300 and 400 references talking about climate change and public health. And again, they recommend for planning and policy. And the last report that I'm just going to highlight here is from the Canadian Public Health Association. Sometimes people say, oh, well, if climate changes, then that just means the breadbasket will be in Canada and we don't have to worry, everything will move and we'll be growing wheat in Nebraska, and things like that. It's not that simple. There are all kinds of problems. And the Canadian Public Health Association said we must find allies and forge partnerships with individuals and then, again, policies and practices in the public and private sectors should be examined from a population health perspective as part of the comprehensive impacts assessments. So the Public Health Association of Nebraska urges you to support LB802. The Health and Climate Resiliency Task Force is a good start to protecting the public health of the people of Nebraska now and into the future. Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Dr. Collins (sic--Corbin). Any questions, Senators? I want you to know, Dr. Collins (sic), I always appreciate the person who comes forward and goes, let me just give you the highlights, because we all can read, and we much appreciate that. Thank you. [LB802]

DAVID CORBIN: Yeah, I thought that you could probably read it better than I could read it to you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: But it helps to know what you think are the important points of it. So thank you. [LB802]

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DAVID CORBIN: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next testifier. Good afternoon. [LB802]

JANE MEZA: (Exhibit 7) Good afternoon. My name is Jane Meza, J-a-n-e. I am professor of biostatistics and senior associate... [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We need your last name, sorry. [LB802]

JANE MEZA: M-e-z-a. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. [LB802]

JANE MEZA: I am professor of biostatistics and senior associate dean at the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. I am representing my personal views today as a public health expert. Dr. Haar...excuse me, Senator Haar talked about the rising carbon dioxide concentrations and the results that we're seeing, in terms of higher temperatures, changes in rainfall, increases in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. I'd like to point out that NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (sic-- Administration) declared 2015 as the warmest year on record, putting us on par for the warmest decade on record since recording history started in 1880. I'd like to focus on following up on Dr. Corbin's comments and the changes that we're seeing and how they will impact health. So some of the expected health impacts of climate change are: (1) increases in heat-related illnesses from rising global temperatures, things like heat stress, and these will impact many of our agricultural workers here in Nebraska; (2) decreased air quality from ozone and particulate matters. These will impact people with asthma and cardiovascular diseases. We've already seen increases in vector-borne illnesses, such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus. These are due to changes in density of mosquitoes, ticks, rodents, and other animals that transmit disease to humans. Due to the increased severity and frequency of major precipitation events, we're likely to see communities that are impacted by disease burden from waterborne illnesses, such as cholera and other diarrheal diseases. Impact on food supply leading to food insecurity and undernutrition will be likely. Rising temperature can decrease food safety by increasing the risk and incidence of select food-borne illnesses. Additionally, crops may be less nutritious from altered uptake of micronutrients and decreased nitrogen content. Increased mental health issues will be an impact. Specifically, increasing temperatures have been associated with higher rates of personal violence and social disturbances. While the temperature is not a sole cause of these events, it exacerbates current existing problems of social and interpersonal tensions. Additionally, increased extreme weather events, such as the things that we saw with Hurricane Katrina, can affect mental health in many ways. And we're also seeing impacts of climate change on health. For example,

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cryptococcus gattii, a tropical and subtropical fungus, is causing lung infections in humans, dogs, cats, and animals in the Pacific Northwest. This lung infection can progress to meningitis, if not treated early. There have been outbreaks of deadly Vibrio gastrointestinal disease from oysters harvested in warming Alaskan waters. Sweden has seen an increase in tick-borne brain inflammation since the mid-1980s, as ticks have expanded their range. Lyme disease continues to spread with increasing speed, with a 320 percent increase in the number of high-risk counties, from 1992 to 2012. Now almost 50 percent of counties have the tick vector. Not all health effects will be negative. In northern Europe, there's a shortened season for RSV, which is a common lung infection of very young children. While all Nebraskans are at risk, some populations of concern are disproportionately vulnerable, including children and pregnant women, older adults, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic medical conditions, certain occupational groups, including agricultural workers, and those with low income or low health literacy. Our understanding of how climate change affects risks to human health has increased. However, there remain specific scientific gaps, especially for our local, state, and region. This bill will permit the Legislature to study the potential impacts of climate change in Nebraska and provide opportunities to improve the health and well-being of all Nebraskans through appropriate responses to climate change. I would be happy to respond to any questions you have. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any questions? Thank you for your testimony. [LB802]

JANE MEZA: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next testifier. [LB802]

MILO MUMGAARD: Good afternoon, Chairperson Campbell and committee. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. [LB802]

MILO MUMGAARD: My name is Milo Mumgaard. I am presently the executive director of Legal Aid of Nebraska. And prior to that, I was the senior policy aide... [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Mr. Mumgaard, would you spell your name. [LB802]

MILO MUMGAARD: Spelling? Mumgaard, M-u-m-g-a-a-r-d. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. [LB802]

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MILO MUMGAARD: Thank you. Prior to that, I was senior policy aide and general counsel to Mayor Chris Beutler here in Lincoln, at the city of Lincoln. I am here today in my personal capacity to relay information regarding our involvement at the mayor's office in organizing the round table that has been discussed here today on urban and rural communities, the impact of climate change on those communities and response. This round table took place in September and was associated with the League of Municipalities' annual meeting. Fortunately, we had a lot of participation from rural and urban communities at that round table. Initially, the thing to recall, the thing to put this into context, is that the city of Lincoln's point of view on climate change has been, for the longest time, to, of course, accept that it is occurring, and that it is a priority for the city to reduce climate change, related vulnerabilities for residents and businesses, as well as to better respond and plan for when impacts occur. The city of Lincoln has taken the position that it is no longer reasonable, of course, to rely upon historical weather patterns to plan for activities going into the future. And, in fact, we have to plan for the effects and the impacts of climate change so, therefore, LB802 is certainly a significant step in that direction for the state of Nebraska as a whole. In fact, the way we have looked at it at the city of Lincoln had been that residents of our city really expected nothing less than that, because the obligations of city government, when it comes to things such as snowstorms that we just had and water supply and energy affordability and efficiency and the health issues associated with heat waves and so on and so forth, are, in fact, the DNA or the basic expectations of government, particularly local government. So, therefore, in responding to and planning for the impacts of climate change, it is an exceptionally reasonable thing to be doing and, in fact, is a very good government thing to be doing. So, in that context, this round table was able to discuss how, in fact, urban and rural communities had a direct role in thinking through what to do when the impacts of climate change are felt and are being felt in the state. And to summarize, through the presentations and the discussions of the participants and so on, there was a recognition that policy is never easy in this context, but that, in fact, local governments are taking action all across the state, not just the city of Lincoln, certainly, in small and large ways, to plan for and deliver...a lot of effort is directed to the risks and the impacts that are being experienced and also lie ahead. But there are three things, in particular, that we described or discussed that need to be addressed, and I think LB802 takes a long step in the direction to help direct, to identify and deal with that. First of all, there is, indeed, all across the state, a need for more timely, accurate, and specific information on climate change and its impacts, that is to be distributed to local community members, to local community leaders, to civic leaders, community leaders, and so on. The bottom line is there is a great deal of misinformation in communities today about climate change, and that can be very effectively addressed through the existing high credibility of our community and local leadership. And second, the participants really emphasized how local and state governments should use more pricing signals as we move forward. Now why would that be important? It's because Nebraskans are pretty commonsensical. And in terms of how do you deal with the impacts of climate change, one of the ways to do it is to ensure that people see those impacts in their pocketbooks. And Lincoln is very much a leader in that regard with both our water pricing,

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our electric pricing, and so on, that ensures that conservation becomes a norm within the context of these kinds of city services. And third, local governments, we agreed, must strive to get even more people interested and constituencies to the decision-making tables on policies addressing climate change impacts. And that means having the kinds of educational outreach, having the kinds of activities that LB802 anticipates having in the state of Nebraska, to get more people to think about these impacts and to start planning for how to address them best into the future. So to conclude, I think it's fair to say that my experience with local government and policymakers around the state really does say that communities are ready for thinking through their day-to-day operations and climate change impacts. And LB802 is certainly a way to help with that process at the local level. But I certainly think, you know, the state taking a position that this needs to be addressed is both common sense and reasonable from all kinds of perspectives. So again, I encourage you to pass LB802, and I look forward to being of assistance to seeing it implemented in the future. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any questions, Senators? Thank you very much. [LB802]

MILO MUMGAARD: Thank you, Senator. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next testifier. Good afternoon. [LB802]

JOHN HANSEN: Chairman Campbell, members of the committee, for the record, my name is John Hansen, J-o-h-n, Hansen, H-a-n-s-e-n. I am the president of the Nebraska Farmers Union, and am their president and also their lobbyist. We have been working on climate issues for well over a dozen years. We have been a part of efforts to work with agricultural producers to be constructively engaged, in order to reduce carbon emissions and also extract carbon that's already in the atmosphere and sequester it into the soil. We have been...we were an aggregator, and we worked with our National Farmers Union organization. And we signed up 1.2 million acres in the state of Nebraska to participate in a voluntary cap-and-trade program. And our state had a total over 3 million acres and was the top state in the nation. And so when we educate and we incent, well, we can change production behavior. And so there's a lot of opportunity there. And while a lot of us might think that those folks in rural Nebraska are maybe not quite as up to speed as folks that are our city cousins in town, the latest rural poll...and I'm a member of the advisory committee of the University of Nebraska Rural Poll. These are four statewide polls that go across the state, that have well over 2,000 respondents. So these are statistically significant polls. And we pick issues. And the last two polls that we have done for the last two years, we have had very substantial percentages. We had over 50-some percent, depending on how you ask the question, two years ago. We had 61 percent last year. We thought that we ought to have a state climate plan. So if you are involved in agriculture and you're involved in the natural world, you understand the health implications, just personally being out in the elements and working

with...2012 was...not only killed trees, it killed grass. It put terrible strain on livestock. So as our participation as a part of the University of Nebraska's study that's been done on climate implications and their recent set of round tables, we've participated in both agriculture and energy. We are in support of this bill. We're in support of the original bill that caused the University of Nebraska to do the study in the first place. You got to plan. We got to know. And we need the kind of help that we need to be able to make simple, incremental, managerial changes over time. As we continue to go forward, there won't be one management change; there will be a whole series of management changes. So this is education. This is incentives. This is clearly a private-public partnership type of issue. And so to that end, while we are in strong support of LB802, structurally, as we look at the bill, a lot of the expertise and a lot of the push that has come and the innovation that has come from the private sector and from agriculture and other sectors, I think, would be helpful to this committee as you look at the planning over time. And so I see the advantages of an advisory type committee, of folks who have expertise and interest in this issue, to partner with the Legislature now, and especially those that have particular areas of expertise. And there's a lot of things going on. There's a lot of wheels moving. So as we look at our historic role in the development of renewable energy, climate change has changed the paradigm from renewable energy being economically beneficial, environmentally beneficial, to really becoming essential. We must reduce carbon emissions, and that includes not only reducing the amount of carbon we put in the atmosphere, but agriculture can, along with agroforestry, we can take about a fourth of the carbon that's already in the atmosphere, and we can sequester it and put it in the soil and build tilth and build the quality, the water quality and the resiliency of our soils. And that is going to be essential as we go forward and deal with climate change, for both food production and health and environment and taxation and revenue. This bill could have been before about four committees, to my way of thinking. Thank you, and I'll end my testimony there and answer any questions, if you have any. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Riepe. [LB802]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. I have a question. What's the implications of the nitrogen and phosphate that goes into the drinking water part of our environment? [LB802]

JOHN HANSEN: Well, in most things, what are the limits and how much of what do you have? And we know that too much...we know that certainly in fragile soils we have come a long way from where we used to put 200 pounds of anhydrous ammonia in sandy soils. We know that we can't do that, because it won't hold that much nitrogen, that it will leach, that it will move down into the water table. And so, you know, we use...much more careful about how much we put on and how much we put on at one time. And so we change management systems. So we spoon-feed it, rather than give it all up-front and then lose a large portion of it. And so, relative to phosphates, it's primarily a runoff issue, so we get better at being able to control runoffs, especially from confined animal units. And, you know, this is all a work in progress. [LB802]

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SENATOR RIEPE: I recall, just a few years ago, that in the Grand Island area, the incident of pediatric cancers was significantly higher. And, you know, when I look at it, that's the here and now, which is more of a concern to me than...I would gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today. I'm just, you know...that would be an immediate concern, as opposed to trying to...tomorrow's concerns. But that's me. [LB802]

JOHN HANSEN: Well, Senator, I would... [LB802]

SENATOR RIEPE: I come from a pediatric hospital background, so I have an interest. [LB802]

JOHN HANSEN: Well, I would tell you that in my former life as an NRD director, that our NRD developed the first water quantity/quality monitoring program in the state so that we could not only know what water levels were, but water quality was doing, so that when crises came we had the information that we needed in order to be able to manage, and that our management perspective and view was that today and tomorrow are pretty darn close together. [LB802]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thanks for being here. [LB802]

JOHN HANSEN: Thank you very much. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Anything else? Thank you, Mr. Hansen. [LB802]

JOHN HANSEN: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. [LB802]

HELEN WINSTON: Hi. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. [LB802]

HELEN WINSTON: (Exhibit 8) Hi. My name is Helen Winston; that's H-e-l-e-n W-i-n-s-t-o-n, and I'm here speaking on behalf of the youth affected by asthma in northern Omaha. I grew up very active and pretty athletic. I danced, I ran, I tossed the football around with my dad and my little brother. I had an extremely healthy childhood. Neither of my parents smoked, and we lived in pretty clean parts of town, at least in terms of suburban Omaha. Then my mother moved my brother and I to Benson, which is in the northeast part of the city. When I turned around 12 years old, having lived in Benson for only two years, I began to struggle with my health, specifically

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with my breathing. I didn't really understand what was going on with me. I'd always be struggling behind my teammates during practice. I'd take longer to recover from runs or workouts. I'd always hear this awful grinding noise, or clicking or whistling, depending on the air temperature and the humidity. And it wasn't until when I was about 15, when a fellow teammate told me I probably had asthma. And she knew, because she'd had it for years, as well. Today I walk 10 to 15 miles a day. I box; I have my orange belt in Krav Maga. I am, by no means, out of shape. But I can scarcely run more than a couple hundred yards without needing my inhaler. I only lived in Benson for eight years, but the irreparable damage to my lungs was done. I am, by no means, a special case. Even if we only consider Omaha to be a midsize city, the health implications of pollution from industry and from individuals are, at least to me, catastrophic. I'm lucky that my parents were able to get me diagnosed, and that I have a job so it can pay for my prescriptions. But most of the kids in northeast Omaha aren't as lucky. According to the 2012 PRC Child and Adolescent Community Health Needs Assessment, conducted by the Boys Town National Research Hospital and the Children's Hospital, approximately 8.7 percent of school-age kids in the metro area have been diagnosed with asthma. That's about 1 in 12. However, the percentage of kids afflicted in northeast Omaha rises to about 19.4 percent...that's almost 1 in 5. Further still, around 25.9 percent of African-American children in Omaha have been diagnosed. That's over 1 in 4. And these are kids, growing up, aspiring to be an athlete or to play a wind instrument or even to take a walk around the block without having to struggle to breathe. We can look at this health crisis in economic terms as well. I am prescribed this little guy, which is a life-saving device; 90 micrograms of Albuterol sulfate for my rescue inhaler. I say rescue, because it's only supposed to be used when needed, but I need it just about every day, even though my asthma is only mild to moderate. With insurance, it costs about \$40 out-of-pocket, and I can afford that easily, because I'm able to allot parts of my paycheck towards medical care. But a majority of kids in northeast Omaha can't do that. Those with only mild to moderate asthma may not be able to afford a \$40 inhaler. And it might be more, depending upon their quality of insurance or if they even have insurance at all. Moderate to severe sufferers require higher dosages, require different medication for daily and necessary use, as well as a nebulizer. Now a nebulizer is a machine, for those of you who don't know, it's a machine with an over-the-nose-and-mouth mask, which pumps medication as a mist for patients with asthma and other respiratory diseases. A nebulizer can cost anywhere from \$40 to \$600, depending on the kind you need. The main cause for such high asthma rates in northeast Omaha was the coal plant, which got shut down recently. One might argue that, because this plant is no longer producing pollution, we no longer have to worry about this issue. And, yes, while cases may go down, we are still left with the tens of thousands of people growing up without access to treatment or medication, as well as developing more severe respiratory diseases. Many of us are asking the same questions. Why me? Why my part of town? Who's responsible for getting everyone the necessary medical care? And who's going to make sure the people or the companies causing this health crisis are going to be held accountable? Those are the questions we're hoping

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this task force will be able to answer. And I'll be willing to take any questions at this time.
[LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions, Senators, or comments? Thank you very much for your testimony today. [LB802]

HELEN WINSTON: Thank you so much. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB802]

CLAIRE HINRICHS: Good afternoon. Our printer is broken, so I don't have any copies for you.
[LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: You go right ahead. [LB802]

CLAIRE HINRICHS: But I will try to e-mail you in the coming days. Good afternoon. My name is Claire Hinrichs, C-l-a-i-r-e H-i-n-r-i-c-h-s. Reverend Kim Morrow is my mother. I am an IB student at Lincoln High School, and I'm heading up a youth organization right now, called Students Promoting Ethical Action on Climate, or SPEAC. I also helped to organize and attended Senator Ken Haar's Nebraska Youth Summit on Climate last week. I stand today in support of LB802. A lot of discussion on this issue sounds like it can be about saving the whole world, the whole atmosphere, the whole human race. Of course, these things are important, but it's practically useless to focus on the big picture right now. There are much more tangible reasons that we need to act on a changing state in our environment, for example, our economy. Much of Nebraska's economy is supported by agriculture, but we can't just keep planting the same crops when the climate no longer suits them and there are like no bees left. The further this situation progresses, the more genetic modifications we'll need to use, the lesser the crop output, the more we'll have to be dealing with record droughts one year and record rains two years later, which are all health concerns. We're not going to figure out the best way to deal with these changes by doing the same old thing we've been doing for decades. When the climate is different than it's ever been before, we'll have to deal with it in a different way than ever before. And the Health and Climate Resiliency Task Force's job will be to figure out how to deal with these new problems. Agriculture isn't the only thing affecting our economy due to climate change. Our energy sources are vital to the functioning of modern society. At this point in time, does it even make sense anymore to rely on nonrenewable resources? Imagine in your head for a moment that right here in Nebraska we have mass reserves of some energy source, just waiting to be tapped into. Would you let this energy source just sit there, remaining untapped, when it could be harvested to support our economy and our society? Of course not. But this is exactly the case with wind and solar energy. Right here in Nebraska we have a potent energy source that is not

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only more environmentally friendly than coal, oil, or gas, better for health concerns, as explained in Helen's testimony earlier, but saves money in the long run and won't ever run out. This is a big issue for today's youth. What are we going to do when oil and gas aren't options anymore? Last week, at the Nebraska Youth Summit on Climate, I saw for myself just how much today's youth care about this issue, because it's our future that lawmakers today are manipulating. Knowing our lives will be significantly affected by the decisions being made now means it's really important to us that the right decisions are being made. So we can see that there are many changes that need to be made here in Nebraska to adapt to the changing world. And the best way to forge a pathway towards these changes is by establishing this task force that can pave the way for changes in energy and agriculture, which will benefit our economy, in turn benefiting our society and our government, which ultimately will benefit the human race and the world that we live in. I stand open to any questions you may have. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Ms. Hinrichs...Heinrichs (phonetically). [LB802]

CLAIRE HINRICHS: Hinrichs. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Hinrichs. I got it right the first time, didn't I? Any questions, Senators? Thank you for your testimony. [LB802]

CLAIRE HINRICHS: You're welcome. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And that would be helpful...at least then the clerk could put it in the record. Good afternoon. [LB802]

JANECE MOLLHOFF: (Exhibit 10) Good afternoon. Senator Campbell and committee, my name is Janece Mollhoff, J-a-n-e-c-e M-o-l-l-h-o-f-f. And you'll have a copy of my testimony from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska. I'm representing them today, because the League of Women Voters supports measures that preserve the integrity of ecosystems, which also, then, protect public health and the environment. I'll let you read my testimony from there, because, in the essence of time here, I just want to tell you why I care about this issue. I've had a long career as a nurse. And I worked in public health and community health a lot of the time. But I also recently retired after 32 years in the Army Nurse Corps. In the year 2000, I attended Command and General Staff College, which all officers have to attend. And during that time, we explored climate change and how it's going to affect our world. And that was 16 years ago. And I have seen little done on this between that time and now. And I think that Nebraska needs to take this step to help to plan for our most vulnerable populations and that the benefit of early planning and intervention cannot be outweighed. I would ask that you support LB802, because it provides the

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Legislature with a means to develop proactive and coordinated approach to mitigating the health effects of climate change in Nebraska. Any questions? [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any questions, Senators? Thank you for your testimony. Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB802]

MARY PIPHER: Good afternoon, Senator Campbell and committee. My name is Mary Pipher, P-i-p-h-e-r. I am a psychologist and the author of several books, including one called "The Green Boat," with a focus on the psychological effects of climate change on ordinary people. I am also a member of a local group called Guardians of the Aquifer. I do not need to provide evidence that climate change is occurring. And I also don't need to argue the virtue of preparedness. Our state understands that, when it comes to issues such as fires, tornadoes, and blizzards. We also have the lessons of history, most notably the Dust Bowl years which were, to a large extent, caused by drought and shortsighted agricultural practices. Wise leaders look to history, science, and the future when making decisions. Resilient citizens face reality, discuss it, and try to respond adaptively. With LB802, we have the opportunity to educate, problem solve, and to work through managing future challenges. If we are practical and prudent and make solid plans in the ways we operate, we will not only ameliorate the effects of climate change, but we will improve our state in many ways in the present. For example, with public policy that promotes the use of clean energies, we will see the rates of asthma fall in our state. With better water management planning, we will not only be able to protect and maintain a good water supply, but we are likely to improve the quality of our water which, as you know, is quite compromised in many parts of our state. Everyone in this room loves Nebraska. Everyone here wants our many beautiful rivers to flow freely, our aquifer to be sustained, and our farmlands and orchards to be verdant and fertile. Everyone wants our children to be healthy and our farm communities prepared for droughts. I'm deeply grateful you are considering Senator Haar's bill. I'm optimistic this committee will move it on to the floor so that our legislators can decide to realistically deal with our state's precious future. When my five young grandchildren, all Nebraskans, are about to misbehave or act impulsively against their own best interests, I often say, "Make a good choice." That is what I am asking you to do today. Thank you very much. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Are there any questions or comments? Thank you for coming today. [LB802]

MARY PIPHER: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB802]

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TIM RINNE: (Exhibit 11) Good afternoon, Chairwoman. And Senators, my name is Tim Rinne; that is T-i-m R-i-n-n-e. I am the state coordinator of Nebraskans for Peace. As you've heard today, and you'll hear a bit more testimony, there are a number of reasons for why we should be thinking about climate change. You hear about higher temperatures, which particularly could impact our agriculture here in the state. You hear about rising sea levels, which would cause, you know, the melting of the polar icecaps. Or the polar icecaps would account for the rising of the sea levels. And you hear about extreme weather events all the time. But I'm here to talk about something else. I'm here, and it was referenced by the professor from the school of public health in Omaha, I'm here to talk about dinner. As my organization, Nebraskans for Peace, has been interested in the climate change issue for 15 years, we've been talking about it, and mostly we looked at the perspective of it that it was going to cause disruption. And when you get disruption, when you get unrest, when you get refugees, when you get conflicts over resources, okay, things get out of hand; and peace disappears, because you've got violence. But it really wasn't until about eight years ago that we started putting the connections together on the impact that climate change is going to have on our food security. And so now, if you'll look at these pages I passed out to you here, this is a quotation from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which came out in 2014. "Throughout the 21st century, climate-change impacts are projected to...further erode food security...All aspects of food security are potentially affected by climate change, including food access, utilization and price stability." A couple months later, you have the National Climate Assessment, which is a climate assessment done for, specifically, the United States. And they reported in their report that climate disruptions to agricultural production have increased over the past 40 years and are projected to increase over the next 25 years. "By mid-century and beyond, these impacts will be increasingly negative on most crops and livestock." The report that was cited from the University of Nebraska, which the Legislature had a direct hand in authorizing, the center sentence there, "By mid-century"...which they count as not 2050, but as 2041 to 2070..."By mid-century, this increase," in temperature in Nebraska, "would equate to experiencing typical summer temperatures equivalent to those experienced during the 2012 drought and heat wave," which was the driest and hottest year in the state record. But it's not just the scientists that are weighing in on this. It's also notable Republicans, like former Nebraska Congressman Doug Bereuter, who is now affiliated with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. And a year ago this past May, they released a report entitled "Advancing Global Food Security in the Face of a Changing Climate": Climate change will bring hotter temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent natural disasters. Farmers everywhere will be affected. "If these challenges are not addressed, consumers will need to be prepared for higher food prices and potential food shortages." We're talking here midcentury that we are looking at, or sooner. Then some of his colleagues in the Republican Party...Henry Paulson, who was George W. Bush's Treasury Secretary, and George Shultz, who was Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State...okay, they formed with some of their business colleagues this group called the Risky Business Coalition (sic--Project). So this is all business experts. And they produced this report called "Risky Business: The Economic Risks of Climate

Change in the United States." It says, "Our research shows that under the 'business as usual' scenario and assuming no significant adaptation by farmers," the Midwest region as a whole will face "yield declines of up to 19 percent by mid-century and 63 percent by the end of the century." And Doug Bereuter will tell you that, by 2050, the United Nations is expecting that global demand for food will increase to 60 percent. It will increase 60 percent over what it is now at the same time that we are projecting, by mid-century, that we're going to see yield declines by 19 percent. The Risky Business coalition wasn't satisfied with that report that they put out in June of 2014, so six months later they produced another one specifically on the Heartland. Over the next 5 to 20 (sic--25) years, "without significant adaptation by farmers, some counties in Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana will likely see average commodity crop losses up to 18 to 24 percent due to extreme heat each year." Then, of course...and it's not just Al Gore that's concerned about these issues...the Department of Defense, back in 2010, made, as part of their Quadrennial Defense Review, "Climate change will contribute to food and water scarcity, will increase the spread of disease, and may spur or exacerbate mass migration." And finally, former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel reported in October 2014 on a "Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap," that the Department of Defense put out, that, "Among the future trends that will impact our national security is climate change. Rising global temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, climbing sea levels, and more extreme weather events will intensify the challenges of global instability, hunger, poverty, and conflict. They will likely lead to food and water shortages, pandemic disease, disputes over refugees and resources, and destruction by natural disasters in regions across the globe." We're seeing that now. The civil war in Syria has already been designated as the first conflict of that scale that can be directly attributed, in part, to climate change, because of a devastating four-year drought that they had that drove 1.5 million rural people off of the farm and into the cities, where they overwhelmed the social service system. This is what we're facing here. This is not something down the road. My time is up. This is not something down the road; this is something immediate. LB802 is going to be an opportunity for us to start taking steps to address this. Thank you for listening. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much for the slides. Any questions, Senators? Okay. Thank you very much. Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB802]

CHELSEA JOHNSON: Good afternoon. My name is Chelsea Johnson, C-h-e-l-s-e-a J-o-h-n-s-o-n, and I am currently the deputy director at the Nebraska League of Conservation Voters. We're a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to turn conservation values into political priorities. And we do that through educating the public, advocacy, as well as getting involved in elections. You already have an abundant amount of information about the implications that climate change will have on health, so I just wanted to talk about our experiences working with people across the state, not just in Lincoln and Omaha, but in small-town communities all the way into western Nebraska and Scottsbluff. And, you know, as poll numbers are showing, the Rural Poll has 61 percent of Nebraskans think that we should have a plan to deal with climate

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change, because they're concerned about that issue. And that's what we are seeing as well. And right now, kind of the action step for that is to educate their fellow citizens about the issue and increase the level of concern in their own communities. But then, you know, what comes next? What do they do, once they have this concern? And that's where a plan, like LB802 is proposing, would be very helpful for these communities to utilize their own capacities and expertise in how to build the resiliency of their own areas to climate change and, you know, not invest a lot of resources in something that they think might be under threat because of climate change, but really address what the report that you just received from the roundtables, what they note as being a really important part of having a plan, being that you're answering these questions of what is going to be most stressful on Nebraska when it comes to climate change. So I just want to close with kind of a personal anecdote that came to my mind while I was sitting here listening to the testimonies, and it's a phrase that was drilled into my brain as a student going through track practice, volleyball practice, basketball, which is: Proper planning prevents poor performance. And of course that was what my coaches always wanted to say in order to motivate us to practice hard. But I think it really applies now, when we're looking at LB802, and thinking that, yes, these are future implications of climate change. Some implications of climate change are happening right now, but we really do need to plan now so that we're not in a really bad situation in the future. Thank you very much. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Our next testifier. Good afternoon. [LB802]

JOHN ATKEISON: (Exhibit 12) Good afternoon to all of you. My name is John Atkeison, J-o-h-n A-t-k-e-i-s-o-n. As people were talking I was thinking, wow, I won't have to say anything. But I will try to keep it short. What's circulating to you is a publication we call "The Grazer's Guide to Global Warming," and we call it "The Grazer's Guide" because it's in little, smaller, bite-size chunks, and there are also some links to some more substantive resources. It's published by EnergyLinc, which is a little grassroots organization that I have put together to do education at the grassroots. And as such, we've had some very good house parties and public speaking events and other things that show there is a pretty big level of concern, especially in this part of the state, but in rural parts of the state as well. One of the best resources is the link to the book you've seen referred to before, and you probably all have, which is the UNL report. And since we have this, I just want to stress how lucky we are to have such a compact and well-done study that focuses on the implications of this issue for our state. From today we see the impacts. There's a certain amount of the difficulties we had in 2012 that can be attributed to climate change. You just don't have these many things, to this extremity, all at the same time. You just can't explain what happens in the world today without saying there's something different; and that thing, with severe weather, is the climate change that's caused by global warming. The link is...and EnergyLinc really is the link between the making of electricity and global warming because it's the single largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in the United States and the world. We have in this report the quote that Tim Rinne brought to you already. I just would like

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to extrapolate from that, talking about how 2012 will be typical...the summer of 2012 weather will be typical by mid-century. And that gets a pretty big reaction in rural Nebraska when you remember the droughts. It's not just that it's going to be warmer and we're going to be more like places south of here, like Oklahoma. It's going to be more like Oklahoma in the Dust Bowl. It means...well, I spoke to a couple of the authors, the four authors of this report, independently and says, you know, this sounds like you guys are saying we're going to go back to a Dust Bowl mode of operation again, that this is going to reoccur. And as I say, this was a separate...two separate occasions, and both of them said, oh, yeah, only this is going to be worse, because it's going to be worse conditions and we're just not preparing for it any more than we prepared for that one. So that really got my attention. And I went back and looked at some of the resources, the historical studies, and the TV shows that we've seen over the last decade to relook at that era. And the thing that struck me, being a parent and a grandparent, is the phenomenon of dust pneumonia, which is simply that that dust, that fine, powdery dust, got in the lungs and was a direct cause of death of children. And that's...you know, none of us here will stand for that. So the warming is not just getting hotter; it has many other implications as well. This bill gives us a good start. This plan gives us a place to start. I think it's appropriate that it come to this committee because human well-being, human health is very much on the table when it comes to climate change. Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you for bringing your copy. Our next proponent. Good afternoon. [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: (Exhibits 13 and 14) Good afternoon. My name is Nate Belcher; and that is N-a-t-e B-e-l-c-h-e-r. And I am here with Green Acres Cover Crops. We are an agricultural seed supply company with a focus on cover crops, and we do consulting as well. So real quick, just some background of what a cover crop is, is any plant that we can utilize to increase the health and fertility of our soils and also provide forage for livestock. What this ultimately means is we're helping producers go from a chemically dependent, heavy input agriculture systems to biologically driven systems which are, you know, a/k/a Mother Nature, how plants and very productive ecological environments have thrived for a very long time. So just to kind of...just a little background, which I'm sure you're all well aware of, our main industry is agriculture. Because of that, we are considered a leader. You know, people look to us, whether that be other producers, other states, even globally. We are leaders in food production and I believe that we need to act that way. And if we can and promote the right things, that leadership can turn into global change, which is ultimately what's needed for climate mitigation. I mean we can't just do it alone. It takes everybody. So I provided some information just what cover crops are, just for your general knowledge, and then some bullet points. So being that our main industry is agriculture, by default that means that soils are our biggest asset, which then by default of that means that climate change has huge implications for us. I mean, when we are dependent on soil fertility and productivity and resiliency, combined with Mother Nature, I mean, we truly are the,

you know, epitome of what climate change can do. So I was asked to be here not to, say, give you the doom and gloom, but more how do we turn this problem into an opportunity, and everybody can win. And I think that's what's so important is this isn't something that we have to give up to get. We can mitigate climate change and gain from it substantially. So how do we do that? As I said before, soil is our biggest asset. But if you look around, especially this time of year, we're not utilizing it to its full capacity. We grow crops for about, what, four or five months out of the year max? Plants have...are insanely adapted, for lack of better terms, pardon my lack of organization, but they grab carbon from the atmosphere and sequester it into the soil better than any technology that we've ever created. It's simple. So what we do and what can be, you know, put into practice across the state of Nebraska, let's utilize our soils to the fullest potential. And what that means is having living plants and roots in the ground as long as possible. So we're taking that carbon, CO₂, which is a big cause of climate change, we pull it out of the atmosphere and we sequester it into the soil in a stable form. For a producer standpoint, so, okay, we're taking CO₂ out of the atmosphere...huge benefit, obviously...but above and beyond that, we're building healthy soils. Carbon-rich soils cycle nutrients more efficiently and effectively; they infiltrate and hold on to much higher amounts of water so that when we do get the droughts, we can handle them because we've stored water in our soils. When we have the excessive rainfall, we can infiltrate that and then store it until we need it later in the growing season. So really what we're doing is creating soils that are self-sustaining, they cycle their own nutrients, all of these benefits that allow the producer to produce more food with less inputs, which makes them more profitable. To round that all the way back to consumers, so mitigating climate change through the sequestration of carbon, we're allowing producers to be more productive and be more financially viable. But because we have healthier soils, the food that is coming off that land is now healthier; it's more nutritionally dense. The minerals have been made available through a biological-driven system to then be "uptaken" by the plant and put into the food that we eat. So what I like about this bill is that we need a task force to look at these different situations and production methods, to assess what works and what doesn't and how can we turn this problem into a benefit, and make the policy and education and outreach to make that...you know, to see it through. Any questions? [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions or comments, Senators? Senator Kolterman. [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: Sure. [LB802]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Yeah, thank you for coming, Mr. Belcher. On your cover crops, what kind of cover crops do you plant or do you sell? [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: It just depends on the production system. So we sell a wide variety, anything from...you know, think of it this way: warm season grasses, cool season grasses, legumes, any

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species that we think will fit well in that sort of...whatever their cropping system. In relation to climate and time frame it can...there's a vast array of different crops that we can use. A lot of the main ones in our area, we're in corn and bean country, things that are winter hardy that can be planted after corn and beans, such as cereal rye, legumes like hairy vetch, Austrian winter peas, and just a variety of different things to build organic matter, which is basically carbon that we've pulled out of the atmosphere through the growth of those plants. [LB802]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: So in our area, I'm from the Seward area,... [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: Okay. [LB802]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: ...we have a lot of seed corn that's being produced out there. [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: Yeah. [LB802]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: And we've seen a lot of, oh, turnips, radishes. Is that a cover crop that you're talking about here, that type of cover crop? [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: Yeah, so that's a version of a cover crop. You know, those are...a lot of times radish has the deep taproot, so there's what we call our biological tillage. You know, every time we run a cultivator through our fields, which we're seeing less and less of, we're oxygenating that soil, which feeds the microbes, and we're losing CO₂. So as quick as we can gain it in, every time we till, we're just releasing that back into the atmosphere. So it's kind of a zero-sum game. When we use tools that are more biologically driven, such as what I call biological tillage, using the plant to break through the soil hardpan and create tilth without the requirement of any tillage implement or diesel or, you know, expensive equipment for the producer, but what we promote is a balance between those crops and crops that are very what I'll call carbon rich which, without getting too heavy into the science of it, allows us to retain as much carbon that has been accumulated in that plant as possible. [LB802]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Okay. Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. [LB802]

NATE BELCHER: Anyone else? [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. Our next proponent. Okay. Anyone in opposition to the bill? Anyone in a neutral position? Good afternoon. [LB802]

JOHN ERIXSON: (Exhibit 15) Good afternoon. My name is John Erixson, J-o-h-n E-r-i-x-s-o-n. I am the deputy director for the Nebraska Forest Service. Nebraska Forest Service staff led the forest and fire round-table discussions in October. The discussion was aimed at engaging key stakeholders from conservation groups, landowners, the forest industries, communities, and agriculture, to discuss ways to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. There is a saying amongst foresters: Healthy forests equal healthy people. Trees and forests play an important role in human health. Research shows that employees with a view of nature report being more satisfied in their job. In hospital settings, natural views from windows can shorten hospital stays and reduce the amount of medication required by patients. Students with a view of trees outside their classroom windows learn better. Trees provide many social and health benefits for Nebraskans. Noted by Linsey Abrams in [The Atlantic](#), when emerald ash borer began killing thousands of trees in communities, rates of human death from cardiovascular and respiratory illness increased, end quote. Urban trees filter air and water of pollutants, reduce heat stress for residents during heat waves, and protect us from UV light and reduce stress. Urban environments with trees have increased outdoor activity and the very act of planting a tree provides long-term aesthetic, environmental, and health benefits. Climate change poses grave threats to and is already affecting our trees and forest resources in Nebraska. Whether it be increasing damage due to wild fires, insects, floods, drought, heat, or severe weather events, there is no doubt that we are seeing substantial changes in the health and vitality of our forests, which in turn affect the health of our citizens. Indeed, incidents of severe drought, heat, and severe weather events have already caused extensive mortality in trees, in cities and towns, and in windbreaks and natural forest settings. For example, Nebraska has seen an increase in frequency and number of large, intense wildfires over the past 50 years. During most of the 20th century the state saw large fire seasons every 20 to 25 years. Since 1990, the time between such large fire events has decreased to about every six years. The scale of these events has also dramatically increased. Fifty years ago a large fire season was considered to be around 150,000 acres. In 2012, nearly a half a million acres burned. Besides the obvious threat these fires pose to the lives of the residents and firefighters, heat and smoke near these fires also adversely affect public health. The air quality in and around these large fires is very poor, and particulate matter is high and can remain high for days after a fire. Air quality can be affected for hundreds of miles downwind and surface water quality is impaired for months following a fire. Many Nebraskans have seen the devastation mountain pine beetle has caused in forest ecosystems throughout the west, killing more than 46 million acres of pine forests in North America. Mountain pine beetle was found for the first time in Nebraska in 2009 in the Wildcat Hills and Pine Ridge, substantially increasing the risk to these forests. The beetles have spread to Nebraska because we no longer see the extended periods of very cold conditions during the winter that kill the larvae. Developing a Climate

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Resiliency Task Force would provide an opportunity for Nebraska to develop a strategic plan to address climate change. Thank you, and I'd be happy to answer any questions. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions, anyone? I'm assuming you're in a neutral position because of the agency. [LB802]

JOHN ERIXSON: I am. Pardon? [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Because of the agency? [LB802]

JOHN ERIXSON: That is correct. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay, because it certainly sounds like you're a proponent. But thank you. I understand. [LB802]

JOHN ERIXSON: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next person in a neutral position. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: Senators. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: (Exhibit 16) My name is Randolph Cantrell, R-a-n-d-o-l-p-h L. C-a-n-t-r-e-l-l. I am a professor at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. I have, for the last 15 years, been part of the Nebraska Rural Poll, which has been cited by a couple people here. My old daddy told me, if you have to be last, be fast, (laughter) so let's see what we can do with this. This is based on, if you're not familiar with the poll, it is a paper-and-pencil survey mailed out to nonmetropolitan households, although it is still mailed out to the metropolitan Grand Island area because Grand Island wasn't metropolitan, now we have all this history with it. We've been at this for about 20 years. In 2015, we surveyed 1,991 Nebraskans living in 86 rural or nonmetropolitan counties of the state. This is about a 32 percent response rate from the 6,200 that we sent out. There's details about the methodology that are available in this report, and I've left you a URL at the end of this particular testimony. Our margin of error for this study we estimate at plus or minus 2 percent. I should also let you know that we weight this for age because we tend to have higher nonresponse among younger people. In 2015, among one of the topics we asked about had to do with climate. By the way, this is being presented as neutral

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testimony because, if I'm going to poll people on what they think about any issue, then as part of the Rural Poll I do not have a position. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Understand. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: And so all of us on the Rural Poll, we cop the same plea. Rural Nebraskans were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements about climate change, regardless of whether they attribute change to climate to natural cycles, human activity, or believe it's not happening at all. Here are the results that I think...I picked some out that I thought might be of most interest to this committee and this topic. One is a lot of Nebraskans are concerned about things that are being associated with climate change. About half of them said they're concerned about or very concerned about more or more severe droughts or long dry periods. Just over 40 percent are concerned about insect-borne diseases or insect vector diseases; 39 percent indicate they're concerned or more concerned about extreme summer temperatures. They weren't very worried about water. Less than a quarter of them said they were concerned about water supply having to do with climate change or any of the theories that go along with that. There was regional variation: Residents in the north-central region were more likely than residents of other regions to be concerned about droughts or dry periods. That makes sense if you know north-central Nebraska. About 64 percent of them said that they were concerned or very concerned about that. Most rural Nebraskans believe...and here we go...that the state should develop a plan for adapting to climate change in order to reduce its impact on...this is specific language now...to reduce its impact on agriculture, rural communities, forestry, and natural resources. And most rural Nebraskans agree that the University of Nebraska should be helping agricultural producers in rural communities, others, to adapt to climate change. Those are pretty high numbers in terms of percentage agreement. There are a couple of graphs in the written material that I gave you to let you sort that out. And that is also broken down on the last page, those two particular variables, by region, by age, and by education. Concern, or the belief that we should be engaged in drought studies, the sort of thing that's proposed here in LB802, is stronger among people with higher levels of educational attainment, it's stronger among younger people, and it is stronger in the...strongest in the Panhandle portion of the state. And the part in here that mentions the University of Nebraska, we have also 69 percent of people...or 63 percent of people tell us that the University of Nebraska should be helping agricultural producers and rural communities to adapt to climate change. I didn't put that in there as a shameless plug for the university. What it did indicate to me was that there is some sympathy, strong sympathy, in the general public for research or ongoing study or an attempt to understand what the heck is going on with this concept of climate change. Like I said, I had...there's a URL you can get to the entirety of this report, which is titled "Climate and Energy: Opinions of Nonmetropolitan Nebraskans." [LB802]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Questions, Senators? Dr. Cantrell, I have to be honest with you, I saw you walk in this afternoon and you sat in the back and I have spent most of the afternoon going, I know that man, how do I know that man? [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: Who is that dude? You know,... [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And the minute you got up to testify I went, ah, State Planning Committee. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: I did talk to them. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: You spent a greater part of a morning with the Legislature's State Planning Committee talking about your survey. And it was more geared to, what would we say, the longevity of small towns and so forth across the state. I would highly encourage my colleagues to look at the full study, because Dr. Cantrell spent much of a morning with us and really we could have spent a lot more time than that. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: Yeah, we can go a long time. And I hid back there because I'm inappropriately dressed for a room full of senators. This is because I don't have a car and weather happened to me; it's survival gear. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Oh, weather happens, doesn't it? But I would encourage you to take a look at the full report; and if you have any questions, we really appreciated your honesty and your research that you had given the State Planning (Committee), so this is helpful. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: You're welcome. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Dr. Cantrell. [LB802]

RANDOLPH CANTRELL: Thank you. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Anyone else in a neutral position? Okay, Senator Haar, we are back to you. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: Well, I would like to thank everybody who came to testify today and invite the senators and their staffs to pizza tomorrow, pizza and climate change. And Reverend Kim will be there, and a climatologist from UNL, to answer any question. I think we all, if we have

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questions about this, we need to ask the type of questions. And we'll have some people there tomorrow. Again, the A bill, my...this is the job for my staff to do the work next summer. And we hope to work with the committee in any way we can to tweak it here and there perhaps. And again, health depends on everything all the time. And I love that: Proper planning prevents poor performance, the five p's. And that's...LB802 is a call to planning using the best science that we have. And we have a marvelous resource at UNL to provide us with that science. And then from the...you know, if you go in and read the Nebraska poll, Nebraskans are looking to us for leadership on this issue. And with that, I thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Baker. [LB802]

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Campbell. Senator Haar, I need you to...I know what your vision is; I mean, as long as I've known you, you've been pretty consistent...need you to connect some dots for me. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: Sure. [LB802]

SENATOR BAKER: The ultimate goal I would assume to be a critical mass of people in this state who would be willing to make profound changes in a whole number of things. But to get to the critical mass of 80 percent of the people who either strongly believe or are not going to be in the way, what are the steps in between? Okay, we get some people together, 23 people, plus advisors, and somehow coalesce around getting a strategic plan put together. So then, all right, so we've got a strategic plan. Connect the dots between that strategic plan and getting to a critical mass of people who want to do things differently. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: Great question. And I'll just hold up, this is Colorado's climate plan. And this says state-level policies and strategies to mitigate and adapt. I don't know whether Nebraska will come out with a plan like this. And it covers all the areas, again, that we've heard about today: health, water, energy, transportation, agriculture, tourism and recreation, ecosystems, and so on. But it's kind of been a step-by-step process. And one of the things I've learned in the Legislature is, if you don't get something done in one year like you'd like to, keep working at it. Senator Campbell knows that well. And so I see a progression of steps. We got started talking about climate change in LB583 two years ago. The university did the study which, by the way, is getting a lot of public attention across the state and across the nation. Then there's this round-table report which brought together the stakeholders in specific areas. And so I would see this task force now, since I'm leaving after one year, they're retiring me, and so I would see this as getting more state senators to pick up the issue and carry it forward. I don't know exactly where it's going to go. But with 61 percent in that poll saying, either agreeing or strongly agreeing, that

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Nebraska needs a climate action plan, that's pretty good progress over such a short period of time. I guess I just see that growing and multiplying. As time goes on, you know, the predictions in the middle of the century and the end of the century, wow, they're just going to force changes to happen in society. I hope we can take...you know, be more proactive and think about the changes coming. And I'll tell you just one real quick little story. For example, the city of Lincoln, you know, built...opened up Antelope Creek and the beautiful bike paths and all that sort of thing. When I was on the city council in the 1990s, all that water from Antelope Creek went through a tunnel that wasn't even as high as this room. Bricks were falling out of the tunnel and so on. It cost about a quarter of a billion dollars to open up Antelope Creek the way they did and make it beautiful, with pathways and so on. But without that, I think when the ten-inch rain came, if it all would have had to have gone through that little tunnel, that quite a bit of downtown Lincoln would have been flooded. At the University of Iowa, when they had the second 500-year flood in a decade, and that was in 2010, they had things like their records stored in the basements of buildings along the river, and so on. So they've taken it really seriously that they have to think of that the future may not be like the past, probably won't be. They have a warehouse now that has semis with portable structures that can be put up in two days that would give a, you know, a barrier along that river, instead of trying to put up sandbags that didn't work because the river came over it. So it's those kinds of things that we should start to think about and that this whole thing is about planning. This is all about planning and I just...one other term I'm going to throw at you is something called stationarity and stationarity is kind of the thing that we've gone on for a long time. You assume the future is going to be like the past and you plan on that basis. But we're realizing now that with climate change and the extreme weather events, that stationarity doesn't work so good anymore and we have to plan for these extreme events and plan for the future. What happens if you can't plant corn in Nebraska after...you know, by midcentury, etcetera, etcetera? So I think the momentum is building. It's come a long way in about three years. And I don't know what the future is going to be like, but I'm optimistic that it's catching on, people are catching on. Long answer, I'm sorry, but (laugh)... [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions? Thank you, Senator Haar. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you very much for your patience and thanks so much for the testifiers. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Items for the record? [LB802]

ELICE HUBBERT: (Exhibits 17-22) We have letters of support from the city of Lincoln, The Nature Conservancy, Laurie Gift of Omaha, the National Association of Social Workers-Nebraska Chapter, Wachiska Audubon Society, and Don Zebolsky of Omaha. [LB802]

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

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SENATOR HAAR: And one more thing, I didn't spell my name. It's H-a-a-r. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Why, we have to start all over. (Laugh) No. [LB802]

SENATOR HAAR: Thank you so much. [LB802]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. That concludes our hearings. And everyone have a good evening. [LB802]