

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee January 26, 2024
Rough Draft

BREWER: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. I'm Senator Tom Brewer, representing the 43rd Legislative District. And I serve as the Chair of this committee. The committee will take up bills in the order that there are posted on the agenda. Our hearing today is your public part of the legislative process. This is your opportunity to express your positions on proposed legislation before us. Committee members may come and go during the hearing. It's just part of the process. We have bills to introduce in other committees. I ask that you abide by the following procedures to better facilitate today's meetings. We'll start by having you turn off all your electronic devices or silence your phones. Let's see. The introducing senator will make initial comments, followed by proponents, opponents, and those in the neutral. Closing remarks are reserved for the introducing senator. If you're planning on testifying, please pick up one of the green testifier sheets on the table. We ask that you fill out the sheet complete and legibly so it can be used to put everything in the official record. If you are here and you want to have a record of it but do not want to testify, there are gold sheets that you can sign up on the table. And that will put it in the official record that you were here to attend the hearing. If you have handouts, we ask that you have 12 copies. And if by chance you don't, we do have pages that can help make some more copies. When you come up to testify, speak-- speak clearly into the microphone, state your name, and then spell both your first and last name so it too is entered into the record correctly. We're using the large-- light system today. You'll have three minutes. It'll have a green light for the first two, and then an amber for the last minute, and then the red. And there will also be an audible alarm that goes off after you run out of time. Let's see. No displays of support or opposition of bills, vocal or otherwise, will be allowed from the audience. Committee members with us here today will introduce themselves. And we will start on my right with Senator Sanders.

SANDERS: Good afternoon. Rita Sanders, District 45, which is the Bellevue-Offutt community.

AGUILAR: Ray Aguilar, District 35: Grand Island.

LOWE: John Lowe, District 37: Gibbon, Gibbon, Shelton, and Kearney.

HALLORAN: Good afternoon. Steve Halloran, District 33, which is Adams County, Kearney, and Phelps County.

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HUNT: I'm Megan Hunt. I represent District 8, which includes the northern part of Midtown Omaha.

BREWER: Dick Clark is the legal counsel for the Government Committee. Julie Condon is the committee clerk. And the Vice Chair is Senator Sanders. And with that, we got some pages to introduce. Let's see. Christine [PHONETIC], raise your hand. You're behind Halloran. Yes, you are. Over there. She is a political science major at UNL, a senior from North Platte; and Cameron, and he's political science also, and history, UNL senior from Omaha. And with that, we will open on our first bill: LB830. Senator Blood, welcome to the Government Committee.

BLOOD: Thank you, Chair Brewer. And good afternoon to you and the members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Senator Carol Blood, and that is spelled C-a-r-o-l B-l-o-o-d. And I represent Nebraska LD 3, which is comprised of western Bellevue and eastern Papillion, Nebraska. Today, I bring forth LB830 to establish the state tartan of Nebraska. Last year, I was able to meet with the Girl Scouts Saddle Brook, Saddle Brook Troop 42146, and they informed me of their Silver Award Project to have the tartan designed by the Nebraska State Tartan Task Force and to be recognized as the official state tartan. With over 39 different states having their own tartan, we can also express our pride in Nebraska through this legislation. These Scouts worked with the members of the Nebraska State Tartan Task Force that included Madi E., Cassie L., and Katie R., and Troop Leader Kathy Robbins-Wise, members of the Spirit of Nebraska Girl Scout Troop Honor Troop 42146, Susan Ritta of KZUM 89.3 FM radio, Kathy Robbins-Wise, Morgan Wise, and Caryl Bohn of the Scottish-- and if I say anybody's names wrong, I apologize-- of the Scottish Society of Nebraska, Morgan Wise of the St. David's Welsh Society of Nebraska; Dylan Tilley and Ben Coleman of the Celtic Society of Lincoln; Josh Haggin, Havala Shearer, and Chad Asherin at the Metro Area Kilted Throwers, and Lynn Johnson-Romero, Irish Culture-- Cultural Center of Omaha. So the tartan is officially registered with the Scottish Register of Tartans, which is the main organization referenced within this bill. The girls were awarded the Silver Award, but want to take this cause to the finish line. I have been inspired by the tenacity of these Girl Scouts and their admiration for the state of Nebraska. What the tartan itself represents speaks volumes about how these young women and members of the Tartan Task Force view the state, and it really should be celebrated. So using the song "Beautiful Nebraska--" and I know a lot of you think the Nebraska fight song is our state song, but it really is "Beautiful Nebraska--" and the state Blue Book, the symbolization

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of the Nebraska tartan includes the following colors: blue. With over 80,000 miles of rivers in the state and the name of our state being derived from the Otoe word for the Platte River, "nebrathka," meaning flat water, the tartan's blue background reflects the lakes and rivers in our state, not to mention the beautiful aquifers that flow beneath it. Yellow represents our tall and short grass prairies; Sandhills; state flower, which is goldenrod; and our state bird, the western meadowlark. Green. These squares-- squares represent our state's connection to trees and agriculture. According to the February 2022 Nebraska Agricultural Fact Card, 92% of Nebraska is farmland. Nebraska was originally designated the tree planter state by legislative action in 1895, and Nebraska's claim to tree planting fame includes the founding of Arbor Day in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska City. The Timber Culture Act of U.S. Senator Phineas W. Hitchcock in 1873 and the millions of trees planted by early settlers as windbreaks, woodlots, and orchards. Black. The black lines throughout the tartan represents the railroads that brought transportation and employment to many immigrants during the Homestead Act, and continue to this, to this day providing transportation and employment to people and goods in and traveling through Nebraska, especially with Bailey Yard in North Platte, Nebraska being the largest rail classification yard in the world. Scarlet. The scarlet lines represent the blood shed by those gone before us on this land, that we may learn from the lessons of our history. White reflects the state motto that we strive for: equality before law. We want to celebrate Troop 42146 to appear today and testify in support of LB830, but scheduling conflicts-- like going to school-- didn't allow that. But thankfully, the Girl Scouts Madison, Cassandra, and Kathryn wrote an online comment stating how enthralled the girls were to complete what they started almost four years ago and to complete the Silver Award Project. Thank you for listening. And feel free to ask any questions you may have, but I do see some testifiers here as well that will probably much be-- more entertaining than me.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for that opening. Let's see if we have any questions for you. Questions for Senator Blood? Senator Aguilar.

AGUILAR: Senator Blood.

BLOOD: Yes, sir?

AGUILAR: Just one question. Are you aware that the Governor may designate official state items?

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BLOOD: Yes, we are aware of that. And the Governors, both present and past, have done proclamations but never made a designation.

AGUILAR: OK.

BREWER: All right. Any other questions? All right. Will you stick around for close then?

BLOOD: I will gladly.

BREWER: All right. Thank you. All right. We are going to start with proponents to LB830. Come on up. Welcome to the Government Committee.

SUSAN RITTA: Thank you.

BREWER: Whenever you're ready, you can go ahead and start.

SUSAN RITTA: Hello. My name is Susan J. E. Ritta. Susan spelled S-u-s-a-n; Ritta spelled R-i-t-t-a. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of LB830, to ratify an official tartan for the state of Nebraska, the design being that which I currently am wearing, and details of which are in the handouts that are provided. My name is Susan J. E. Ritta, also known as Lady Susan on Thunder on the Plains, Nebraska's only Celtic radio show, airing for over 16 years on Lincoln's community radio station, KZUM. For the past five years, myself and representatives from four other Nebraska organizations promoting Celtic heritage, that Senator Blood had referenced, have been working hard to design and have ratified an esp-- official state tartan for the state of Nebraska. As she has mentioned, over 30 U.S. states have an official state tartan, and Nebraska is not one of them yet. We are proud to present this design. Created with the assistance of tartan-weaving mill, Locharron of Scotland, which has already been registered in the Scottish Tartan Registry in June 2022. In addition, this design was recognized via Governor proclamation, first by Governor Ricketts in April 2022 and again by Governor Pillen in April 2023 as part of Nebraska Tartan Day proclamations. A tartan is designed to be filled with symili-- symbolism, and ours is no different. Senator Blood did provide those details in her testimony earlier. In Scotland, a tartan represents a clan. In Ireland, a tartan represents a county or area. For Nebraska, this tartan represents both her land and her people. We offer this tartan to sign up as a gift from our united Celtic heritages for free use by all who love Nebraska and who identify as Nebraskan, now and forevermore, regardless of

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lineage. I'd like to thank my fellow collaborators on this State Tartan Project for their dedication and perseverance, the Office of the Governor for recognizing the tartan via proclamation in April 2022 and 2023, and to all of the committee for your thoughtful consideration today. With this, I humbly ask that you please advance LB830 to a floor vote. I am also happy to take any questions at this time. Thank you. Or as they say "as Gaelige--" in Irish-- go raibh maith agat.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for your testimony. And your example here matches the one that you're wearing. So we got a pretty good idea of what it looks like. And Senator Blood did a great job of explaining the details with the colors. So that's all very informative. Let's see if we have questions. Questions? Yeah. I think, I think you did a great job. Oh, I'm sorry. Senator Lowe.

LOWE: KUZ-- KUZMA?

SUSAN RITTA: KZUM.

LOWE: UM.

SUSAN RITTA: 89.3 FM here in Lincoln.

LOWE: 89.3. OK.

SUSAN RITTA: Yup.

BREWER: All right. Other questions? All right. Thank you for your testimony.

SUSAN RITTA: Thank you very much.

BREWER: OK. Additional proponents for LB830? Welcome to the Government Committee.

DYLAN TILLEY: Thank you, everyone. My name is Dylan Tilley, D-y-l-a-n; last name, T-i-l-l-e-y. I am a member of the Celtic Society of Lincoln, formerly the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Lincoln. I'm going to keep this very short and sweet because I know you all have better things to do than listen to me ramble. We would like to advocate in favor of this simply because it ties the community together in a way that is positive for all Nebraskans. And it gives an opportunity for the local Celtic community to have a representation when we visit and talk with other states about our tartan patterns and

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our, our cultural history. Susan covered everything that I needed to cover in depth and much better. But if you ever have any questions, we are more than happy to, to assist with anything we can do. Thank you very much.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for testimony. Any questions? All right. The next proponent for LB833.

CONRAD: Thank you so much. That's so nice.

BREWER: Welcome to the Government Committee.

EMILEE REECE: Thank you. My name is Emilee Reece. That's E-m-i-l-e-e R-e-e-c-e. I am a program specialist with Girl Scout Spirit of Nebraska. On behalf of Troop 42146, who could not be here today, I want to speak about my support of LB830 and recommend that the Nebraska tartan be adopted as the official tartan of the state of Nebraska. The journey to the introduction of LB830 begin with the establishment of the Nebraska State Tartan Project Task Force in 2019. Girl Scout Spirit of Nebraska Senior Honor Troop 42146 partnered with the task force to help advocate for the adoption of the official State Tartan of Nebraska as their Silver Award Project. The Silver Award is the highest award a cadet Girl Scout, or girls in grades six through eight, can earn. To earn the Silver Award, girls must identify an issue that is important to them, develop a plan that addresses that issue, and implement a sustainable take-action project. Over the last four years, these Girl Scouts, with the leadership and guidance of their troop coleaders, have learned about Nebraska history, administrative authority, and the legislative, legislative process all while practicing collaboration, patience, and persistence. With the passage of LB830, you will not only provide a long-awaited closure to a Girl Scout's Silver Award Project, but you will also help educate people about our state, as well as instill a sense of pride in Nebraska for all that wear the tartan. Thank you.

BREWER: Thank you. All right. Questions? Yes, Senator Hunt.

HUNT: Thank you so much for being here today. I am a lifetime Girl Scout, and I am so excited to learn about this Silver Award Project. Have you, to your knowledge as part of the Spirit of Nebraska Girl Scouts Org, have there been other Gold and Silver Award Projects that have involved the cooperation of the Legislature? How typical is that?

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EMILEE REECE: Not that I personally know of, but it's definitely possible that there have been. But it's pretty rare, I think, that a project reaches, you know, something like-- of this level. So it's pretty outstanding. I think that they--

HUNT: And the girls are in school right now?

EMILEE REECE: Yeah.

HUNT: Which is perhaps why they're not here.

EMILEE REECE: Yeah.

HUNT: Will you pass along my congratulations to them for--

EMILEE REECE: Yeah.

HUNT: --for their--

EMILEE REECE: Of course.

HUNT: --focus on this project and for reaching out to us?

EMILEE REECE: Yeah.

HUNT: Because whatever happens with this-- you know, that's really impressive, and they should be proud of that.

EMILEE REECE: Yeah. Of course.

HUNT: Thank you.

EMILEE REECE: Thank you.

BREWER: I'm going to predict very good things happening with this. All right. Any additional questions? Thank you for your testimony. OK. Any other proponents to LB830? Is there anyone here in opposition? Anyone here in the neutral? All right. Let's invite Senator Blood back up to wrap this up.

BLOOD: So in closing, I'd like to clarify one thing, is that I've been asked if this is part of my heritage. If it was part of my heritage, I'd be here promoting kolaches.

LOWE: Oh, please.

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BLOOD: Pardon?

LOWE: Please.

BLOOD: I, I'll bring some before the year is over. [INAUDIBLE]. These Girl Scouts have worked very hard. And I know we try very hard too to make sure that what we bring forward is something that is legislation, legislation worthy. We know that, in our state, we have many things that are state-oriented. We have Kool-Aid, is I think our, our state soft drink. Milk. I'm not sure what the category is, but milk is one of ours. So we have lots of categories like this. And we're not the only state that has, has done this or will hopefully do this. But I think it's a really important lesson for these young people to start with something and see it go through this process. And these girls have been diligent. These are young girls, young women who could have just taken shortcuts. But they have met with me multiple times. We've discussed how to make this happen. This had been over several year period. And it only came to legislation when they were never able to beyond-- get beyond the proclamation point. And I do remember-- and I don't know if this was before your time or not-- Senator Linehan had met with a grade school. And they wanted to make corn, our state vegetable. But corn is not a vegetable.

HUNT: Yeah.

LOWE: It's a grass.

BLOOD: Pardon?

LOWE: It's a grass.

BLOOD: Right. So we-- isn't that-- we haven't tried this before, but what a grand statement. And if it doesn't touch your heart to hear the description of the tartan, then you weren't listening. I'm very proud of these young people, and I look forward to the future that they have. And I bet one of them ends up being a state senator in a decade or so. So with that, I thank you for your time and for letting me bring forward this unique bill.

BREWER: All right. Let's see if we have some questions for you. Questions for Senator Blood? Senator Halloran.

HALLORAN: Thank you, Chairman Brewer. Not so much a question, but a, but a statement. You would, you would make William Wallace very proud. Braveheart.

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BLOOD: Oh, I've never watched that movie.

HALLORAN: A little bit of history going along, going along with this, this fine image that you're trying to project about the Scottish and, and, and Irish heritage. I, I'm hoping that the girls learn something about the proud, proud heritage, heritage of William Wallace.

BLOOD: I'm guessing that they learned a lot more than that along this process. And I will personally have a kilt made for you if you'll wear it on the day it gets to the floor.

HALLORAN: Well, as, as--

HUNT: Say yes. Say yes.

HALLORAN: Would I be required to go commando?

BLOOD: That was way too much information--

BREWER: All right. You were doing really good until you spoke.

BLOOD: And I'm glad the Girl Scouts are not in this room right now.

HALLORAN: That's tradition.

BLOOD: It, it's true. And I would be very impressed if you were that bold.

BREWER: All right. Any other questions for Senator Blood? Yes. All right.

BLOOD: Thank you for, for the fun.

BREWER: Just, just a quick note as you're heading out here. You have ten proponents, no opponents, none in the neutral. And since you had no testifiers in opposition or in neutral, I think you have a great candidate for consent calendar.

BLOOD: But I would need all of your support in order for that to happen.

BREWER: I think we'll, we'll get there. All right. Well, thank you.

BLOOD: Now I have to go watch the movie.

SANDERS: --just to see the kilt.

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BREWER: With that, we will go ahead and wrap up on LB830 and get set for our next bill.

BLOOD: Thank you, sir.

CONRAD: Thank you.

BREWER: Thank you.

HUNT: We have fun, don't we?

SANDERS: It's, it's amazing we can get work done.

AGUILAR: Would you push that mic down so it's closer to the speaker?

BREWER: We were doing so good, Halloran, until you had to jump in there and gum up things.

SANDERS: She's getting over-- you know. She's--

HALLORAN: Levity, like brevity, is the soul of wit.

HUNT: I think, I think Murman has a bill against that. What we're talking about?

BREWER: All right.

SANDERS: Can't unhear it.

BREWER: Now, LB1102 would be, would be your bill?

CONRAD: Am I up next? All right.

SANDERS: Ibach?

CONRAD: I thought Ibach was next, but I can jump--

DICK CLARK: Well, I think there was a conflict where she's in another committee.

CONRAD: Oh, OK. You got it.

BREWER: Senator Conrad. Welcome to your Government Committee.

CONRAD: Hello, friends. Chairman Brewer, members of the committee. My name is Danielle Conrad, D-a-n-i-e-l-l-e; Conrad, C-o-n-r-a-d. Not a lifetime Girl scout, but a former Girl Scout, and proud member of this

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Government Committee and this Legislature. I am pleased today to-- and, and help me [INAUDIBLE] a quick energy segue and quick energy shift here from a very festive and celebratory bill that we just heard from Senator Blood in regards to the state tartan and the lighthearted moment that we all shared in regards to that Q&A thanks to Senator Halloran. Going to just kind of help us maybe code-switch here a little bit to a much more serious and, and kind of grave and, and tragic kind of situation that families in our state have had to contend with. And so this is one of those measures, LB1102. It, it's a bill that I, I probably would have never put on my personal legislative agenda when I was planning or preparing for session. This just isn't an issue that I had previously worked on or had been on my radar screen. And then there were some family members of missing Nebraskans who came through the Capitol this interim and made connection at my office and started to help raise awareness about the issue and educate my staff and myself about these important issues. And I know some of those members, family members are here to testify as well. And so basically, learning from them that we have had proclamations, gubernatorial proclamations in the past to designate a Nebraska Missing Persons Day. And of course, that's been deeply appreciated. There is an opportunity that other states have utilized to designate an official state Missing Persons Day in the statute books to have a focal point, to raise awareness, to provide remembrance of that loved one who was, was missing or lost. And so LB1102 would declare October 17 of each year as Nebraska Missing Persons Day. It would be observed not only for the missing people but also for the families and the friends and the loved ones who deal with the trauma of having a loved one go missing without a trace. So I know that you're all aware of some of the really high-profile cases that we've had in Nebraska for missing people. When the-- I definitely remember from our community when Gina Bos went missing in October 7-- on October 17, 2000 from downtown Lincoln and hasn't been heard or seen since that time. Her family started a foundation. They've been a big part of bringing this bill forward. And I know that there are a lot of other family members that are hurting and looking forward to some positive action in regards to this bill. My email has been, maybe not completely full-- filled, but I've received a lot more feedback from family members than I anticipated after this bill was introduced. And I can tell you, as a mom, there's a lot of stories in there about missing kids. And it, it really, really pulls at your heartstrings. And then finally, I think that you're well-aware, driving around town or reading the news, that there's a very high-profile missing persons case happening in Lincoln right now for a beloved community member and

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that people are, are still working in earnest to try and figure out what happened there. But when I was preparing for the hearing, I was thinking about, after that period of time when the yard signs go down or the billboards go down or the search teams are disassembled, you know, is there something else that we can do as a community, as a state to still provide a focal point or recognition to raise awareness? So in addition to some of those individual high-profile cases that we're well familiar with, I also wanted to thank Senator Raybould-- and I know she had to leave today because she was under the weather-- and Senator Brewer for their incredible leadership in raising attention for murdered and missing Indigenous women as well in Nebraska and across the country. And, and I think there's definitely intersections and tie-ins here as well, so. Happy to answer questions. And I know there's some family members that are here today to share their stories as well.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for that opening. Let's see if we have some questions. Questions? The, the date that was picked, was there a, a unique significance to the 17th of October?

CONRAD: I-- yes. Thank you so much, Chair Brewer. I think that the date, as designated in the legislation as drafted, coincides with the date that Gina Bos went missing in Lincoln back in 2000.

BREWER: Very good. Thank you. All right. You'll stick around to close?

CONRAD: Yes, please. Yes.

BREWER: All right. So we will start with proponents to LB1102. Come on up. Welcome to the Government Committee.

RHEA BARFIELD: Hi. Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Brewer and the esteemed members of the committee. My name is Rhea Barfield, and that's R-h-e-a B-a-r-f-i-e-l-d. I am here today representing the families of Nebraska missing persons because I am one of them. Jannel Rap wishes she could be with us today, as she too has a missing loved one: Gina Bos. So why Nebraska Missing Persons Day? According to the FBI, there are-- there were 3,000 missing person reports in Nebraska in 2023. They-- the, the year concluded with 84 who were still missing. As we are standing here before you, eight more missing persons reports will be filed today in Nebraska. This is what's happening right now. Since the start of 2024, 53 missing persons cases have already been filed with the Nebraska State Patrol. The following are just a small portion of the Nebraska missing. They are my cousin:

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Tyler Goodrich, a 35-year-old father and resident of Lincoln who disappeared on November 3, 2023; Marilyn Alexander, a 39-year-old mother who vanished from Hastings in 2001; Taries Price, an eight-year-old girl who vanished in June of 2020 along the Platte River; Chance Englebert, a 28-year-old father last seen in Gering, Nebraska in July of 2019; Jason Jolkowski, a 19-year-old missing man from Omaha, last seen taking out the trash in 2001; Christopher Loupin, a 28-year-old man who was last seen at a campsite at Elm Creek; Sunny Sramek, an 18-year-old female from Trenton who vanished on her way to Omaha in 2001; Cindy Valle, a 15-year-old girl last seen in Omaha in August of 2011; Joseph Bermel, a 44-year-old male who went missing from Omaha just four days ago; And Ream Alahanui [PHONETIC], a 17-year-old male from Lincoln who has been missing for the last five days. And then there's Jannel Rap's sister, Gina Bos, who has been missing from Lincoln, Nebraska since October 17 of 2000. We honor Gina by naming October 17 as Nebraska Missing Persons Day. In the last 23 years since her disappearance, Gina's family has met with thousands of families who have been thrust into a group that they never wanted to join. Our missing loved ones left behind their lives-- sorry-- their hopes and dreams, and their futures. And then we are left behind wondering what happened, why it happened, and if there was anything we could do to have prevented it. Worst of all is living with the knowledge that perhaps we have not done enough because they still haven't been found. So sorry.

BREWER: No, you're good. You're good. Drive on.

RHEA BARFIELD: Our loved ones have simply vanished. Simply vanished. It gives law enforcement nothing to follow up on and media agencies nothing to report. Everyone's hands are tied. The hope is lost and our families are left feeling alone. Placing October 17 as Nebraska's Missing Persons Day on Nebraska's official calendar gives the families of those who have disappeared a current story and the power to ask for their story to be told by their local media. This special day dedicated to highlighting our loved ones will renew our hope and give the public an opportunity to be part of the solution. This is more than, than just naming a day. It's our rainbow. It's our ability to restore that hope, to allow remembrance and to refresh the minds of everyone around us. So I urge you to vote in favor of October 17 as being marked as Nebraska Missing Persons Day. Your "yes" vote will be the story and give power and a voice back to our families and the ones that are still missing. Because we are nothing without each other. We're nothing without our families. This day will live beyond us and be a legacy of care passed down to future Nebraskans. So with your

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guys' favorable vote and the good people of Nebraska, so much is possible. Thank you so much for taking your time to listen and to consider October 17 as officially being designated as Nebraska-- Nebraska Missing Persons Day.

BREWER: Thank you for your testimony. Well, let's see if we have any questions. Questions? Questions? All right. Oh, Senator Lowe.

LOWE: Thank you, Chairman. And thank you for coming to testify today. We don't get many emotional bills in this committee.

RHEA BARFIELD: Sorry.

LOWE: And I was going to allow you more time to finish if you ran out of time. So I, I appreciate you coming and telling the story--

BREWER: Someone made sure she didn't run out of time.

LOWE: I, I, I saw that was longest yellow light I've ever seen.

RHEA BARFIELD: I talk fast, so the tears can be, you know. Thank you.

LOWE: Thank you.

BREWER: All right. Any other questions? All right. Thank you for coming. Thank you for your testimony.

RHEA BARFIELD: And thank you for the water.

HALLORAN: Just a quick comment.

BREWER: Yes.

HALLORAN: Whatever you do, don't give up hope.

RHEA BARFIELD: No. My cousin, Tyler-- his parents are here, Lonnie and Pam. And we will never. We can't. It's not in our blood, so. Thank you guys so much.

BREWER: You bet. Thank you for being here. OK. We are still on proponents to LB1102. Any other proponents? Anybody here in opposition? Good. Anyone here in neutral for LB1102? All right. We will invite Senator Conrad to come-- Oh. I'm sorry. Oh, we had someone--

LONNIE GOODRICH: This was unplanned, but.

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BREWER: No. Come on up.

LONNIE GOODRICH: Proponent.

BREWER: Proponent. All right. I, I went pretty quick there, so. Please have a seat. Sit down.

LONNIE GOODRICH: I wasn't intending to do this, but.

BREWER: And relax and just--

LONNIE GOODRICH: Lonnie Goodrich, L-o-n-n-i-e G-o-o-d-r-i-c-h. And I will try to do this without tears. Tyler Goodrich is our son. He's been missing since November 3. Short and sweet. Anything that we can do that keeps these people's face in the news, keeps people's names in everyone's hearts, anything for any person, whether it's missing 1 day or 23 years, that we never forget. Because that's the only hope as a parent of a missing person. That's the only hope we have, is that people continue to see their face and to recognize the problem that we have with people going missing, whether it's on their own accord or whether it is because of criminal activity or whatnot. But our hope is to keep their faces and their names out there so that they're always alive to the rest of the state and people will never give up and they will keep looking for them. That's all I have.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for that testimony. Let's see if we have any questions for you. Questions? Questions? Well, thank you for that extemporaneous-- I-- it's always from the heart when you come up and do that, and we appreciate it. All right. I'm going to back up in case I missed it. Any other proponents?

ELIZABETH GEORGE: I actually would like to testify as well. [INAUDIBLE]. My name is Elizabeth George, Elizabeth; last name, George, G-e-o-r-g-e. July 25 was the last time I saw my daughter. My story doesn't end that way. My daughter was found a few months-- a few days ago. She struggles with mental illness and drug addiction. Somehow made it all the way from Lincoln, Nebraska to live in a tent on Venice Beach. Having their faces front and center is how she was found. Jannel personally, which is Gina Bos's sister, personally went and passed out fliers at the last place she was seen. And months later, that flier led to my daughter. So on behalf of all of the missing persons in this, this state, this country, and this world, which is far too many, this is important. They deserve to remember-- be remembered. They deserve to be looked for. That's all I have.

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BREWER: All right. Thank you for your testimony. Let's see if we have any questions. Questions? All right. Thank you again. All right. Any additional proponents? Is there anybody here as an opponent? Anyone here in the neutral? All right. With that, I'll invite Senator Conrad back up to wrap it up.

CONRAD: Very briefly. Thank you so much, Chair. Thank you, members of the committee, for your consideration and kind questions and affirming notes of hope, which I think that we can always utilize and should always reflect upon together. I want to thank the families that stepped forward today. I mean, clearly, the most devastating kind of testimony to provide, especially in this kind of forum, about something that's so traumatic and, and that hits so close to home and to the heart. And I, I think clearly their, their heartache was, was on display, as we could each imagine walking in their shoes, perhaps, as they've found the self on this, this really challenging journey. So with that being said, I know that each of the cases that they highlighted today, from what I've been able to read about their missing family members, that they were very vibrant and beloved members of the community who contribute a lot of really important things to our communities and want to remember those, those positive aspects as well. But there's no fiscal note on the legislation. And would definitely urge your favorable consideration. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

BREWER: All right. Thank you. Let's see if I have questions for you. Questions for Senator Conrad? Again, I won't-- we'll exec next week.

CONRAD: OK.

BREWER: You have zero opponents, zero in the neutral on-- from the testimony today. So we'll, we'll get a vote next week for you and--

CONRAD: Very good.

BREWER: --see if we can't move this along.

CONRAD: Very good. Thank you so much.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for your testimony. All right. We'll close out on LB1102. And next up-- oh. One proponent, zero opponents, zero in the neutral on LB1102. Next up is LR276.

IBACH: Thank you for passing over and accommodating my other schedule. I appreciate that.

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BREWER: Senator Ibach, welcome to the Government Committee.

LOWE: You know how to clear a room.

BREWER: And not in a good way.

LOWE: Yeah.

IBACH: Thank you. Thank you.

AGUILAR: You're not going to make us cry, are you?

IBACH: I was going to say this might be enjoyable. Good afternoon, Chairman Brewer and members of the-- go ahead?

BREWER: Why don't we-- why don't we hold just a little bit longer? We'll let some folks get out here and get Senator Conrad back and we'll just--

IBACH: Oh, OK. Thank you.

BREWER: We'll start reading through your materials just for a little bit there.

IBACH: Yeah. There's lots of homework.

BREWER: Lots of homework? That's what everyone wants to hear on a Friday afternoon.

IBACH: I feel bad because I didn't-- I thought Judiciary would go longer than this committee, and I think we're about done over there.

BREWER: Is Wayne shooting through people pretty fast in there, is he?

IBACH: He had a couple shell bills. And I'm like, what?

BREWER: Well, that will pick up the pace, the shell bills. All right. Whenever you're ready.

IBACH: OK. Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Chairman Brewer, members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. My name is Senator Teresa Ibach, I-b-a-c-h. And I'm here to present LR276 for your consideration. If adopted, LR276 would ask members of the United States Congress to enact federal legislation to change all counties in Nebraska east of Sheridan County, Garden County, and Deuel county to the Central Time Zone, as illustrated in the map I presented

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you. After being asked by numerous constituents over the interim to move the time zone line to the Nebraska-Colorado border, I began to explore the background of the issue and how this could be achieved. I discovered that time zone boundaries are established by federal law, but can also be changed by the United States Secretary of Transportation if adjustment is deemed to benefit commerce. Since time zones are supposed to be-- supposed to be standardized, states cannot single-handedly make this change, which is why I'm presenting you with a resolution instead of an actual bill. Over the last two decades, 15 communities have changed their time zone boundaries, with the last change occurring in 2010. This is not a new concept for Nebraska. I provided you a map from Rand McNally from 1921, which shows the time zone line has been changed at least one time in Nebraska over the past hundred years, and a map of the current time zone so you can see all the changes over the past century across the nation. In fact, the community of Valentine experienced a change such as this in the '60s. Prior to the change, the Central and Mountain Time Zone ran right along Valentine's Main Street. If you were on the east side of the street, you are in Central Time Zone; and if you on the west side of the street, you are in Mountain Time Zone. It was then determined it was beneficial to move Valentine into the Central Time Zone, and the boundary was moved further west. After the change, Valentine was no longer split. However, Cherry County remains split. To me and to the cosponsors of this resolution, it makes sense to move the boundary line further west to the Cherry County line and to follow the county line south, which would create a relatively straight line that would bisect the state cleanly. Of all the legislation I have introduced, I have probably received the most feedback on this measure. There's been some opposition, but most times when I explained what LR276 would seek to achieve, most of them believe it is actually-- it actually does make sense. That being said, as I mentioned before, the state cannot make this change alone. Even if the Legislature were to adopt this measure, it would either require a change in federal law, or U.S. DOT-- Department of Transportation-- approval for this to go into effect. But I do believe this is a conversation worth having, which what-- which is why I have brought LR276 to you today. With that, I would be open to any questions you might have.

BREWER: All right. Thank you for that intro. So if we go back here and we look at this map of Nebraska-- this was the old one from 1923?

HALLORAN: 1921.

IBACH: Yes.

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BREWER: Wow. There was a big notch right in the middle of the state. When you did your research on this, was this the reason why they don't just run down a latitude or longitude and keep it simple?

IBACH: Well, it, it's based on the railroad. So once upon a time, when the railroad was running through, it was based on changes with them-- with their trajectory. History day and--

BREWER: You learn something new every day. Well, let's see if we don't have some questions for you. Senator Lowe.

LOWE: Thank you. Was there any thought of just moving it to the Nebraska border?

IBACH: You mean with the panhandle as well?

LOWE: With the panhandle as well.

IBACH: Well, I--

LOWE: Just so all of Nebraska's under one time zone, whether it's Mountain Time or Central Time.

IBACH: Well, I've had a few of those conversations, but most people in the panhandle do not want us to touch their Mountain Time Zone. The--

LOWE: That's, that's why I said change to Mountain Time all over, over the state.

IBACH: You want to change the whole state to Mountain Time? Well, that would be a notch. You think this was a notch?

HALLORAN: We'd have mountains. Never mind.

IBACH: That, that would be a barrier, yes.

BREWER: Yeah. That would, that would be a challenge. OK. Other questions? All right. Thank you. You'll stick around for close?

IBACH: Yep. For sure.

BREWER: All right. All right. We'll start with proponents to LR276. We'll go to opponents to LR276. How about, anybody in the neutral on LR276? All right. Senator Ibach, would you like to--

IBACH: I told you it would be easy.

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BREWER: Well, it's a, it's a Friday afternoon. And, and we appreciate your, your kindness on that one. Let me read into the record here. On LR276: zero proponents, six opponents, zero in the neutral. And with that, we will close on LR276. And we will also close our hearing for today. So we had predicted an hour, and we're going to be a little better than that. So anyway, thank you. And everybody, have a good weekend.