

ARCH: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber, Chamber for the forty-third day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, First Session. Our chaplain for today is Pastor Michael Eckelkamp from Christ Lincoln, here in Lincoln, Nebraska. He is the guest of Senator Mike Jacobson. Please rise.

MICHAEL ECKELKAMP: A prayer by George Washington. Almighty God, we earnestly pray that you will keep our country under your holy protection, guide the hearts of our citizens to respect and follow our government, and inspire us to show kindness, love, unity toward one another and all fellow Americans. Please, most graciously help us to act justly, love mercy, and carry ourselves with that same compassion, humility, and a peaceful spirit that characterized the example of the divine author of our faith. Without following this example, we cannot hope to be truly content and blessed as a nation. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ARCH: I recognize Senator Andersen for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANDERSEN: Colleagues, please join me. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ARCH: Thank you. I call to order the forty-third day of the One Hundred Ninth Legislature, First Session. Senators, please record your presence. Roll call. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: There's a quorum present, Mr. President.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Are there any corrections for the Journal?

CLERK: I have no corrections this morning, sir.

ARCH: Thank you. Are there any messages, reports or announcements?

CLERK: There are, Mr. President. Your Committee on Judiciary, chaired by Senator Bosn, reports LB6, LB93, LB475, and LB641, and LB704 to General File, some having committee amendments. Additionally, communication from the Governor concerning an appointment to the State Racing and Gaming Commission. Additionally, a communication from the Governor concerning an-- a withdrawal of an appointment from the Rural Health Advisory Board. Notice of committee hearing from the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. A committee report from the Agriculture Committee concerning gubernatorial appointment of Anna Castner

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

Wightman to the Nebraska State Fair Board. Notice from the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee that they've selected LB398 and LB311 as the committee priority bills for the session. Communication from Senator Meyer, declaring LB382 as his personal priority bill for the session; communication from Senator Hughes, designating LB303 as her personal priority bill for the session; and a communication from Senator Sanders, designating LB649 as her personal priority for the session. That's all I have at this time, Mr. President.

ARCH: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will now proceed to the first item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, first item on the agenda, Senator Raybould would move to withdraw LB605.

ARCH: Senator Raybould, you are recognized to open on your motion.

RAYBOULD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues. I ask that you vote affirmatively for-- to allow us to remove LB605 from the hearing that was scheduled for next week.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, you're recognized to close on your motion. Senator Raybould waives close. Colleagues, the question before the body is the motion to withdraw LB605. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 34 ayes, 0 nays on the motion to withdraw, Mr. President.

ARCH: The motion to withdraw is successful. Colleagues, we will now move to Final Reading. Members should return to their seats in preparation for Final Reading. Please return to your seats. Senators, please check in for Final Reading. Senator Kauth, Senator Dover, Senator Clouse, Conrad, Sorrentino, Riepe, Hunt, please check in. Mr. Clerk, we will move to Final Reading. The first bill is LB241.

CLERK: [Read LB241 on Final Reading]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB241 pass? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, Clements, Clouse, DeKay, Dover, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

Riepe, Sanders, Sorrentino, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: Senators Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Conrad, DeBoer, Dungan, Fredrickson, Hunt, Juarez, McKinney, Rountree, Spivey. Not voting: Senators Dorn and Guereca. Vote is 36 ayes, 11 nays, 2 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB241 passes. We will now proceed to LB247. The first vote is to dispense-- excuse me. Mr. Clerk, for a motion.

CLERK: Mr. President, a motion. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh would move to return the bill to Select File for a specific amendment, that being FA34, to strike the enacting clause.

ARCH: Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to open on FA34.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I've, I've, I've talked about this a little bit. But last night, some things happened and they really crystallized, solidified for me how awful this has become, how like, just unbelievably toxic and partisan and petty this has become. And I've said this in the past. Like, you give me no reason to, in, in everybody in here's words, behave. And I have no reason to behave. I have no reason to hold my tongue. I have no reason to not take time. You've taken all of that from me. And when you take that from me, what you're actually doing is taking good public policy away from the people of Nebraska, for petty partisanship. So I have no reason. So I will stand here and I will talk on whatever I want, whenever I want, however I want, and I will take time and I will slow things down. Because in addition to taking everything that I care about away, you also keep putting forth some of the most ridiculous concepts that do nothing to help the people of Nebraska. So here we are. And I'm going to take time. I've got 10 minutes. Then I can talk 2 times, and then I have 5 minutes to close. So, I guess you all have 25 minutes to do what you'd like. I might not take all of the time, so I wouldn't go too far, or I might take all of the time. Who knows? And I have a motion filed on the next one. And honestly, if I wanted to, for those of you who are new, I could take, on my own, 50 minutes on this. Because I can take my 25 minutes, then we vote, then I can do a motion to reconsider that vote, and then we can do that-- I can do my 25 minutes again. And then if anybody else wants to talk, then that just adds-- could get up to an hour on this one bill and this one motion. And I don't care what we get to. And I don't care what's on the agenda, because you all have made sure that there is nothing that I care about that is going to move forward in this body this year. So congratulations. Welcome. Get used to my voice. You're going to be hearing it a lot. So, what, what should we

talk about? Well, we had a lovely visit yesterday from the, the President of Ireland, someone who I have known for a few years and is a great human being. And I'm glad that he got to know so many of you. Interesting thing about Irish history is my family-- part of my family that came to America came during the po-- potato famine, came during political unrest and uprising when people were starving. And the government at that time was not caring for the people, and so they were basically political refugees in America. I, of course, have had the great privilege of growing up as a white person in America, although my great grandparents were very heavily discriminated against for being Irish. But eventually, assimilation because of skin color afforded future generations a lack of that discrimination. Of course, having red hair comes with its own discrimination, but it's not-- not to play any small violins because, you know, having red hair isn't really a great burden in my life. I kind of like having red hair. So yeah. So we've got some bills, we've got this budget, and this budget is like, bananas to me. So the budget is like-- everything about it is how can we get property tax relief for farmers, not how can we fund government's resources or programs or public education? We had the Library Board yesterday. We, we are taking like-- not giving them like \$40,000 to pay their rent, for property tax relief. And, you know, I had a great conversation with Senator Spivey about like, how important libraries are and what a great resource they are. I think it was Senator Lippincott that talked about how great the libraries were in his community. They won a national award. But we, we just-- we can't actually fund them because we need property tax relief. And we keep having these conversations about the deficit. It's not a deficit. We are actually choosing-- you look at the budget, we are choosing to have a deficit. We have created a deficit by putting money into a fund to reimburse people for their property taxes. And then we have these entities come in and testify in Appropriations, saying you're taking money out of our cash funds and putting them into general funds. And I say, yes. So what are you going to do about it? Well, we'll have to use our levying authority and raise property taxes. How does that make sense? How does that make sense that we are going to raise our property taxes to pay for property tax relief? Anybody? It doesn't, does it? No. So our priority bills are due. Our designations are due by tomorrow. And I have not filed one because I don't know what to prioritize. I've only been able to get one of my bills execed on, and it is almost the definition of a "do nothing" bill, because it's just putting into statute what DHHS is already doing by federal law. It's just creating that security for our childcare community to have it in statute, that this is definitely going to happen by a date certain. So it's a-- it is a do nothing law that couldn't even get 25 votes. It

barely got 25 votes after several floor maneuvers and 3 rounds of voting. Then it got 25 votes and it moved to the next round, where it will sit and die because that's how this place works. So I don't have anything to prioritize. And I'm, you know, thinking about it, what I want to prioritize. And the bill I wanted to prioritize was IPPed, not just left to sit in the committee, it was IPPed. This is a bill that I brought in 2023. This is a bill that I talked with the Governor's Office in 2023 and 2024. We have been working on this bill for years. It is a really, really good bill. And for pettiness, absolutely categorically pettiness, it was IPPed. This is a bill that could be transformative to poor people, families, in this state. It would be the most significant thing we would do for low-income families in Nebraska, and it was IPPed for pettiness. So what we're going to do is we're going to talk, and then we're going to talk some more, and then we're going to talk some more. So we've got this program. It's called TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. And I would say, putting it generously, that program has been abused by this state. And I don't mean abused like poor people are scamming the system, like some of you want to believe that they're lazy and they don't work-- because you have to work to get TANF. I mean abused by the Legislature and by the various administrations. It's been abused because instead of going to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, it's gone to things like crisis pregnancy centers that aren't actual medical--

ARCH: Time, Senator.

M. CAVANAUGH: --facilities.

ARCH: And you're next in the queue.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President-- that aren't actual medical facilities and to, to provide non-medical information to pregnant women. Now, I'm not saying that crisis pregnancy centers don't offer good services. They offer car seats and diapers and parenting classes, and that's fantastic. But they aren't a medical facility and they shouldn't be treated as one. So we're putting money towards that. We're also putting money towards a fatherhood program. You know what makes people good fathers? When they can feed their kids. You know what else makes people good fathers? When they can pay their rent and keep their kids in their homes. You know what else makes them good fathers is when we don't keep them incarcerated and pay them \$2 or less an hour. That helps make for good fathers. I don't know what the father pro-- Fatherhood program is under the TANF funding, but giving those fathers the financial resources to care for their children would do a lot more for their kids and for their relationship with their

kids than whatever programming we're doing. But we cannot, Nebraska. We absolutely cannot, under any circumstance, can we trust poor people. We cannot trust poor people. We can't give them money and then let them make their own decisions about how to take care of their families. They're poor. They need us to tell them how to take care of their families. They need us to be that nanny state for them. They need us to regulate every aspect of their lives. They need us to make sure that they are going to work. They need us to make sure that their kids are going to childcare when they go to work. We need them to tell us every day their kid goes to childcare and every day their kid is sick. And then we need to know why they didn't go, and we need to know why they lost a job or why they don't make enough money. But it can't possibly be that they are being underpaid by their employer because minimum wage isn't a livable wage. No. It's because they're lazy. And then they need us to protect them from ever unionizing or professionalizing their gig economy job. They need us to protect them and tell them how to live their lives in every facet. They need us to tell them about what to do with their bodies. They need us to tell them what bathrooms they can use and what bathrooms their children can use. They need us to tell them what books they can read. They need us to tell them how to parent. They need us to tell them how to live. They need us. Thank God we aren't working ourselves out of a job. And once we find out how to legislate all of the facets of their lives, we can go back and we can use the HHS priority bill, and we can just eliminate whole programs. The HHS priority bill eliminates the autism waiver. That alone should have been its own bill and its own public hearing. There are 58 sections in the HHS priority bill. I encourage people to take a look. It's LB376. The first section changes language in statute that is what I think would be called a cleanup to the ballot initiative on abortion. Any cleanup on the ballot initiative to abortion should have been its own bill. These supposed cleanups to the minimum wage and the sick leave bills or ballot initiatives were their own bills, their own public hearings. Why wasn't this one? Why wasn't LB376, the Section 1 that's the cleanup abortion language, why wasn't that its own hearing? Why wasn't eliminating the autism waiver from statute its own hearing? These are things that I would love to know. And since when we get to that bill, we only have 8 hours, I will spend more time talking about that, because there's a lot. We are eliminating-- oh, what was that-- there-- there's a report we're eliminating. We're, we're eliminating a lot of reports because they're obsolete. And the fun thing about that is that because they're trying to eliminate all these reports, I started looking at some of them.

ARCH: Time, Senator. Senator Fredrickson would like to recognize Dr. Matthew Halfar of Omaha, who's serving as the family physician of the day. Please rise. Be recognized by the Legislature. Senator Bob Hallstrom would also like to recognize some guests. They are seated in the north balcony. There are 12 members of the Nemaha County Leadership Nebraska-- from Leadership Nebraska City. Please rise. Be recognized by your Legislature. Senator Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. So because they're eliminating these reports, I started looking at them. And so, first of all, there's this question. Well, nobody reads the reports, so let's get rid of them. I read reports. I don't read all of them. There's a lot, but I read the ones that I'm interested in, and other people read the ones that they're interested in. And those reports exist because they were put into statute, and they were put into statute with a public hearing. There was a bill. There was a public hearing. It moved through the Legislature. There was a reason. But putting it-- removing it from statute with 58 other sections of things you're removing from statute, not a standalone bill. So here's one. It's a report that was just received on January 31, and it's the Child Support New Hire Report. And so, in the report list on this, it say-- let me find this one. I apologize. Child support. OK. It says-- what it says here, it, it refutes the statute-- references the statute, 1997 to 2012. It's the child support/license suspended report. That's what it says on this document from HHS about what these things eliminate. Child support/license suspended report. OK, so here's the report from DHHS on January 31, 2025. It's got the text, referencing blah, blah, blah, blah. It says, number of employees reported in 2024, and then number of matches with child support files in 2024. The New Hire Reporting Act requires employers who hire or rehire any employee to report this information to the Nebraska State Directory of New Hires. The data is cross-referenced and matched against parties with an open childhood enforcement case. The new hire report in-- assists in the location establishment enforcement of child support orders. OK. So what this report is supposed to do is to tell us how many people had their license suspended, how many people who work in child support had their license suspended and were rehired. That is a report that is important information. If this report goes from 10,000 to 100,000 people being suspended and rehired, or from 100,000 to 10,000 people being suspended and rehired, that is a red flag that we should be looking into, that we should be asking questions about. There is a reason for this report, and that reason is so that we can track what is happening with the people who are working with our most vulnerable populations.

But LB376 eliminates this report. It's one page. It cannot possibly be that hard to, once a year, file with the Clerk of the Legislature one page, to let us know how things are going with those who are licensed to work in child support. But we can't possibly have that level of government. Now, the autism waiver. So here's what it says. The-- this is the author-- this was authorized in 20-- 2007 but never launched due to lack of funding-- outright repealed, outright repealed. I'd like to know if in the hearing there was any discussion about the lack of funding, if there was any discussion about the need for this waiver, if there was any discussion about what is going on with this waiver, why have we not used these resources? How does the-- eliminating this waiver fit into the greater picture of what the department wants to do with eliminating the DD waitlist? Why not this waiver? This waiver could be a tool in that. We could take people off of the DD waitlist who just needed the autism services if we actually decided to fund the autism waiver. But instead of having that comprehensive conversation, we're just going to outright repeal. Outright repeal. Now, why does that matter? Well, if we didn't outright repeal, then this would still be a tool in our toolkit that we could potentially use in addressing developmental disability and intellectual disabilities in the state of Nebraska. Now we outright repeal it and here's what happens. We decide that, you know what? Actually we do want to do this. So next year, somebody in this body brings a bill for the autism waiver. I think I'm out of time. So I will wait for my close.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, you are welcome to close on your motion to return to Select File.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. So the autism waiver, if somebody-- if we outright repeal it and somebody decides next year or the year after that actually, that was a really good waiver and we should be using it. So you bring a bill. You go through the hearing process. That takes months. Then you get it passed, then it is enacted. Then DHHS starts to work on a Spa. Then they apply for it, then they get it. Then you have to fund it. Then it happens. This could be 2 to 3 years after, 2 to 3 years after, or we could just leave it alone and it's there. It's not time-consuming for us to keep the autism waiver as a tool available to us. It is time-consuming for us to reinstate it. It is time-consuming for us to go through that entire process that we did back in 20-- 2007. So why are we doing it? Because some consultant thought it was a good idea, just like some consultant thought it was a good idea to raid, raid the Blind Commission's cash fund, which, by the way, yes. We are raiding the Blind Commission's cash fund. And that was a great hearing in

Appropriations, colleagues. When the Blind Commission came in because we were raiding their cash fund and we had a young man come crying, made pretty much everybody cry, talking about his loss of sight from second grade to jun-- to high school to now, and how the Blind Commission helped teach him the tools he needed to feel like he was fully engaged in his life, and that he had prospects for a future, like to become an attorney. And teaching people tools on how to navigate the world and the workforce, that's what the Blind Commission does. But that is a DEI program, so I can understand why we would want to raid that fund. Because when we think of DEI, we think of only the queer population and black people. And so, I mean, first of all, those are people who should be included, but it also includes blind people, and hard of hearing people, and making accommodations for people, and ensuring that people are, are engaged within the workforce, in the schools, in the fullest extent possible, but we are defunding those things. We're taking money from the Blind Commission. We're taking money from the Hard and Hearing Commission. We're eliminating DEI programs. We're eliminating autism waivers. We're doing great, Nebraska. Your Nebraska Legislature, standing up for the most vulnerable people in this state, including those that could use TANF. But instead, we'll just raid that TANF fund and give it to all kinds of other things that are tangentially qualifying. We have a bill this year in Appropriations to fix a bill from a previous year to fund domestic violence shelters with TANF funds, because you can't do that. It's very, very cumbersome, because TANF has to serve a specific population, and you have to document that you're serving that specific population. But we don't want to serve that population because they're poor. We're OK with serving people who are victims of domestic violence, which is great, admirable, fantastic, but not if they're poor. If they're poor, we need to know what they've done wrong in their lives that have led them to this moment of poverty. So, how much time do I have left?

ARCH: One minute.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is the motion to return to Select File. There has been a request for a roll call. A reminder, colleagues. We are on Final Reading, if you could return to your seats, please. Colleagues, please return to your seats. We are on Final Reading. The question is the motion to return to Select File for a specific amendment. All those in favor vote aye-- oh. Excuse me. There has been a request for a roll call. Mr. Clerk, please call the roll.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

CLERK: Senator Andersen voting no. Senator Arch voting no. Senator Armendariz voting no. Senator Ballard voting no. Senator Bosn voting no. Senator Bostar voting no. Senator Brandt voting no. Senator John Cavanaugh voting no. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh not voting. Senator Clements voting no. Senator Clouse voting no. Senator Conrad voting no. Senator DeBoer voting no. Senator DeKay voting no. Senator Dorn. Senator Dover voting no. Senator Dungan voting no. Senator Fredrickson voting no. Senator Guereca. Senator Hallstrom voting no. Senator Hansen voting no. Senator Hardin voting no. Senator Holdcroft voting no. Senator Hughes voting no. Senator Hunt voting no. Senator Ibach. Senator Jacobson voting no. Senator Juarez voting no. Senator Kauth voting no. Senator Lippincott voting no. Senator Lonowski voting no. Senator McKeon voting no. Senator McKinney voting no. Senator Meyer voting no. Senator Moser voting no. Senator Murman voting no. Senator Prokop voting no. Senator Quick voting no. Senator Raybould voting no. Senator Riepe voting no. Senator Rountree voting no. Senator Sanders voting no. Senator Sorrentino voting no. Senator Spivey voting no. Senator Storer voting no. Senator Storm voting no. Senator Strommen voting no. Senator von Gillern voting no. Senator Wordekemper voting no. Vote is 0 ayes, 45 nays, Mr. President, to return to Select File.

ARCH: The motion is not successful. Colleagues, we will proceed to the vote. The vote is to dispense with the at-large reading. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 42 ayes, 1 nay, Mr. President, to dispense with the at-large reading.

ARCH: The at-large reading is dispensed with. Mr. Clerk, please read the title.

CLERK: [Read title of LB247]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB247 pass with the emergency clause attached? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, John Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, DeBoer, DeKay, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, McKinney, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, Conrad,

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

and Juarez. Not voting: Senators Dorn and Guereca. Vote is 44 ayes, 3 nays, 2 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB247 passes with the emergency clause attached. Senator Bob Hallstrom would like to recognize Reagan McIntosh from Syracuse as a special guest today, seated under the north balcony. Mr. Clerk, please proceed to the next item.

CLERK: [Read LB286 on Final Reading]

ARCH: Mr. Clerk. Members, just-- reminder, please remain in your seat. We are in Final Reading.

CLERK: [Read LB286 on Final Reading]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB286 pass? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, Meyer-- McKinney, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: None. Not voting: Senators Dorn and Guereca. The vote is 47 ayes, 0 nays, 2 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB286 passes. Next item is LB289, and the first vote is to dispense with the at-large reading. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 43 ayes, 0 nays to dispense with the at-large reading, Mr. President.

ARCH: The at-large reading is dispensed with. Mr. Clerk, please read the title.

CLERK: [Read title of LB289]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB289 pass with the emergency clause attached? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, Cavanaugh, Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, McKinney, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: None. Not voting: Senators Dorn and Guereca. Vote is 47 ayes, 0 nays, 2 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB289 passes with the emergency clause attached. We will now proceed to LB377. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh would move to return the bill to Select File for a specific amendment, that being FA36, to strike the enacting clause.

ARCH: Senator Cavanaugh, you're welcome to open on your floor amendment and the motion.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank, thank you, Mr. President. So colleagues, again, you know, do you. I'll do me. What I love is having the opportunity to share information that people might not otherwise look at. Not-- this is not a comment on this next report that I'm going to share. But Senator DeBoer did have distributed the Planning Committee report, so what better use of my 10 minutes than to share it? Yeah. So you don't-- you've all-- you wrote it. You don't have to listen if you don't want to. But-- OK. So, the Planning Committee's report: Executive Summary. The goals of the Planning Committee session-- sessions during the 24-- 2024 interim were to examine trends in state revenues and expenditures and to contextualize them within shifting demographics and changes. As we approach a new budget cycle with significant fiscal challenges and continue to address the perennial concerns over high property taxes, the Planning Committee sought to investigate our revenues over time and the balances of those revenues geographically and per capita. These investigations were conducted around the backdrop of the 2024 special session, focused on property taxes, and were split by that special session. Local-- OK. Next heading is Local Taxes and State Aid to Counties. The results of our inquiry were to, were to discover that, as expected, less populous counties in the state raised higher amounts of revenue per capita. Nebraska's high amongst the states for the most counties with fewer than 1,000 residents, as Nebraska has 12 such counties. The smallest county by population is Blaine County, with 435 residents. Not surprisingly, Blaine County has the highest per resident collection of

property and state aid to counties. In contrast, the 3 most populous counties in the state receive some of the lowest combined property tax and aid to counties per capita. An analysis of school district per pupil spending yielded similar results. Smaller school districts generally had higher per pupil rates and larger school districts generally had lower per pupil rates. This finding matches the trends in other states. The relationship with size and the largest school districts was not as strong as with counties. Some of the largest school districts were slightly more towards the middle in per student spending. This finding was also not surprising, and may correlate to the effects of concentrated poverty in those districts. Property taxes. When we examined property tax increases on a statewide basis, the total property taxes collected minus the LB1107 income tax credits given was 35% higher in 2023 than in 2003. When adjusted for inflation using the CPI for the adjustment, in that same time period, Nebraskans' median income, when adjusted for inflation using the same metrics, grew by 29%. Nebraska's population also grew by 13.8% during that same time. Adjusted for inflation then, property taxes, minus the LB1107 credit, collected statewide grew by 21.7% per capita, while the median income of Nebraska grew by 29%. Using these figures to understand the property tax issue in Nebraska suggests that while raw total dollar amount of property taxes collected has gone up precipitously in the last 20 years, and surely individuals in some areas of the state are paying more in adjusted property tax dollars, the problem may have more variance in individual regions of the state than previously suspected. In adjusted dollars on a per person basis, the property tax increases have slightly outpace-- outpaced inflation. Nevertheless, population growth indicates taken as a whole, Nebraska property taxes did not grow as quickly as median income on a per capita basis when adjusted for inflation. It is quite clear that the state's work to lower property taxes has had an impact on these results. Without including the LB1107 tax credits, the adjusted increase in property taxes is much higher. Additionally, the state's takeover of responsibility for community colleges further reduced the increase in property taxes. Nebraska's property taxes on a statewide basis were lower because of these interventions. I'm going to just pause there. Oh, my God. Property taxes were lower because we stopped pushing unfunded mandates down to local levels. Shocking. The system works. When we fund government at the state level and we don't push it down to the local levels that can only fund their operations through property taxes, property taxes go down. It's almost like math. Math is real. Looking at statewide per capita and median incomes, however, fails to see the nuance of the property tax concerns in the state. Statewide property tax valuations have increased by 84% in adjusted

dollars. A deeper dive into where valuations have increased most quickly would provide more information about which Nebraskans are paying more than the averages. A deeper dive into median incomes across the industry and geography would also provide more information about who is paying more in adjusted dollars for property taxes. These areas were beyond the scope of what the committee could accomplish this interim. I do need to make sure I get back in the queue. OK. OK. Next subheading. Other State Taxes. Between 2003 and 2023, the total statewide and local sales tax collected increased by 15% when adjusted for inflation. This amount is less than the increase in total property taxes collected, 35%. When the 11-- LB1107 tax credits are part of the calculations, the committee did not explore changes in total income tax collected in the same time period, in part because of the ongoing changes to the income tax structure based on the recent changes still going into effect. State Expenditures. Next, the committee turned to expenditures. General Fund appropriations increased by 28% between 2003 and 2023. General Fund revenue increased by 31% over the same time period. Because of the differences in how the budget was structured over this time, it is not possible to do line-by-line comparison of every budget item. Some programs were discontinued. Others began during this time. The agencies included in the budget in 2003 remained consistent in 2023, with their share of the overall budget remaining relatively stable. However, allocations for correctional services and courts have increased. Allocations for correctional support services have increased. Even though crime has decreased in the state, we are still incarcerating more people. Interesting. Where was I-- while funding for universities and health and human services has declined as a percentage of the total budget. Hmm. Now why would more people be incarcerated when we're spending less on health and human services and education? That's a real head scratcher for me. For example, university college appropriations were 44.7% of agency operations in 2002-2003 and 37.6% in 2022-2023. I'm assuming that's going to go down even more, since we are doing budget cuts to the university of 5% across the board for universities and community colleges and state colleges, so "funzies" there. Another expenditure category of interest is the Cash Reserve Fund/rainy day fund. Nebraska's rainy day fund level is at the second highest level since 2016, despite a recent drawdown of funds. This is also higher than the 50-state median and the regional median for states bordering Nebraska. Senators all agreed maintaining current limits on the rainy day fund is appropriate. This-- that-- to be clear, that's the senators that were on this committee. I'm not sure that senators writ large agree that we should maintain the rainy day fund, because we're not going to. Because, you know, property tax relief is more important

than the solvency of our government. Detailed analysis. We began in June by analyzing revenues by county, specifically focusing on 1) property taxes, and 2) state aid to local subdivisions. These 2 revenue sources were examined by county, both in total and per capita. Total revenue divided by the county's population. The next 2 sections provided-- provide a summary of these revenues-- revenue sources, and then show the total population, the total revenue amounts, and per capita figures by county. Revenue by county. OK. I'm going to dig into that a little bit later, because I've just been reading a lot. And then we have some graphs, so I might skip forward. The, the revenue by county is, is more data. So I'm going to have to-- I'm going to actually look at that and process it when I'm not on the microphone, and then I will walk through it, because it's hard to explain maps when you haven't actually looked at them yet. I see that I have my time remaining light on, and so I had a thought that I was going to continue with, but I don't know what it is. I hear that Senator Erd-- former Senator Erdman has had some conversations with some colleagues on this bill, the Natural Resources Committee bill. So I look forward to hearing what those are. And also, Steve, if you're watching, you have my number. You could text me, too. I'd love to hear from you. Thank you. And I'll yield the remainder of my time.

ARCH: Senator Juarez would like to recognize some special guests in the north balcony, 24 fourth grade students from St. Thomas More School in Omaha. Please rise and be recognized by your Legislature. Senator Clements also has a special guest located under the south balcony, Beatriz Polo Diz from Grinnell College. Welcome. Returning to the queue, Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I'm glad that we have an opportunity to visit a little bit about LB377. I had been in close contact with my friend, former Senator Erdman. And he, of course, as you know, had a lot of interest in Game and Parks issues and their management. And he was deeply concerned about this extension of commissioner's terms and had a thoughtful idea to make it prospective only. I'm not sure if we're going to be able to entertain that discussion point at this juncture in the process, but nevertheless, it is an interesting point that I think we should bring up. And while perhaps we-- he and I did not find a meeting of the minds in regards to that discrete issue, I have let him know that I have also shared my concerns with the Natural Resources Committee that I will not be supporting another measure impacting Game and Parks moving forward. And it's not because I-- and here's where Senator Erdman and I are coming at it from perhaps a, a different, a different angle, but maybe with the same reason. I actually love Game and Parks

and think they are a wonderful state agency, and our state parks are a treasure. And the opportunities that they provide for individuals and families to get outdoors and to hunt and to fish, and the educational components in the state parks are extraordinary, and they really showcase our natural beauty and contribute not only to our quality of life, but to tourism, as well, which is a critical revenue-generating industry. But the other measure impacting Game and Parks significantly coming forward is a delegation of expanded authority to allow them to increase license fees for state parks, for hunting and for fishing. And again, I see that as misguided, in terms of where we are, in part of a broader pattern and practice, which I have talked about a lot this session thus far, and anticipate we'll talk more about. There was a, a bill just a, a few moments ago on Final Reading that my good friend, Senator Barry DeKay brought forward, LB247, and then it had the E clause on it, which sought to make adjustments in terms of fees for solid waste and garbage, garbage disposal kind of matters in relation to some orphaned superfund sites and some other existing programs that were short on cash. And here's the thing, colleagues. I voted against that measure consistently at committee level and at each round of debate, because I think it's wrong to increase garbage fees for our citizens, because Nebraska can't balance or manage its budget. In less than 2 years, we've gone from historic revenues, historic revenues, now albeit, some of that was one time, with the ARPA funds and otherwise. But we went from historic revenues to a massive deficit, and it's projected to get worse-- in just 2 years, or less. That's astonishing. And I think it's wrong to ask Nebraska citizens to pay more for their park permits and their garbage fees and everything else coming down the pike because this administration and this body can't manage a budget, which is our only constitutional duty and requirement. So inst-- we put forward tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest that were too big, too fast, and they're ripping a hole in our budget, and they're going to have deep and lasting impacts in our ability to fund infrastructure and economic development and education and healthcare and workforce training and housing. And these little bites along the way, whether it's LB247, whether it's the Game and Parks fees that are going to be before us this session, or any other number of fees that are going to be increasing, it's all due to that dynamic, which, if we can't stop, we can stand witness to. The other issue that's moving along--

ARCH: Time, Senator.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr.--

ARCH: Senator Hunt, you're recognized to speak.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraska, from the brain trust that is the Nebraska Legislature. Since the time that we've been sitting here doing Final Reading, you know, I look at the news and some really shocking news came through at about 9:30 that I'm-- that I've been thinking about ever since, and I wanted to speak on it. This is from Alayna Treene, who is a White House reporter for CNN, and she is breaking the news. The Trump administration is expected to invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, a sweeping war time authority, in the coming days, sources familiar with the move tell me. The move is designed to speed up the President's mass deportation pledge. The announcement, which could be made as soon as tomorrow, will come in the form of a Presidential proclamation. The move would likely pave the way for quicker removals of certain immigrants. And I've been sitting thinking about that since I got that news alert on my phone. The fact that the Trump administration is reaching back to 1798, before the Civil War, before universal suffrage, before slavery was abolished, when we were still bringing them over on the ships, to justify mass deportations today, if that doesn't make it clear what kind of era they want to return us to, I don't know what does. The thing about this law-- and I've, I've done some research on it and, you know, called back to what I do know about it. The Alien Enemies Act was part of the infamous Alien and Sedition Acts, which were laws that have been widely condemned for their authoritarian overreach and the way they've been used to suppress dissent. This law was originally designed to detain or deport nationals for enemy countries during an official war time. So during official war time, when we're declared in war, the act was originally used to remove enemy foreign nationals, not as a tool for the mass removal of immigrants. We are not in a declared war, but Trump and his allies are manufacturing an enemy to justify their actions, to justify these mass deportations. I think that we need to call this out and see it for what it is, which is an attempt to give a legal veneer to ethnic cleansing. Trump and his advisers have been explicit from their campaign to their actions since his election, that their goal is to round up and remove as many immigrants as possible, including those who are lawful permanent residents, including those with deep ties to the United States, including those who have citizens-- children-- who have children who are citizens, who are married to citizens, and invoking an 18th century, 1798 wartime law in an attempt to boycott-- or to bypass constitutional rights, to bypass due process, to bypass basic human decency is the solution? This is about creating a legal pathway for expulsions of legal immigrants based on race, religion, and politics. And we've seen this before, colleagues. Laws like this have been used to justify some of the darkest chapters in U.S.

history, including the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, the Palmer Raids in the early 1900s, which targeted immigrants and leftist organizations. Even on our lifetimes, the post-9/11 round-ups of Muslim immigrants without any evidence. And every time this has happened in this country, the country has used national security as an excuse for mass detentions and deportations, and history has always judged that as a shameful act of violence. I think that this can be fought. I don't think it will be fought. Congress can move to limit or repeal the law. State and local governments can refuse to cooperate. That's what Nebraska ought to do. And we know that legal challenges will come to this if this happens, but the courts have failed before. So public resistance is essential, Nebraskans. We have to ask ourselves what we're willing to do in the cause of safety for our neighbors and friends. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Oh, good. Senator Erdman did text me, and-- so you must be watching. And just so you know, I still have you in my phone as Senator Erdman. I haven't changed it. That-- it might be a downgrade to call you Senator, but I still do. So, let me see. See, you say you lost-- he said he lost some cell phone numbers, but you still have mine. Not allow current G&P commissioners-- oh, Game and Parks commissioners-- to get 3 terms, only those newly-appointed commissioners starting in 2025. That is a-- OK. These commissioners should be elected. Well, that's an interesting thought, electing the game and Park commissioners. Do they have a levying authority? Agencies of the right with B-- BELF? Senator Erdman, I don't know what BELF is. And please help the landowners who suffer under the stain of crop and livestock losses to wildlife. OK. What I should have done is just been silent for 5 minutes as an homage to you, Steve, but, but I'm, I'm not quite, I'm not quite to his level of filibustering. I just-- I can't bring myself to remain silent on the microphone for 5 minutes. You're going to have to tell me what BELF is, because I don't know what that is. Oh, Board of Educational Lands and Funds. I-- OK. I do know what that is. And there was talk about BELF in Appropriations, and whether or not we should be selling that land and investing the money and if that would yield a higher return than the current process, which I think is an interesting thought, and one that maybe we should do an interim study on. Maybe the Planning Committee should look into BELF and see if that's something that we want to invest in the sale of. I don't really know how that would work, how the sale of government land works. Well, that's not true. If you go to govdeals.com, you-- back in 2023, I

think it was, if you went to govdeals.com, you could have bought a very nice piece of property in Senator Brandt's district for about 300 K and it had multiple buildings on it and a farm. It was the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Center in Geneva, Nebraska. Now, the buildings themselves were all worth millions of dollars, and the land was probably worth even more, but we sold it on govdeals.com. That's right everybody, govdeals.com-- for about 300 K. So now when we have our manufactured deficit we should really be kicking ourselves because we could have sold that for a lot more money. But if you're looking for a deal on government lands, apparently go to govdeals.com. Let me say it one more time, govdeals.com. So I don't know. If we were to sell the BELF-- kind of sounds like elf. If we were to sell the BELF, would we sell it on govdeals.com or would we sell it some other way? Also, DAS wants to sell the Omaha state office building in downtown Omaha. And maybe they could sell it on govdeals.com. I, I don't know that they're going to get the \$40 million that they're estimating for it because there is a prop-- a similar property in downtown Omaha that's for sale, and it has had a difficult time getting a buyer. So I'm not sure that that's going to work out for us. But also, if we do sell the building in downtown Omaha, we have to move this-- the Omaha state operations somewhere, and there doesn't seem to be quite yet a succession plan. So I would say it's maybe premature to be selling that building unless we have some thoughts as to where we want to put it. But anyways, parks-- Game and Parks, Senator Erdman and I see eye to eye on some of it, not on all of it. But I do love our parks, our state parks, and I love going to our state parks. And every year, I get a new pass, pretty much on January 1, because I go out there to Mahoney for-- because my aunt gets a cabin. So I do enjoy going to our state parks, and I love going to Platte River. Platte River is really fun. I don't go much further than that, but I see my red light is on, so.

ARCH: Time, Senator.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Pre--

ARCH: Senator Conrad, you're recognized to speak.

CONRAD: Thank you, Mr. President. Again, good morning, colleagues. Just to continue, there's a host of measures moving through the Legislature this year, in addition to the one that we just passed off Final Reading a few moments ago, LB247e, that will increase garbage rates and fees for most Nebraskans. They'll be more coming down the pike to increase park fees and fishing fees and hunting fees, and give more latitude in that regard to the commissioners. There are proposed

changes before the Legislature this year that would make deep cuts in higher education, and that would result in higher tuition for kids and moms and dads who are trying to access higher education and improve their lives and improve their workforce prospects. At the same time that there's a host of increased fees moving forward in the Legislature, there's also a host of measures to eviscerate the social safety net, which supports working families and children and the poor. And at the same time, there's additional attacks launched by the Legislature against basic tools to ensure people can have jobs with some dignity when they're working minimum wage jobs or when they need to access sick leave. And this body has had ample opportunities to take up sick leave proposals, and they have not. This body has had opportunities to take up thoughtful proposals to support working families, and they have not. So the voters, in their frustration, have decided to take matters into their own hand through the precious right of citizen initiative. And they pushed forward with measures to give basic protections on sick leave, to give basic, modest, yet meaningful increases in the minimum wage, because it hasn't kept pace with inflation and the rising costs of gas and groceries and childcare and housing that working families face. And so, in addition to a tranche of bills to increase fees and tuition and costs on working families, we're also working to eviscerate the safety net program that many of them rely upon that also subsidizes subpoverty wages because some employers are not doing their part. And then a third separate attack on the will of the people themselves and working families themselves, including young people who are trying to save for college or put gas in their car or contribute to their family's well-being and bottom line. And the message we've heard from senators pushing those bills forward on those measures and others-- and it's a, a very interesting psychology, I think, to, to pro-- proponents of those measures' rhetoric: that voters were too stupid to understand what they were voting for. I think that is striking and very misguided and very insulting and unbelievable to hear members of this body utilize that line of thinking and rhetoric as they seek to undercut the will of the voters and hurt working families. The other thread that you hear, is not only were voters misled and stupid and unable to assess the impacts of the measures that they were voting on, is that the only way to help the working poor is to hurt the working poor. We heard that from Senator Hallstrom and others in regards to the Uber bills, we've-- special favors to Uber. We've heard the same thing from those trying to undercut the minimum wage. We've heard the same thing from those trying to undercut sick leave. We've heard the same thing from those trying to eviscerate the social safety net. And it's striking and it's strange and it's insulting, and it's part of where this

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

Legislature is and is headed. And I'm glad Senator, Senator Cavanaugh gave us an opportunity--

ARCH: Time, Senator.

CONRAD: --to reflect on where we are in this body at this moment.

ARCH: Senator Hunt, you're recognized to speak.

HUNT: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, I don't need time to reflect, and I-- it's not my intention to take a bunch of time. It's my intention to raise up an issue happening at the national level that is of interest to Nebraskans, and then say my piece and be done with it, which I would do at any time on any bill. This is just the news that was breaking today, about the Trump administration expected to invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to remove immigrants from our country. Donald Trump is dusting off an archaic, authoritarian law from the years when we were still bringing slaves over on ships, because he knows that his policy goals can't stand up to legal scrutiny. That alone should be terrifying. If we let this happen, if we let an administration invoke laws from an era of slavery and disenfranchisement to allow mass deportations of immigrants, we are saying that the most brutal parts of our country's history are up for revival. And it's already happening today. What's happening to Mahmoud Khalil and the Trump administration's move to invoke the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 are deeply connected. This isn't just about deportation or national security. It's about normalizing and accepting the state's ability to strip people of their rights, their legal status, and even their physical freedom based on who they are, what they believe, where they're from, and what their political beliefs are. Mahmoud Khalil, I talked about yesterday, is a permanent U.S. resident with due process rights. Yet, he was arrested in his own home by plainclothes DHS officers. He was disappeared into ICE detention, away from his wife, who's a U.S. citizen who's 8 months' pregnant, and his legal status was revoked, all because of his political activism, all because he led protests, which are protected under the First Amendment, at Columbia University in support of the Palestinian cause. This law was designed for war time. It was designed to remove nationals from enemy combatant countries against which Congress has declared war from our country, but Trump and his allies are applying it to justify a political purge. Under this framework, they don't need to charge people with crimes or prove any wrongdoing. They just need to label someone as an enemy. This morning on my drive in here on NPR-- oh, I don't know her last name. This anchor, Michelle-- I can't remember her last name. Someone knows. She was interviewing, I believe, the head of DHS, who came on

to NPR to talk about their detention of Mahmoud Khalil, and he refused to acknowledge that he was a green card holder. He refused to acknowledge that protest was legal. And when the anchor kept pressing him on what is the law that Mahmoud Khalil broke, he refused to answer. He, he kept saying, well, if you've seen on TV, all you have to do is look at TV and see. And the anchor was saying, OK, but for people who haven't seen it on TV, can you explain for our audience what law it is that he broke, and he wasn't able to do it. He literally wouldn't do it. Mahmoud Khalil was not arrested for committing a crime. He was targeted because he is of Palestinian descent, he's outspoken, and he's visible, and this administration wanted to make an example of him. The Trump administration's rhetoric about terrorist sympathizers supporting terrorism, it's part of a broader strategy to make Palestinian identity itself illegal, criminal, worthy of deportation. And this is exactly what they want to codify by invoking this Alien Enemies Act, giving themselves unchecked power to target an entire group of people without evidence or trial based on their nationality, their religion, and their political beliefs. The government has already disappeared Mahmoud Khalil into detention and refused to disclose his location. There are already members of Congress who are speaking out about this, but we need to do more. Now they're trying to revive an 18th century wartime law to fast track more mass deportation. This is not theoretical, colleagues. This is already happening. If we let this happen, no one is safe. The Trump administration is pushing the boundaries of who can be stripped from their rights and removed from society. And Mahmoud Khalil is not the last. He's a test run. It's not just about immigrants. It's about whether the government can declare entire groups of people as threats and remove them from public life. And if we don't shut this down now, we are sleepwalking into an era where citizenship, residency, and even legal protections of citizens are conditional, conditional on whether the government approves of who you are, and what you believe, and what your political views are. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Time, Senator. Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to speak, and this is your third opportunity.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Just a reminder, govdeals.com for all your government deals, apparently, if you want to buy property. So I wanted to get back to the, the Planning Committee's report. And there's the-- on the detailed analysis, for those following at home, on page 4, that's where the-- we kind of break down into more information. And so in a previous life-- I actually am going to nerd out for a second. I used to manage research reports and help put-- like, take the research and put it into a report and help with,

you know, disseminating the information. And so all of this is very familiar to me, and executive summaries. And my colleague-- my, my former colleague, Duane [PHONETIC], who I loved-- our very first conversation, by the way, was about pens. Sat down next to him in like, the tiniest office, and the first thing he says to me is what pens he likes to use for taking notes. And I was like, oh my God, this is who I'm going to be sitting next to for 8-10 hours a day, every day, and the only thing he wants to talk about are different pens for note-taking. It was one of the most quintessential Duane conversations, and he ended up being a very good friend after years of working together. And he-- we still text regularly, not about pens as often, but I still know what pens he likes to use for note-taking. And he used to work at the World Herald, actually. But anyways, we would do this thing that's called double proofing, where one of us would read everything that was on the page as the other pointed at it, and-- like everything-- commas, colons, periods, space-- to make sure that there weren't any errors. And we-- I-- like I would read out loud and he would move the pencil under, and then like, he would stop if I missed something and-- or we would discuss it, and we would have very robust discussions about whether or not the wording was exactly how we wanted it. We were very thorough. So when I read reports, I find myself still doing that. And I will, again, commend Senator DeBoer and her team, because I was reading through those pages and I did not see any errors. And even when you do do double proofing, you could still find errors, but there were no errors in the executive summary of this, as far as I could-- my eyes could see. I'm, of course, always will stand for correction. So I'm going to skip to page 10 on the analysis, because there's a lot of grids and-- oh. It's been-- color has been added to identify Douglas and Lancaster County. Oh, I see that. Yes, it has. OK. So the analysis of revenues, specifically property tax and state aid to local subdivisions by county per capita revealed that many smaller population counties spend more per person than more populous counties. For example, Grant's County revenue per capita is \$6,983, which is \$4,305 more per capita than Sarpy County's \$2,678. Interesting. I don't-- who represents Grant County? Is that Dorn? Senator Hunt represents Grant County? That's probably-- yeah. Who-- you do? Ibach. Ibach represents Grant County. And Senators Andersen and Hallstrom rep-- it's who? Strommen. That was bad information, Senator McKeon. You just want to make me look silly. Senator Strommen represents Grant County. And Senators Andersen, and, and-- I said Hallstrom, didn't I? Hol-- Holdcroft. Senator Andersen and Holdcroft represent Sarpy County, I believe. I don't know if anybody-- oh, wait. Yes. Of course there's more. Senator Rountree and Senator Sanders also represent Sarpy, right? I believe so. Boy. And

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

oh. And of course. Speaker Arch. My goodness. I am off my geography game today. OK. So we have one senator, Senator Strommen, who represents Grant County. And we have 5 senators representing Sarpy, and that would be Senator Rountree, Senator Andersen, Senator Holdcroft, Senator Sanders, and not to be forgotten, Senator-- Speaker Arch. And that is my time.

ARCH: Time, Senator.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Speaker.

ARCH: Sen-- Senator Conrad, you are recognized to speak, and this is your third opportunity.

CONRAD: Very good. Thank you, Mr. President. So just to maybe close the loop on the other kind of broader issues that I've been talking about this session, and again, reaffirming this morning. So the governor and many of you in this Legislature and the previous Legislature tried and failed twice to nickel and dime Nebraskans to death with massive increases in sales taxes on everyday needs, so that we could, in an attempt to bring forward one of the largest tax increases in Nebraska history that would have fallen the hardest on working families and seniors, and then grab that money and give it to the richest, largest landowners in the state. You tried and you failed twice-- last year in the regular session and in the disastrous special session of last summer-- because of a bipartisan, nonpartisan, principled group of senators that came together and said no. So you failed twice, and now you're trying to do it through other means. Increasing fees on every-day Nebraska families, nickel and diming them to death while you eviscerate their social safety net programs and while you undercut their ability to have jobs with dignity in getting minimum wages and some sick leave, and then you're increasing all of these fees and then sweeping them over, for whatever purposes-- to balance the budget, to increase property tax relief for the largest, wealthiest landowners. And I've heard some grumblings this morning that people are annoyed and they want to get moving. And we will, of course. But if anyone is annoyed, they need to look in the mirror, not at Senator Hunt, Senator Cavanaugh or myself. You knew what you were doing in your caucuses. You knew what you were doing with chairs races. You knew what you were doing with Committee on Committees. You knew what you're doing in regards to bill scheduling. And you know what you are doing when you selectively kill bills for senators who have the audacity to fight for the working poor and their community. That's it. That's what sparked all of this this morning. A weaponization of process, because a senator had the audacity to use

the process to fight for her community. So your actions and your words and your deeds speak for themselves. And while you may be empowered at the moment, we will stand witness to that with our voice and our vote and the only tools that we have left and are available. And I'll tell you, visiting with colleagues and visiting with constituents and visiting with very sophisticated stakeholders who love this institution and who love this state as much as I do and I assume each member in this body does, things are pretty bad right now in our politics, at the federal level and here on the state level. Our beautiful, nonpartisan, Unicameral Legislature has inoculated us, for almost 100 years, from the worst components in our politics on the national level, but is continually tested, weakened, and threatened and undermined in the term limits era. But the goal is to get people who care about working families and civil rights to give up. The goal is to silence. The goal is to force us to walk away. And here's the news. That goal will not be met, no matter how arduous, no matter how painful, no matter how unfair, we will keep coming to work. We will keep speaking out. We will keep organizing. We will keep speaking truth to power, because while you're in power, thus far, all you've utilized your power for is to hurt working Nebraskans. And that speaks for itself. And there's folks out there who are working 3 jobs and don't have good transportation or healthcare, who got it a lot worse off than the senators in this body, including me, so we'll keep fighting.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, you're recognized to close on your motion to return.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. We should look into selling BELF. I yield the remainder of my time.

ARCH: There's several guests we'd like to recognize. Senator Strommen has 8 members of the Keith County Leadership Group located in the north balcony. Please rise and be recognized by your Legislature. Senator Jacobson has 4 guests: Sean, Kelsie, Ryan, and Remi O'Neill from North Platte. Please rise and be recognized by your Legislature. Senator Murman also has 18 students from the 12th grade and one teacher from Southwest High School in-- from Bartley, but there is a very special guest in the group. We want to say congratulations to the senior female wrestler from Southwest High School in Bartley, Ambie Custard, who is Girls Class B Champion in the 135-pound weight class, with a record of 48-0. Please rise. Be recognized. Colleagues, this is a reminder. We are on Final Reading. Please return to your seats. Senators, please return to your seats, and I would ask that you check in, please. Reminder, Senators, please check in. Senators, the first

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

vote we will take is the motion to return to Select File for a specific amendment. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 0 ayes, 44 nays to return to Select File, Mr. President.

ARCH: The motion to return was not successful. Mr. Clerk, please read the bill.

CLERK: [Read LB377 on Final Reading]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB377 pass? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Has everyone voted who wishes to vote? Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Fredrickson, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, Mey-- McKinney, Moser, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino. Spivey, Storm, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: Senator Machaela Cavanaugh, Clements, Meyer, Murman, Storer, and Strommen. Not voting: Senators John Cavanaugh, Dungan, Guereca. Vote is 0 ayes, 6 nays, 3 excused not voting, Mr. President. Excuse me. 40 ayes, 6 nays, 3 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB377 passes. We will now proceed to LB396.

CLERK: Mr. President, LB396, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh would move to return the bill to Select File for a specific amendment, that be to strike the enacting clause with FA37.

ARCH: Senator Cavanaugh, you're recognized to open on your motion.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Yeah. OK. It's 10:57. I'm going to withdraw. Thanks.

ARCH: Seeing nothing further on the bill, Mr. Clerk, please read the bill.

CLERK: [Read LB396 on Final Reading]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB396 pass? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

CLERK: Voting aye: Senators Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, John Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, McKinney, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: Senator Machaela Cavanaugh. Not voting: Senator Guereca. Vote is 47 ayes, 1 nay, 1 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB396 passes. Next bill, LB593.

CLERK: [Read LB593 on Final Reading]

ARCH: All provisions of law relative to procedure having been complied with, the question is shall LB593 pass? All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Voting aye: Senator Andersen, Arch, Armendariz, Ballard, Bosn, Bostar, Brandt, John Cavanaugh, Clements, Clouse, Conrad, DeBoer, DeKay, Dorn, Dover, Dungan, Fredrickson, Hallstrom, Hansen, Hardin, Holdcroft, Hughes, Hunt, Ibach, Jacobson, Juarez, Kauth, Lippincott, Lonowski, McKeon, McKinney, Meyer, Moser, Murman, Prokop, Quick, Raybould, Riepe, Rountree, Sanders, Sorrentino, Spivey, Storer, Storm, Strommen, von Gillern, Wordekemper. Voting no: None. Not voting: Senators Machaela Cavanaugh and Guereca. Vote is 47 ayes, 0 nays, 2 excused not voting, Mr. President.

ARCH: LB593 passes. Mr. Clerk, for items.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Notice that the Urban Affairs Committee will hold an executive session now under the north balcony. Urban Affairs Committee, exec session now, under the north balcony. Additionally, communication from Senator Riepe, notifying that he has selected LB556 as his personal priority bill for the session. Communication from Senator Lonowski that he has so designated LB632 as his personal priority bill for the session. Communication from Senator Wordekemper, noticing that he has chosen LB608 as his personal priority bill. Notice from Senator Hardin that he ha-- that the Health and Human Services Committee has selected LB332 as a committee priority bill. Notice from Senator von Gillern that the Revenue Committee has selected LB650 and LB647 as the committee priority bills for the session. Notice from Senator McKinney that he has sel-- that the Urban Affairs Committee has selected LB288 as a committee priority bill. Communication from Senator DeBoer that she has selected LB235 as

her personal priority bill for the session. Communication from Senator Sanders that the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee has selected LB521 as a committee priority bill for the session, as well as LB660, both Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee priority bills. Notice that the Planning Committee has selected LR27CA as its committee priority bill. The Planning Committee, LR27CA. And an Attorney General's Opinion, addressed to Senator Raybould, that will be in-- found in the Journal. That's all I have at this time, Mr. President.

ARCH: Please proceed to the next item on the agenda.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next item on the agenda, LB97, introduced by Senator Fredrickson. It's a bill for an act relating to motor vehicles; amends several sections of Chapter 37, 60; changes provisions relating to deferred judgments; changes provisions of the State Boat Act relating to amphib-- amphibious vehicles; changes, provides-- changes provisions of the Motor Vehicle Certification of Title Act relating to junk vehicles and certificate-- certificates of title, minibikes, applicability of the act to fertilizer trailers, applications for certificates of title, identification inspections, and lienholders and bonded certificates of title; changes provisions of the Motor Vehicle Registration Act relating to minibikes and credit of fees and prohibit modification of license plates; changes provisions of the Motor Vehicle Operators License relating to fees, surcharges, and ignition interlock devices; changes provisions of the Nebraska Rules of the Road relating to minibikes and ignition interlock devices; changes provisions relating to the source of the Department of Motor Vehicles Cash Fund; changes provisions of the Uniform Motor Vehicle Records Disclosure Act relating to personal information and sensitive personal information; provides for the Department of Motor Vehicles to credit money to the Motor Carrier Services Division Distribution Fund and eliminates certain provisions of the fund relating to the State Treasurer; defines and redefines terms; eliminates obsolete provisions; harmonize provisions; repeals the original section; and declares an emergency. The bill was read for the first time on January 10 of this year and referred to the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. That committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments. There are additional amendments, Mr. President.

ARCH: Colleagues, Senator Rountree would like to announce some special guests seated in the north balcony. They are 65 fourth grade students for Peter-- from Peter Sarpy Elementary School in Bellevue, Nebraska. Please rise and be recognized by your Legislature. While the

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

Legislature is in session and capable of transacting business, I propose to sign and do hereby sign LB241, LB247e, LB286, LB289, LB377, LB396, and LB593. Senator Fredrickson, you are recognized to open on your bill.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. It's always fun seeing students come here, especially students that are excited to be here. So welcome to the Legislature. Hope you enjoy the morning. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning, Nebraskans. I am here today to introduce LB97 on behalf of the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles. LB97 is a cleanup and harmonization bill. The bill ensures the continued efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Motor Vehicles. This bill makes several technical corrections, streamlines processes, and aligns Nebraska statutes with federal regulations. I've had the pages pass out a complete list of what's included in LB97, but a few examples of the updates in this bill-- this bill makes are that it allows for the release of a lien when issuing a bonded title after proper notification to the lender, it corrects an admission which occurred when the Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title Act was recodified to exempt fertilizer trailers from being titled, it changes language on distribution of fees collected under the International Fuel Tax Agreement, it a cleans up language to eliminate the word surcharge from the license security fee, and it allows for the state to recognize ignition interlock orders from other states in the issuance of permits for ignit-- ignition interlock orders. These updates are critical to maintaining a modern, effective, and legally compliant Department of Motor Vehicles. LB97 is a necessary step to align Nebraska statutes with best practices, enhance public safety, and improve administrative efficiency. Additionally included are LB-- in, in LB97 are Senator Dover's LB543 and Senator Guereca's LB225, with committee amendment, AM292. I've included their bills on the list that I handed out, but I am sure they'll be getting up to speak to their portions, as well. All 3 bills were advanced from committee unanimously, and they have no fiscal impact. Thank you for your time and attention to this bill, and I'd be happy to take any questions.

ARCH: As the Clerk indicated, there is a committee amendment, AM292. Senator Fredrickson, you're welcome to open.

FREDRICKSON: Senator Moser.

ARCH: I'm sorry. That is Senator Moser, please. Senator Moser, you're welcome to open on the committee amendment. Senator Fredrickson--

FREDRICKSON: So I'll, I'll be happy to sort of--

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

ARCH: --you are recognized to open.

FREDRICKSON: OK. Thank you. I'll, I'll briefly open on the committee amendment. So, as I said in my opening, AM292 is the committee amendment. That, that amendment includes Senator Dover's LB543, which I'm sure Senator Dover will be able to speak a little bit more about, as well as Senator Guereca's LB225. So, again, both of these bills were amended onto LB97 with unanimous votes from the committee, and that is what the committee would amend. So I would ask for your green vote on both AM292 and LB97. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Mr. Clerk, for an amendment.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Dover would move to amend AM292 with FA33.

ARCH: Senator Dover, you're recognized open on your floor amendment.

DOVER: Thank you, Mr. President. My floor amendment raises the statutory limit on what the Nebraska DMV can charge for license plates. Currently, the plate fee is set at \$4.10, and the maximum, maximum statutory fee is set at \$4.25 per plate. This leaves only \$0.15 for an allowable plate increase. This is a statutory maximum limit, but not the actual amount the DMV can charge, since the state can only charge the cost of what it takes to produce a license plate and no more. In November of 2021, Corrections experienced a 111% increase in the validation decals reflective sheeting. In 2022, Corrections experienced a 23-54% increase in the cost of aluminum sheeting materials and ribbons. There is a current concern that the aluminum prices could spike due to current tariffs. On Wednesday, a 25% tariff on all aluminum imported into the United States went into effect. My amendment would change the maximum statutory limit from \$4.25 to \$8. So I just want to clarify for everybody, the statutory limits really doesn't mean a lot. What matters is that they can only charge what it costs to produce a license plate. And so I don't believe that the \$0.15 is, is, is enough room for what the cost of what aluminum could turn into. So this is just kind of getting out ahead of the problem. Again, it's not going to change-- it will not change the cost of a license plate, since Corrections can only charge what it costs to produce one. I would appreciate a yes vote on my floor amendment.

ARCH: Turning to the queue, Senator Guereca, you're recognized to speak.

GUERECA: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm addressing AM292. Thank you to Senator Fredrickson for including my LB225. LB225 modernizes the title transfer process by removing the notary requirement for electronic signatures in specific circumstances. This legislation is narrowly focused and applies only to title transfers when a vehicle is transferred into an insurance company's name following a total loss. The change is friendly to both consumers and businesses. For consumers, total loss claims are already a stressful experience, and an unnecessary administrative hurdle only adds to that burden. By allowing electronic signatures without a notary, we can streamline the process helping vehicle owners receive their settlement faster. Electronic signatures are secure, widely used, and come with built-in authentication measures that protect the integrity of the process. From a business perspective, this bill enhances efficiencies for insurers and auction companies by reducing the number of manual steps required to process title transfers. Importantly, this bill aligns with national regulatory standards. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators has confirmed the legality and legitimacy of electronic signatures, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has issued regulatory-- regulations supporting this-- their use. Additionally, the approach is already in place in other states where the removal of the notary requirement has not led to adverse outcomes. In the rare event of an error, current protections remain in place. Insurers would still be responsible for indemnifying the correct owner, just as they are with wet signatures today. This is a commonsense update that reflects the reality of modern transactions while ensuring consumer protection, efficiency, and compliance with existing law. Thank you.

ARCH: Seeing no one left in the queue, Senator Dover, you are recognized to close on your floor amendment. Senator Dover waives close. Colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of FA33 to AM292. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the floor amendment, Mr. President.

ARCH: The floor amendment is adopted. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator von Gillern would move to amend the committee amendments with AM507.

ARCH: Senator von Gillern, you're recognized to open on your amendment.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. And good morning, Nebraskans. I rise today to introduce AM507 to LB97. This amendment is similar to, but importantly, not the same as a bill I introduced, LB279, that I brought at the beginning of this session. LB279 would have removed the requirement to display a front license plate on Nebraska registered vehicles. That bill came out of a transpor-- a Transportation and Telecommunications with 6 yes votes. Senator Fredrickson was kind enough to work with me to attach my proposal, with a few very important changes, to this bill. The changes are important, as they eliminate the fiscal note and also negate some serious concerns expressed by DMV, as well as some of my colleagues. Whereas LB279 would have eliminated the requirement to display a front plate immediately, AM507 changes the--delays the change until 2029 to coincide with the next license plate cycle. This is aligned with the request made by DMV when we first visited on this topic 2 years ago, as it dramatically simplifies the execution of this simple change. Under this amendment, Nebraska will not only require, but only issue a single license plate. This is important because it optimizes the proposal's positive fiscal and environmental impacts by ensuring the state will only need to manufacture a single plate for each vehicle. AM507 will benefit Nebraska taxpayers by removing burdensome and unnecessary costs associated with the requirement to display a front plate. This is ultimately my primary motivation in bringing this bill, as it is now the norm for cars to come from the manufacturer without brackets or mounts for a front plate. Owners of new vehicles are left with 3 options: Pay the dealership \$75-100 to furnish and install a front plate holder; and pay a \$50 annual fee for windshield decal confer-- conferring the right to display a single plate; third, third option is to drill a hole in the front bumper of your new dream car. None of these seem very appealing. LB507 will also positively impact our state cash flow fund by reducing the number of plates the state will have to appropriate funds to manufacture. As I understand, there are nearly 2 million vehicles registered in Nebraska. 82,000 of those are new vehicles sold. Without AM507, Nebraska will have to produce and issue, at a minimum, between 3.5 and 4 million aluminum plates in the 2029 cycle. At a production cost of around \$4.10 per plate times 2 plates per car, manufacturing that many license plates will likely require an expenditure in excess of \$15 million. We're all aware of potential for supply chain disruptions, turbulence in the global aluminum market, and Senator Dover's amendment just addressed some of those concerns. LB507-- members, this is important-- LB507 has the potential to save taxpayers nearly \$6 million on their license plate costs and new car buyers another \$6-8 million in costs at the dealership, a total savings to Nebraska drivers of up to \$14 million.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

Now some vehicles already only receive one plate: trailers, motorcycles, et cetera, so certainly the number has been adjusted. But regardless, it's substantial. The manufacture of fewer plates will also have a very direct and foreseeable environmental benefit-- reduction of nearly 200 tons of aluminum mined and ending up in landfills. Before I end my comments, I want to briefly anticipate a few concerns that were expressed. It's important to note that Nebraska already allows drivers to display only a rear plate if they're willing to pay a \$50 fee. So law enforcement has already tacitly said that one plate on a car is an effective way to pro-- protect the public. When I brought a similar bill in 2023, a member of the Omaha Police Officers Association testified as a proponent, and stated that moving to a single license plate would not direct-- detract from their ability to enforce crimes-- to enforce law and, and solve crimes or negatively impact officer safety. Douglas County Sheriff filed a neutral position on this bill. And notably, those are the 2 largest law enforcement groups in the state. 26 other states, including our neighbors, Missouri, Kansas, and Wyoming, have implemented this fiscally and environmentally responsible measure with no negative notable outcomes. With that, I am happy to address any questions, and respectfully ask for your green vote on AM507 and your vote to advance LB97 to Select File. Thank you.

ARCH: Turning to the queue, Senator Brandt, you're recognized to speak.

BRANDT: Thank you. Mr. President. Would Senator von Gillern be able to answer a few questions?

ARCH: Senator von Gillern, will you yield?

von GILLERN: Of course.

BRANDT: So on your fiscal note on this-- and I, I apologize. I did not actually pull the fiscal note up. But do you know how many one-plate cars we have today that are paying the \$50 fee to have one plate?

von GILLERN: No. I don't know the answer to that, but I, I did-- out of the 2 million-- when I ran my numbers, out of the 2 million vehicles that are registered in Nebraska, I ran my numbers based on approximately 75% of that number, or 1.5 million that I anticipated were carrying 2 plates, currently.

BRANDT: Because by my math-- and I serve on the Transportation Committee, the cost today is \$4.10 a license plate. And for you not to

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

have that license plate, you're paying \$50 to put a sticker on your windshield, so the state's making roughly \$45, \$46 on that. So that is forgone income right there, so that would be a, a, a loss to the state of Nebraska. So is this mandatory then Nebraska go to a one-plate system in, in '29 if we pass this bill?

von GILLERN: If you pass this, only one plate will be manufactured and one plate issued.

BRANDT: For every vehicle in the state?

von GILLERN: For every vehicle in the state.

BRANDT: OK.

von GILLERN: And currently, again, there are, there are many vehicles that only di-- display one plate. As you know, ag vehicles, which typically-- or over-the-road trucks, so on, only display, display a front plate. They only display a single plate. Trailers only get a single plate. Of course, motorcycles only get a single plate.

BRANDT: OK. I appreciate that. Thank you, Senator--

von GILLERN: Thank you.

BRANDT: --von Gillern. I guess I've always had concerns with this bill, and, and, and we've had some very healthy discussions here with my seatmate, Senator von Gillern. And one of them is you can get a single plate today. You have to pay 50 bucks for a sticker on the windshield, and then you don't have to go through the hassle of putting a front, front plate holder on your vehicle. But the majority of vehicles in Nebraska today have front plate holders. And I'm from a rural area. And this is, this is going to sound a little quaint, but I can-- most of us in rural areas know what our license plate numbers are. So I'm Jefferson County. I'm 33. Thayer County is 32. Fillmore County is 34. Saline County is 22. And the only ones in the state that don't have numbers right now are our urban friends in Douglas, Sarpy, and, and Lancaster Counties. So somewhat, in, in our areas, when we see other vehicles driving around and we see a license plate from 46-county or 56-county and, and we, we know they're not from around there-- also, with the alphanumerics, we know they're not from around there. And a lot of that is also displayed on the front of the vehicle. I did get some concerns from law enforcement. And the scenario that they laid out in law enforcement was this, is that they're in a pursuit in an urban area. The pursued car backs into a slot in a mall or something like that, and they are unable to see that

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

license plate. Today, if there's no license plate and they see that sticker on the windshield, they know it's a one-license plate car, which probably isn't the case of who they were pursuing. So, I, I mean, that was a legitimate concern. And I am really concerned about the mandatory aspect of this law, so I am, I am going to oppose AM507. I know Senator von Gillern has brought this every year he's been here, but those are my concerns. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Senator Clouse, you're recognized to speak.

CLOUSE: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. Senator von Gillern, would you respond?

ARCH: Senator von Gillern, will you yield?

von GILLERN: Yes.

CLOUSE: Yeah. I, too, had heard from my law enforcement, and they, they had some reservations about it. But I expressed to them that the metro folks were in support of it. But I guess for my clarification on-- so they no longer have to have the sticker on the windshield, either?

von GILLERN: Yeah. Correct. The sticker would go away and you would only be issued one-- a single plate.

CLOUSE: OK.

von GILLERN: Yeah. In the, in the-- sorry. Not to, not to take your time, but no one has been able to explain to me the logic of, of the sticker. It-- it's not necessarily visible when you pass in a car coming from the op-- opposing direction. It-- it's basically, is a fee for fees' sake. And that sticker price has been adjusted a couple of times, from what I understand, over the years. I, I did look at just eliminating the sticker fee. But, of course, that comes with a fiscal note. And, and again, the director of the DMV suggested that any change be made with the plate cycle in '29, which, which works better for all parties concerned.

CLOUSE: OK. Thank you. I guess my other reservations are-- I'm not sure how this applies with the flock cameras system that we use out in our area, where they read the license plate and they're able to do some pretty good law enforcement things with that. But I-- just some questions I had. Thank you. I'll yield my time, Mr. President. Thank you.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

ARCH: Senator Dungan, you're recognized to speak.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I do rise today, I think in support of AM507. I spoke with Senator von Gillern about this earlier. I know there's a lot of neighboring states that, that don't require both a front and a back plate, and I, I think the part that I find most convincing is the cost savings that Senator von Gillern was able to outline. So I appreciate his efforts on this. Listening to the debate, though, I was curious if Senator Brandt would be willing to answer just a couple of questions.

ARCH: Senator Brandt, will you yield?

BRANDT: Yes, I will.

DUNGAN: Thank you, Senator Brandt. So as one of those city slickers who has the alphanumeric license plates, just curious, what is the virtue in you rural folks being able to see that we are, in fact, alphanumeric license plates when we're driving through your part of the neck of the woods?

BRANDT: I am so glad you asked me that. So I have an example ready to go on this. Here about 4 years ago, I'm driving down the highway past one of my fields, and I see 4 pickups parked in there, hunting pheasants. Went in there, asked them if they'd asked the owner if they could hunt there. Observed that these were not 33-county plates, which is good old Jefferson County. These were alphanumeric plates, which probably means they were Omaha or Lincoln, which, in asking them, it turns out that that's who they were. They had indicated they had asked the owner, and I said that was kind of strange because that was me. So, that's just one example of how we track things in rural Nebraska. It's a very valuable tool. And yeah. It's kind of funny, but it's kind of not, you know?

DUNGAN: No, I-- yeah.

BRANDT: And, and when we have a request to search for people and look for things, we look at license plates.

DUNGAN: Well, and I appreciate that. I, I remember back when we didn't have the alphanumeric license plates, and it's easy to identify where people come from in the counties. So I just thought that was an interesting point to make. I do think I still rise in support of AM507. I would encourage my colleagues' green vote on that. I think it's a, a good amendment to a bill that also takes care of a lot of

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

other problems, so I'd also stand in support of AM292 and LB97. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Seeing no one in the queue, Senator von Gillern, you're recognized to close on AM507.

von GILLERN: Thank you, Mr. President. Just want to address a few things that were raised. The-- Senator Clouse raised a question about the, the scanners. Scanners are already equipped to pick up cars from the back because there are, as I said, there are 26 other states that already have made this change. And you wouldn't want to, you wouldn't want to eliminate half of the population from being able to, to scan plates on the highway. Also, I, I, I don't have a front plate on my car. When you pull into the garage at the airport, they scan your plate and they make a record of it. Well, they've got a scanner on the back because they know that many people don't have a plate on the front. So the, the law-- I'm not saying it, it wouldn't be easier in every situation, but if law enforcement is chasing a-- if they're looking for a red Chevy Impala and they're driving through the Walmart parking lot and they see a red Chevy Impala backed into a slot, I'm pretty sure they're going to check it out and not, not, not be concerned about whether there's a plate or not. I think that was-- addressed all the other questions that were raised. Again, I just want to reiterate this is, this is approximately a \$14 million savings to Nebraskans. It doesn't go to the General Fund because these are passthrough expenses. Whatever it costs to generate the plate is what gets charged. But you have to pay-- if you have to pay half as much for the plate and you don't have to pay when you buy a new car to have a bracket put on, it represents a very substantial savings. So I encourage my colleagues to vote to positively impact the wallets of all Nebraskans. So thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of AM507 to AM292. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 30 ayes, 5 nays, Mr. President, on adoption of the amendment.

ARCH: AM507 is adopted. Senator Moser, you are recognized to close on the committee amendment, AM292.

MOSER: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. This amendment adds 2 provisions to the original bill. It allows for the removal of the requirement for a notary public on the application for a duplicate title if it's a totally salvaged vehicle. That was Senator

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate March 13, 2025

Guereca's bill, LB225. And then, it also adds the essentials of LB543, which was a Senator Dover bill. It allows for multi-year registration of motor vehicles, and I would appreciate your support on AM292. Thank you.

ARCH: Colleagues, the question before the body is the adoption of AM292, as amended to LB97. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 37, 37 ayes, 0 nays on adoption of the committee amendment, Mr. President.

ARCH: AM292 is adopted. Senator Fredrickson, you're recognized to close on LB97.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, again, colleagues, for your support of this bill and for all the amendments. They were all friendly amendments, so I appreciate that. I also want to thank my, my staff. I want to thank the staff at the TNT Committee for all their work on this, and including Director Lahm and the DMV. I'll, I'll share quickly. Director Lahm is doing an incredible job at the DMV. I actually had to go get my driver's license renewed last week. I'm putting a little plug in. Make an appointment online. I was in and out in 7 minutes, which is like a pretty big deal for the DMV. So I appreciate the work the DMV is doing. This bill is going to help them continue to be efficient and do their work well. Again, it's a cleanup bill. It's brought at the request of the department and it's going to continue to enable efficient and effective government. So I ask for your green vote, and thank you very much.

ARCH: The question before the body is the adopt-- is the advancement of LB97 to E&R Initial. All those in favor vote aye; all those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 38 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on advancement of the bill.

ARCH: LB97 does advance. Mr. Clerk, next item.

CLERK: Mr. President, the next item on the agenda, General File, LB245. It's a bill for an act-- introduced by Senator DeKay. It's a bill for an act relating to the Nebraska Foo-- Pure Food Act; amends sect-- several sections of Chapter 81; redefines terms; changes provisions relating to priority items, federal Current Good Manufacturing Practice, design and fabrication requirements, fees, establishments that are permanently closed, service of notice and orders; eliminates provisions relating to time/temperature control for

food safety, handwashing requirements and food contact, contact restrictions for food employees, requirements relating to the date marking, sale, consumption, or discard of time/temperature control for food safety, and fingernail requirements relating to food employees; harmonize provisions; repeals the original section; outright repeals section 81-2, 2701 [SIC-- 81-2,272.01], 81-2072.10 [SIC-- 81-2,272.10], 81-2, 272.24, 81-2, 272.32; and declares an emergency. The bill was read for the first time on January 14 of this year and referred to the Agriculture Committee. That committee placed the bill on General File with committee amendments.

ARCH: Senator DeKay, you are recognized to open on LB245.

DeKAY: Thank you, Mr. President. And good morning, colleagues. If we were in standard time, I'd be saying good early afternoon. LB245 is a bill that I brought at the request of the Department of Agriculture. It amends the Nebraska Pure Food Act to incorporate the 2022 Food Code recommendations of the Food and Drug Administration. The Food Code has long been adopted by Nebraska and almost all other states as a system of science-based and uniform standards to be followed in food manufacturer, retail, and food service to safeguard against the risk to public health and-- from food borne illnesses. This standard of Food Code help ensure that food is unadulterated and honestly presented when offered to the consumer in commercial food settings. The Food Code is revised periodically to include updated standards based on new understandings about how to mitigate risks, learn from scientific study, and evaluation of causes of incidents of food illness. The legislation is in-- introduced from time to time to incorporate the most recent updates from the Food Code into the Nebraska Pure Food Act. The last general update of the Pure Food Act was LB835, passed in 2020, which incorporated the 2017 Food Code. The committee statement provides a detailed section by section explanation of the bill and the committee amendments. I would encourage you to review that. I will briefly walk through the major points of the bill. Section 2 of the bill incorporates the 2022 version of the Food Code, except for those provisions of Food Code that are excluded. Typically, a Food Code section that is excluded-- replicated in state statute is modified form of state variance. You may notice that Section 2 strikes a number of existing Food Code exclusions, meaning that we now adopt those Food Code recommendations verbatim. Overall, with LB245, the Pure Food Act will have fewer variances from the Food Code. The handout I distributed explains the provisions of previously excluded Food Code sections that we would no longer exclude. Simultan-- simultaneously, in Section 13, sections of the Pure Food Act that contain the variance that are no longer needed as-- are repealed.

Section 6 of LB245 also adopts the updated Good Manufacturing Regulations in 21 CFR 117, replacing older provisions in 21 CFR 110. Part 117 provides more specific proactive sanitation standards and practices for food manufacturers. The new manufacturing regulations are regul-- are already utilized by FDA for inspecting food manufacturers, and most manufacturers in the state already comply with its provision. LB245 eliminates a conflicting state regulation. LB245 also contains a series of clarifications that the department recommends to the-- aid in the administration of the act. These include removing operations that perform only food delivery and no other food activity from the definition of the food establishment. There are no current delivery-only operations licensed. Expanding the definition of a single event food vendors, these are tempor-- temporary food service operations, typically, a local restaurant that has a booth at a community festival that only exists during that event. Currently, the single event food vendor exemption is limited to operations only in existence for 2 days. Because many community festivals may last up to 4 days, the permitted duration for a single event vendor is increased to 4 days. It also clarifies that while institutional entities that provide food service for patrons or residents remain exempt from the permit requirement and permit fees of the Pure Food Act, third-party food service providers utilized by these entities are subject to any applicable fee. Finally, LB245, as introduced, inserts a new schedule of statutory caps for the various fees that the department collects under the act. The department's Pure Food Inspection Program is currently supported by a combination of cash funds generated by these fees and general funds, which is roughly a 50/50 split. The current fee caps were put in place in 2012, and have been adjusted by the department over time to maintain the cash fund contribution, but are now at the statutory maximum. The new fees authorities contained in this bill as introduced are a substantial increase over their current statutory maximums and intended to fully cash fund the program, eliminating the need to partially support the program with general funds. I will talk about this more in my opening on the committee amendments. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: As the Clerk indicated, there is a committee amendment. Senator DeKay, you are recognized to open.

DeKAY: Thank you. The committee amendment is a white copy amendment which becomes the bill. The amendment retains the provisions of LB245 as introduced with a couple revisions. The amendment also inserts the provisions of LB394. With respect to LB245, the major change in the committee amendments is a modification of the fee provisions in Section 8 of the bill, as introduced. AM501 does not adopt the

administration's recommendation to fully cash fund the Pure Food Inspection Program. The fee schedule contained in this amendment would be a normal inflationary increase and provide sufficient fee authority to continue to meet the current policy to fund the program 50% by cash funds matched by general funds. It is necessary to increase the fee authority. As I mentioned on the opening, the fee caps in statute now were last set in 2012, and the fees now charged by the department have reached these caps. Without the ability to adjust fees, a greater share of the cost of the program would need to be funded through general funds. The fee increase in the amendment is necessary to maintain the status quo. The new statutory caps are set based on the assumption of 3% annual growth in cost to carry out the program, and should last for at least 10 years before the fees would need to be revisited. The other revision is a recommendation of the director offered during her testimony on the bill. The Pure Food Act currently exempts pharmacies that sell only pharmaceutical, medicinal, or health supplement foods that are not potentially hazardous food. The amendment would extend that to facilities-- similar pharmacies that sell only these types of food products. Sections 12-15 of the amendment insert the provisions of LB394. LB394 is also brought at the request of the Department of Agriculture and incorporates current additions and publications utilized as standards for purposes of Weights and Measures Act. The committee amendment retains the provisions of LB394 that incorporate a number of handbook publications of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as described in Sections 89-186. These publications are periodically updated with recommendations of the National Conference on Weights and Measures. From time to time, legislation is brought to update the Weights and Measures Act to be consistent with current additions. We currently incorporate the 2019 versions of the handbook referenced in the act. LB394 portions of the committee amendment would incorporate the 2025 versions. The Department of Agriculture Inspection Program and other duties carried out under the act are currently supported through a combination of 50/50 general funds and 50% cash funds. LB394, as introduced, proposed a substantial and immediate increase in the schedule of annual fees paid by the regulated public in order to replace general funds currently supported by the program. The Department of Agriculture's inspection and other duties carried out under the act are currently supported through a combination of roughly 50% general funds and 50% cash funds. Similarly to the fee revision for the Pure Food Act, the committee amendment adopts a modified fee schedule that would provide a more normal inflationary increase that the-- would enable the fee revenues to continue to provide the cash match to general funds supporting the program. The fee caps in the amendment would also be assumed to be

sufficient for 10 years, assuming a 3% annual growth of the program cost. LB394, as introduced, also created a new fee for-- category for EV vehicle charger. This new fee category, omitted from AM501 at the request of the department. Currently, there is only one other state that has only recently begun implementing EV charger inspection. There is not a lot to go on to determine the cost to the department to implement, in order to set an appropriate fee. The department asked for some additional time to get a better understanding of the equipment that they would need to acquire and a staff time to perform the inspections to be ready for-- to implement. I would anticipate legislation next session will be brought to amend the fee schedule to add EV chargers. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Machaela Cavanaugh would move to bracket the bill with MO72.

ARCH: Senator Cavanaugh, you're recognized open on your motion.

M. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. So initially, I had filed this motion because that's just what I'm doing now. That's me. But then I started looking at what the bill actually is, and I'm, I, I-- I'm, I'm going to keep this, this motion. Oh, I thought it was my IPP motion. No, my bracket motion. OK. I am out, I am out of practice here. I thought it was my IPP motion, which is-- IPP, in-- to indefinitely postpone, something that the Health and Human Services Committee is apparently very familiar with. So I am going to-- definitely, we'll get to my IPP motions. And those are going to be motions that are very serious. I, I do want to IPP the bills that I'm filing IPP motions on. I'm not probably going to file IPP motions on the ones that I don't want to file IPP motions on. Why would I do this? Well, what did I say this was? The working man's protest. This is the working man's protest, colleagues. I am standing in protest to how this Legislature is teaching-- treating working Nebraskans. There is an onslaught of bills that attack working people, whether it is from sick leave, or minimum wage, or workman's comp or work requirements for getting assistance that you already have work requirements, or limiting the amount of time that you can have assistance. Mind you, we do not limit how long you can get business incentives, but if your employer gets a business incentive with no limit-- time limit on it, but you receive government programs because your employer pays you too little, we want to limit that. We also want to make you document everything, and we want to penalize the childcare facilities that take you on by paying them 75% of the market rate, and

also not paying them for the enrollment that they could get 100% for a kid that wasn't on the subsidy. So we really are-- we are going on all cylinders in Nebraska. We are putting our fist down and we are saying, working Nebraskas, screw you. Screw you, working Nebraskans. Screw you. Love, Your Nebraska Legislature. That's what we are doing. We are going to have a massive income tax cuts for the wealthy. We are going to have property tax relief for property tax owners, and it is going to be bent on the backs of the income taxes of the poor. And we can't afford to do income tax cuts for the poor because we have to afford income tax cuts for the wealthy. And then we're going to look at raising taxes on all kinds of things across the board, so that we can afford the property tax relief that you are already paying for through your income taxes that we are not cutting, and through the taxes that you will pay on goods and services across the state. So that brings us to this bill. This raises fees, fees. Also, by the way, our government is now trying to operate almost entirely on fees and taxes for goods and services. So we're increasing our taxes on goods and services through the Revenue Committee, and we are raiding cash funds of-- that are funded by fees in the Appropriations Committee. That's what we're doing, Nebraska. We are completely screwing you over. But you elected us, so I guess that's what you want or maybe you just don't know that that's what's happening, but that's what's happening. Maybe it's not being reported on enough. But I guarantee if your senator isn't getting on the mic and talking about these issues, then your senator is probably one of the people that is supporting these things. If your senator is introducing or voting out of committee these issues, then that's who you elected. You elected people who think it is OK to charge you more in taxes at the cash register, charge you more in fees for government services so that they can get property tax relief for themselves. That's what's happening. And for the governor, do not forget the governor. But heavens to Betsy. We cannot take the 100 and almost 80 million dollars in TANF funds that are intended for low-income, 50% poverty people of this state who have to work to qualify-- we cannot take that money that is just sitting there and actually help you. That would be the real atrocity. And you know why we can't do that? Because we got to teach the Democrats in the body a lesson. I don't know what that lesson is other than Machaela Cavanaugh can do whatever she wants because we will take everything that she ever cared about in her entire time being here away from her, so that she has no reason but to punish us every minute of every day for the remainder of this session. That's the lesson I learned. I don't know if that's the lesson you wanted me to learn, but that is the lesson I learned. So here we are, again. We are pushing forward public policy that harms Nebraskans, that harms Nebraskans, and we are doing it on

the basis of lining the pockets of corporations and wealthy individuals and we are punishing the poor, working families of this state, for petty politics, for petty politics. That's what is happening. And we can't let childcare bills move forward because we're afraid of federal funds. Although we're not afraid of losing federal funds, if in fact, the bill is a Republican's bill or the governor's bill, then we're totally copasetic on federal funds. We don't have to worry about DHHS's budget because they're going to draw down IV-E funding. We spent \$10 million on a consultant to tell us that they should be drawing down more IV-E funding, something that I'm pretty sure-- let me check my notes. Yeah. I have said on this microphone multiple times a year, every year for 7 years that we should be drawing down IV-E funding. I get paid \$1,000 a month. You didn't need to hire the consultant to tell you that. Also, about every advocate out there has been telling you that for the entire time I've been here and probably long before I was here. Even the failed contract of St. Francis Ministries acknowledged that we were not pulling down IV-E funding to its full utilization. And now we're like, you know, what's going to save DHHS's budget? We're going to start pulling down that IV-E funding. Also, it's federal funding, and we're terrified that we're going to lose federal funding so we can't move any Democrats' bills that have any federal funding because we're going to lose federal funding, except for DHHS has no concerns about losing federal funding unless it's a Democrats bill, then we're concerned about federal funding. Otherwise, everything's copasetic, as long as it benefits the wealthy. And I asked, I asked DHHS about this shift of the Medicaid contracts. So our MCOs, medi-- managed care organizations, and we have 3 of them, and they manage the Medicaid process here in Nebraska. And one of them, UnitedHealth-- I know. Shocking. UnitedHealth did something not great. UnitedHealth sent out a letter a couple months ago to providers, cutting provider reimbursement rates by 50%, because they can. And I wondered, why would they do that? Because they can only get a certain percentage of profit, right? Right. So, we have a cap. That's why we also have the Medicaid Excess Fund. The Medicaid Excess Fund is the amount of money that goes unspent by the MCOs, comes back to the state, it's above what they can keep for their profits. So if they decrease the amount they're spending by 50%, they're going to have to turn a lot of that money back over to us. So why would they do that? That seems weird, doesn't it? Oh, that's right. If we have more money in the Medicaid Excess Fund, provide fewer services to Medicaid patients, then we have more things in general funds that we can shift to be funded through the Medicaid Excess Fund, and presto-- property tax relief. We're going to have providers leaving the state because they can't afford to

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take Medicaid patients at 50% of the reimbursement rate. We're going to have fewer providers. We're going to have fewer healthcare services, but you're going to have property tax relief. And isn't that what matters most? Doesn't matter if you're going to be dying on that property because you don't have access to healthcare in rural Nebraska any longer, you're going to have property tax relief. Easy peasy, lemon squeezy. I see my time is up. Thank you, Mr. President.

ARCH: Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, items for the record-- Mr. President, bills read this morning on Final Reading were presented to the Governor at 11:14 a.m. Additionally, communication from Senator Prokop, designating LR20CA as his personal priority bill for the session; and communication from Senator Jacobson that the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee is designating LB474 as one of the committee priority bills this session. Amendments to be printed from Senator Bosn to LB230. Motions to be printed from Senator Machaela Cavanaugh to LR25CA, LB376, LB299, LB245. Additionally, notice that the Business and Labor Committee will meet in executive session at noon in room 2022; Business and Labor, noon, room 2022; and the Government Committee will meet in executive session in room 1507 immediately following their hearing. Additionally, the Revenue Committee will meet in executive session tomorrow at 10:30; Revenue Committee, tomorrow morning, 10:30 a.m., executive session. Finally, Mr. President, some name adds: Senator McKinney, name added to LB215; Senator Andersen to LB, LB694; and Senator Ibach would withdraw her name from LB299. Priority motion, Senator John Cavanaugh would move to adjourn the body until Friday, March 14, Friday, March 14, at 9:00 a.m.

ARCH: Colleagues, you've heard the motion to adjourn. All those in favor, say aye. Opposed, nay. We are adjourned.