

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

Education Committee
November 17, 2008

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Education met at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, November 17, 2008, in Room 1524 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on a gubernatorial appointment. Senators present: Gail Kopplin, Vice Chairperson; Greg Adams; Bill Avery; Gwen Howard; and Joel Johnson. Senators absent: Ron Raikes, Chairperson; Brad Ashford; and Carroll Burling. []

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Good morning. This is the hearing for...to approve an appointment of Darlene Starman to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission. Darlene, would you like to come up and tell us why you would like to be on that commission. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: (Exhibit 1) Well, good morning. My name is Darlene Starman. Some of you I know and some of you I've not met. But I was excited when I got the call from the Governor's Office and asked to be a member of the commission. I have been a long-time advocate of public radio and television. I enjoy the many, many sports programs, political programs, arts and humanities that it has to offer. I'm also from rural Nebraska. I'm from a community--Petersburg, Nebraska, in Boone County, Nebraska. I live five miles out of town. We didn't have access to these kinds of...this kind of programming and services as I grew up. So I can really, I think, appreciate the importance of the commission to rural communities and the benefits that it can offer. We didn't have good public libraries. We didn't always have the best teachers either. So I think this is a real benefit. And I can really appreciate how this can enhance the lives of rural Nebraskans. I think it's an exciting time to be involved with the commission. Over 1 million Nebraskans watch NET each week, watch one or more programs offered by NET each week. And we have over 80,000 radio listeners each week. So I think that's a testament to NET and the good work that they do. We...at our last meeting we heard, and I've only been to one meeting so far. I'm a new appointee, so I've been to only one meeting. That's an increase of 60,000 households over this time last year. So those would be some of the reasons why I think I would be a good addition to the NET Commission. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Okay. Thank you. Are there questions for Ms. Starman?
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR JOHNSON: I've got one. And I don't know if you can answer it or not because it's a little bit of a technical question. But I am a great admirer of the NET radio that comes out of UNO. It's distinctly different than the others. And whenever I can I listen to it. But can we put it on a higher tower or a higher hill, (laugh) halfway between Lincoln and Omaha or something like that, because as you drive around Lincoln it will cut in and out and so on. And so here's a great resource that isn't available to as many people. And with, I would think, a rather small correction it can serve a lot more people.

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DARLENE STARMAN: Well, we have a meeting this Thursday. And if you confirm me in the Legislature, I'll ask our technology...I will ask...make that recommendation to the technology committee. But I don't have the answer. I don't know the answer to that question, Senator Johnson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR JOHNSON: And then, you know, this whole area would be served by two excellent radio stations instead of just one. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Thank you for that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Okay. Are there other questions? Senator Avery.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR AVERY: Actually, I don't have a question. I just want to point out that Ms. Starman is a constituent of mine and I'm proud of that. And I will not speculate on how she voted. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR JOHNSON: We will. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Other questions? Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Thank you, Darlene, for being here. And I, too, don't really have a question. But in your introductory remarks you made a reference to the fact that you had a background from rural Nebraska. And, I guess, what I would say rather is encouragement to you. I traveled the state this summer, talking with school districts from one end to the other. And technology, obviously you're not involved with all that is necessary but part of what's necessary, is absolutely critical in rural Nebraska.
[CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Sure, absolutely. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: And please keep that at the front of your telescope. There's good school districts out there, but there is just so much that they can do. And whether it's the Internet or you folks, telecommunications, they need your help. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ADAMS: Um-hum. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Other questions? [CONFIRMATION]

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DARLENE STARMAN: I guess, I would add that we're almost through with the audio and the video upgrades to the Capitol and they're on track. And you'll have audio and video in seven of your legislative hearing rooms, I don't know how many you have, and the Governor's Press Room and in the courtrooms. So that will be completed by the end of December, one of the main issues we've been focused with. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Okay. I see no other questions, so that will end this hearing. Thank you for being here... [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Thank you, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: ...to visit with us. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Have a good special session. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOPPLIN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

DARLENE STARMAN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

Chairperson

Committee Clerk