

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

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The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 1:30 p.m. on March 20, 2007, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing regarding gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Joel Johnson, Chairperson; Tim Gay, Vice Chairperson; Philip Erdman; Tom Hansen; Dave Pankonin; and Arnie Stuthman. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR GAY: We'll call the Health and Human Services to order here. We have some appointments to go through today. A quick introduction of state senators that are here. Senator Hansen... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR PANKONIN: Oh, look who's here. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR GAY: Oh. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

_____: (Inaudible). [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR GAY: All right. And our chief has now joined us. Senator Stuthman, Senator Johnson... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

_____: (Inaudible). [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR GAY: He's here. Senator Tim Gay and Senator Dave Pankonin. So with that, I'll turn it over to you, Joel. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. There was another executive session going on somewhere else and so I needed to be there, too. Okay. Well, I'll just go through the regular rules even though we don't have very many people here, but anyhow this is the Health and Human Services Committee. And I guess you introduced everybody. Remember that the proceedings are transcribed and so as you come forward give your name and spell it and all that kind of stuff. And with that, I can't think of anything else. Let's just go through the list and let's go through the board of Emergency Medical Services first. And the first person on the list is Linda Jensen. And Linda and everybody else--go ahead and have a seat, please--we will need to have you fill out a testifier sheet and then they have it. So we can do that when you're finished. So anyhow, welcome, Linda. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LINDA JENSEN: Thank you. My name is Linda Jensen, J-e-n-s-e-n. I'm a nurse from Immanuel Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. And I have recently been appointed to the board of EMS. I've been a nurse for 36.5 years. Most of that time I have been working in the emergency department. And for the past probably 24 years, I've been working with EMS with continuing education, helping them after they have entered the

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

field of EMS I help them with continuing education through my work at Immanuel Emergency Department. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Were you at Immanuel when it was over, what, at 34th and... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LINDA JENSEN: 34th and Larimore, in that area. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Yeah, I was going to say Fowler or something is in there, too, isn't it? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LINDA JENSEN: Fowler. Right. I started my nursing career over there. I went to Immanuel School of Nursing and then I worked at the old Immanuel Hospital from 1970 until the time we moved to the new campus. So... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: When did they move? 15 years ago? []

LINDA JENSEN: 1974. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Oh, that long ago already? Wow. Okay. Any questions of Linda Jensen? Senator Howard. Oh-whoa. Excuse me. Hansen, excuse me. (Laughter) You look a little different. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Thank you. Is this your first appointment to the EMS support? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LINDA JENSEN: Yes, it is. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Okay. That's all I need to know. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: All right. Anybody else? []

SENATOR PANKONIN: Thanks for serving. Thanks for volunteering to do it. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LINDA JENSEN: Thank you. I... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yeah, you're going to find out we're not a very rough bunch here this afternoon. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

LINDA JENSEN: Well, I consider it to be a privilege and an honor to be able to do this. So I thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Well, and seriously, as other people have mentioned, is that we really do value all of you people. You do make a big difference. So thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LINDA JENSEN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Leon Sykes. Welcome. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Thank you. Good afternoon. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Better have you spell your name, Leon, since you spell it kind of funny. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Dr. Leon Sykes, S-y-k-e-s. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. You want to tell us just a little bit about yourself? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Sure. I'm the director of the trauma service and surgical critical care service at Creighton University Medical Center. I'm a trauma surgeon. I've been practicing trauma surgery now for, let's see, going on 21 years. I've been at Creighton for about a year. As I said, I am the director of the trauma service. I've been a director previous at the University of Maryland a number of years ago, and I've been in associate directorships at a number of institutions around the country. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: As I recall, wasn't Johns Hopkins one of the first places to get in on trauma in general? I know certainly the state of Maryland was one of the first as a whole to do good things. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: It was actually the University of Maryland. The University of Maryland is probably about a mile or so away from Hopkins and one of the forefathers was a gentleman by the name of R Adams Cowley, who was the director of--actually original founder and director of shock trauma. And that's at the university. One of his main students was Dr. Howard Champion who was my preceptor when I did my trauma fellowship a number of year ago. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: I just kind of remember that that's kind of one of the places where it really started. So... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

LEON SYKES: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: You're out of a good place. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Senator Johnson. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Stuthman. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Dr. Sykes, I noticed in your employment you've been since 1998 Ohio, Illinois, Florida, and now up to Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: That's right. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Is there a reason why you move so much? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Well, in terms of academic surgery that's not really a lot of moves. I mean, I know surgical academicians who have moved that many times if not more times. But I'm hoping this is it. I have family ties here both in Omaha and in Kansas through my wife, and so there are no plans to go anywhere. Hopefully this is going to be it and I'll finish out my career here. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Yes, sir. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Senator Hansen. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Dr. Sykes, it's nice to have you here today. Have you ever been involved in anything in Douglas County with Homeland Security drills of the terrorist attacks assimilations or anything like that? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: I have not. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Okay. Do they have those in Douglas County? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: You know, I've heard a little bit about it. I haven't been here long enough yet to really find out much about that. I mean I certainly feel that it's appropriate that I am involved with it and would like to be involved with it. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: If they don't I would encourage you to push that along, because

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

that's something that's very important. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Yeah absolutely. Absolutely. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: The Omaha area is the most advanced along that line in Nebraska and hope that you do take part and so on. And we're awfully glad you're here. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Well, thank you. It's an honor. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Any other...Senator Gay. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR GAY: Did I hear...is this a first time appointment to this or... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Yes, it is. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR GAY: I just wanted to say, and this is for Linda as well, we went through some other appointments last week and I think there's quite a few new people on this board. The way I understood the Governor wanted to...so as you work with your fellow members, I noticed a couple of these were my area, too, but I think most of this board is new so we're excited to get some energy in there. And Senator Pankonin...all of us appreciate it. So I think you got a good opportunity and thanks for serving. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Well, thanks. Like I said it's just an honor to be a part of it and I'm very happy to have been asked. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. We're delighted you're here. Stick around until you're an old man. Okay. Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: All right. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Well, let's go on to the Rural Health Advisory Commission then and we've got Donald Frey. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: I did have a chance to fill one of these out. So do I slip it right in here? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yes, that would be just great. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: Okay. You bet. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

SENATOR JOHNSON: Donald, welcome. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: Okay, well thank you very much. I guess I can tell you a little bit about myself. I'm Dr. Don Frey, chair of the family medicine department at Creighton University. I'm actually not a new appointment. I'm a reappointment and it's a pleasure to be here, because somehow the previous four or five appointments that I've had on the Rural Health Advisory Commission I've somehow been able to pull that off without ever having to testify before this group. And I figure it's about time I that I probably fulfilled my duty in that regard as well. So I'm here. I'm originally from the state of Missouri. Went to a college and medical school down there. Was in rural family medicine in a small town in Missouri for a number of years. I've been at Creighton since 1993. And shortly after that time actually began to serve on the Rural Health Advisory Commission as the representative from Creighton University on that and it's been a real pleasure working with the folks that are on that commission, number one. Number two, it's been a real challenge in terms of addressing some of the needs of rural Nebraska and trying to look at ways that we can all work together to meet some of those needs, which can be very difficult. My main tie to your neck of the woods, Senator, is the administrator of our department, the person who handles the day to day operations and kind of more or less deals with all of the issues that come up in the goings on of about 15 or 16 family doctors at Creighton University is a very capable lady named Betsy Kimball, and I understand you knew her father, Ken Kimball, quite well out at Kearney. In any case, I'd be glad to answer any questions about my experiences thus far with the Rural Health Advisory Commission and again, it's once again an honor for me to be a part of that group. It's a very hardworking group of folks not only the committee members, but also the staff. Some fine people who are working very, very hard for the cause of rural health care in Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Any questions? Let me just tell you a little bit about Dr. Kimball, because...great, great guy. One of the people, you know, when you go down the highway and you see the signs that says hospital this way and so on, he was on the national group that implemented those highway signs. He also was on the national group that developed the EMT course and started it. So pretty good blood there. Ken is just a great, great guy. Anyhow, Don...any questions of Don? Senator Gay. []

SENATOR GAY: Dr. Frey, Gretna is not too far from Papillion so if you ever want to call or get together, feel free to give me a jingle. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: Oh, I surely will. You bet. Yeah, enjoy living out there.
[CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR GAY: Appreciate your service. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: You bet. Thank you so much. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

SENATOR JOHNSON: And while you're here I'm going to tell Dr. Sykes as well is that the van ambulance started in Omaha as well. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: Exactly. My understanding is that the color of ambulances nationally is officially designated nationally as Omaha orange and that that color designation came from Dr. Kimball. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: I think that's correct. Yeah. Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

DONALD FREY: Thank you, sir. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: And we've got a Kate Hesser. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Hello. I'm Kate Hesser. []

SENATOR JOHNSON: Welcome, Kate. And when you finish would you fill out one of those sheets for us? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Absolutely, yup. So you just want to hear a little bit about myself? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yeah, could you spell your name first? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER : Okay. Yeah. My last name is Hesser, H-e-s-s-e-r. I'm originally from Fairbury, Nebraska. Grew up on a farm there. And attended Chadron State College through the Rural Health Opportunities program. Then went on to University of Nebraska Medical Center and I graduated last year. And I'm currently in the family practice residency program at university. And my husband and I are both actually in the program and we'll be moving to Grand Island in July to do two years of rural family practice residency. And the plan is to eventually end up where they need us, I guess, in rural Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Great. Success story. Senator Hansen. []

SENATOR HANSEN: Kate, could you tell us a little bit...this is the RHOP program, correct? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Yes. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Could you tell us a little bit about that program and your

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

experience in it... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Sure. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: ...and how you ever got to Chadron? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Right. Well, because Fairbury and Chadron are about eight hours apart. So as a junior and senior in high school I decided I wanted to be a family physician and my counselor told me about the program, the Rural Health Opportunities program, which if you haven't heard of it it's a program where doctors, dentists, physicians' assistants, and a few other things can be...you can be selected into those schools as a senior in high school. So you apply to the program. You go through an interview process. And if you're accepted then if you maintain a good grade average during your four years of undergrad you're automatically accepted into those health professional schools at the University of Nebraska. So my husband and I actually, we didn't know each other before Chadron, but we both are from this side of the state and both applied to be in the Chadron program for M.D. And the reason I chose Chadron over Wayne is because I wanted to get a little further away from home. And Chadron has a fantastic health professions program. And as far as I know they still do and they produce very good medical students and doctors out of that college. So... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Did that program set you up then to do your residency in Grand Island? Or will you... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER : No. The Rural Health Opportunities program just lasted through my four years at Chadron and then my subsequent enrollment at the university. After that point, I was no longer affiliated with that program. The rural family physician residency that I'm going to pursue in Grand Island I had to apply for that while I was in my fourth year of medical school. So that's completely separate. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR HANSEN: Well, I'm glad you're going to be out there. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: But it is a part of UNMC. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Yes, it's a UNMC family practice program. They actually have five sites that you can go to in the state: Grand Island, North Platte, Norfolk, Kearney, and Scottsbluff. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

SENATOR JOHNSON: Got Senator Pankonin over here. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR PANKONIN: Doctor, we really appreciate you coming today and that's a great story and we appreciate that, because, you know, we know there's a need and we appreciate that you and your husband apparently are both committed to that. So thanks for that. Where's he from? I'm just curious. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: He's actually from Hickman, Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR PANKONIN: Uh-huh. Sure, not too far from here. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Okay, so you all... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR PANKONIN: Right. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER : So small community, but close to a big one. But we've both always just had a desire to go back to a rural town and have that wide scope of practice that, you know, unfortunately is getting less and less people wanting to go into that, but... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR PANKONIN: Well, we thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Well, thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR PANKONIN: I hope it works out well. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: One of the things that is about ready for the Governor's signature is we've revised the loan payment or repayment plan for those that go back to underserved areas and so on. So hopefully that will help a little bit too. It cut the interest rate from 24 percent per year from the time of the occurrence of the loan down to 8 percent. So hopefully it will attract more people to... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: I have several colleagues that are interested, myself included when I get to that point, of applying for that particular program. Obviously we want to be able to support all the doctors that apply and I think there is a pretty big interest in it. So hopefully we'll continue to get good funding for it. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Well, hopefully this will help quite a bit. We think it will. So great. Senator Stuthman. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Senator Johnson. Doctor, do you feel as being a new doctor and being appointed to this Rural Health Advisory Committee, do you think you have enough experience to serve on that committee? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER : Well, my position is as a resident physician member of the committee. So the way I understand it, I mean, everybody who fills my position is sort of green at this point. Definitely by my third year in the committee I feel like I will really know what I'm doing hopefully by then. And could continue on to remain an active member in the committee either...there's other positions I could fill in future years as well. But I think right now it's a learning period. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR STUTHMAN: I think there's a lot of value to having a person like yourself on a committee like that. New people in the new profession and serving as a new member of committee are willing to ask questions as to, you know, why things are happening and what are we doing this for. And I really respect and I admire you for taking this on. So... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Well, thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR STUTHMAN: You bet. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Keep busy. Senator Erdman from Bayard. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Kate, Chadron State is a great place to go to school. I didn't go there, but my brother did so I'm very familiar with... [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: What is your brother's name? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: His name is Nick. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: That sounds sort of familiar. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: He would have been there 2002 so you might not have met him. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Okay. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: When I graduated from high school we had two classmates of mine that were actually accepted in the program. One went to Chadron State, this would've been the fall of '96, and one went to Wayne. Neither one of them completed the program. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

KATE HESSER: It's unfortunate. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Of the people that you began the program with in Chadron, rough estimate percentage-wise, how many of them actually completed it? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: We started out with four and all four made it to medical school. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Wow. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: The one did drop out in medical school. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Okay. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: So he completed the program, but did not complete the med school training for different reasons. Three of us did complete med school. All of us are doing rural family practice. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Fantastic. Of the comments that you hear, and maybe the experience of that one individual who didn't complete it, are there other things that we should be looking at? We've heard from other hospitals and other folks and other folks that the family practice match didn't necessarily yield a whole lot of folks in rural Nebraska and some of these underserved areas. Are there other things that we should be looking at, in your opinion, and maybe that's part of your task here...maybe you could think of things and maybe through this commission you can help us with that as well. Just off the top of your head, are there things that come to your mind that the state would be better served in pursuing or are there barriers that we should be looking at trying to remove to help facilitate people either finishing the program or actually going on? I mean, obviously your situation is very encouraging, because you're the intent of what the program was designed to be and we're grateful that this fit you and it meets what you'd like to do. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER : Right. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: But are there things, and if you don't have an answer today that's fine, but can you think of things through your efforts and the Rural Health Advisory Commission to again come back to us, because Senator Johnson has a bill brought to our attention from similar types of scenarios through the commission to help us set that policy to encourage people to meet these needs in rural Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: I obviously am biased a little bit, but I think the program is really good

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

program. Obviously I can only speak for Chadron. I know that Wayne has struggled a little bit getting those students from the college to the med school and the other help profession programs. So I'm not sure. I can't really comment on their issues, but I know Chadron has had a pretty strong retention rate. Unfortunately, when you have seniors in high school applying for a program like that people are going to change their mind, you know? They may decide they don't want to be a doctor at all or they may decide that rural, you know, medicine isn't really what they're interested in and they decide to go into surgery or something once they've gotten to the med center. You know, unfortunately there's not a whole lot of really good ways to prevent that from happening. You know, the most important thing I think is that we get really good motivated students into these programs. Obviously they target rural students, but I know that in recent years some of the students have been from some of the bigger towns like North Platte and Grand Island, and they may not have the same perception of rural medicine as some of the students from smaller towns. And that may be part of that problem. So maybe, you know, targeting it more towards these small towns. Another problem is that when I got into med school I found out that a lot of students hadn't even heard of the program that said, you know, that probably would have suited me really well if I would have known about it. And I think getting the word out there to these small schools is really important. And at least getting the school counselors informed as to what the program really is and, you know, how great it is to get these students, you know, lined up on a straight path to, you know, being a health professional. So mainly it's I think communication is a big issue. And then for those students to understand the expectations of the program that, you know, this is a serious commitment. And, you know, if you're not really interested in rural medicine this probably isn't the track for you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Sounds to me like you just described your job for the next three years. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: The follow-up, I guess, two thoughts. One, do we have, I guess, the alumni, if you will, of the program serving active roles in their communities or in other communities. Obviously if you go to Grand Island and you have...I would consider that to be a large Nebraska community. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Right. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: You know, I represent eight counties and my biggest community is about 5,000 people. So I would think that there would be a value of having folks like yourself who have been successful in the program to be an advocate for the program. And then as I understand the program, you apply while you're in high school and that track, if you will, that four years plus two and then you're into the med center. Is there a value or could you see a value in possibly pursuing a second tier idea where you would give folks an opportunity maybe after that senior year, once they've kind of figured out

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

Health and Human Services Committee
March 20, 2007

what they want to be when they grow up, to see if this program serves them? And it wouldn't obviously probably be the same program and there may be other duplications, but maybe an effort beyond that, because it is a difficult time. I mean, I made a decision of what I wanted to study and you don't do a lot with an aged degree, but here I am. I mean, there's not a lot of logic sometimes with what your career path ends up being versus what your degree was. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Right. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR ERDMAN: You don't have that luxury in medicine. You pretty much have to know what you want to do, set that course both on undergrad and grad and to the med center, making sure that you have the courses to get to that profession. You know, some type of evaluation of those types of things, knowing what the limitations are for young people to say I'm a senior in high school. I don't know that I want to be a family doc in rural Nebraska for the rest of my life, you know? So there may need to be an evaluation of that, but I think your experience will probably serve well in a lot of those discussions and I wish you well. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Yeah, thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. I see no other questions. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: All right. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Thank you very much for coming, Kate. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

KATE HESSER: Well, thank you. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: May I proceed? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Oh you certainly can. Have a seat, Leon. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Thank you. I was just listening very closely to what my colleague was saying here. And just to address one of the things that you had said, one of the things that there's a real need for particularly in this part of the country are rural surgery fellowships. We don't have anything like that. I don't think the university has anything like that. There are just a couple of them in the country as far as I know. And the sort of the thing that that sort of fellowship would concentrate on would be bread and butter general surgery, but in addition to that the general surgery resident learns how to do Cesarean sections, learns how to do basic orthopedics, some basic plastics, things that you don't really see in any other surgical residency any more. And quite frankly, I think

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there are a few types of surgeons who basically cross every anatomic border and really go wherever the problem is. Trauma surgeons do it, oncological surgeons do it, pediatric surgeons do it, and these rural surgeons do it. And I went to a meeting about a year ago and I began to learn some things about this and I think they're heroes, basically. I mean, operating the way that they have to operate, under the circumstances they have to operate, and just accepting a whole lot of responsibility for a whole lot of different things. And so I bring it up to you just knowing that I don't think there's anything like that around here and I don't know about the politics of approaching anything like that, but certainly I think in this state, I mean, there would be a need for it. And you know, could be something that would be very advantageous. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. Okay, great. Glad you came back.
[CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Okay. Should I leave this? [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Yeah, just put it in that little hopper right there.
[CONFIRMATION HEARING]

LEON SYKES: Oh, okay. [CONFIRMATION HEARING]

SENATOR JOHNSON: Okay, thank you everybody, for coming. And that will conclude the hearing for these gubernatorial appointments. Thank you all for coming.
[CONFIRMATION HEARING]

Chairperson

Committee Clerk