

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
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Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee
January 18, 2008

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Nebraska Retirement Systems met at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, January 18, 2008, in Room 1525 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: John Synowiecki, Chairperson; Philip Erdman; Russ Karpisek; and LeRoy Louden. Senators absent: Tom White, Vice Chairperson, and Lavon Heidemann. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Welcome, everybody, to the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. We will have our...the business of the committee today is for the confirmation hearing for Elaine Stuhr, Public Employees Retirement Board. Members present, to my right is Senator LeRoy Louden. Jeremy Nordquist is the Research Analyst; he's to my immediate right. To my immediate left is Senator Phil Erdman. Laurie Vollertsen is the committee clerk. We will hear first from the confirnee, Senator Elaine Stuhr. Senator, good morning. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: (Exhibit 1) Good morning. Good morning to you and good morning to the members of the committee. It's good to be here. And for the record, my name is Elaine, E-l-a-i-n-e, Stuhr, S-t-u-h-r. And I just first want to say thank you, Chairman Synowiecki and the staff, for arranging this hearing. We do have a meeting scheduled for next week, so. And I know sometimes how these confirmations can get drawn out, so I appreciate the early hearing. Do you want me to just give you a little bit of background? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: That would be perfect, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: All right. I was born in Polk County. I lived most of my life in York County, and right now my husband Boyd and I live on a farm near Bradshaw. We're the parents of three children and six grandchildren. I attended school in the Thayer community; graduated from Thayer High School; graduated from the University of Nebraska. Taught for a number of years at Hampton, and then at Henderson Public Schools. I worked for the university, assisting them with student teachers, for about five years. Then I became involved--I'm also sort of a professional volunteer, so to speak--became involved in an organization called Women Involved in Farm Economics. Worked on policy for ag producers, trying to improve their income and their way of life. I served as national president, and I guess that's where I really got involved in the policy end of it. In 1994, I ran for the Legislature. I was elected and I served the next 12 years. I did serve about 10 years on the Retirement Committee, 2 years as Vice Chairman and 6 years as Chairman, so I feel that I have a little bit of an understanding of some of the goings-on of the Retirement System as a whole. And I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to use some of this experience in the position that I have been appointed to. So, very briefly. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Senator. I want to mention Senator Russ Karpisek has joined us. Thanks, Russ. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KARPISEK: Good morning. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Good morning. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Any questions from the committee? Senator.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LOUDEN: Well, nice having you here, Elaine. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you. It's been awhile since we've sat around these tables here altogether. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Right, it has. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LOUDEN: I guess when you're on this Retirement Board then, would you take part in investments or anything like that? [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: No. The Investment Council will...they...that's their responsibility and duty. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LOUDEN: Okay. Well, I mean, you were here when those retirement funds were in all kinds of shape. And this is what I was wondering, will you be able to make some policy or give some guidance or ask some questions on how some of the funds are done, or...? [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Yes, I'm sure. I think that's one of the challenges that I will have, is actually knowing and getting to know the responsibilities of the board. But I'm hoping that, yes, there will be oversight. I know that one of my goals, and I'm sure it is of all the board members, is to make the Retirement System one of the best systems across the nation, and make it efficient and make it accessible to plan members. So I'm sure that will be one of our responsibilities. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LOUDEN: Okay. Well, thank you. Tell Boyd hello for me. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: I sure will. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Senator Erdman. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR ERDMAN: Senator Stuhr, who is your state senator? [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Senator Greg Adams. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR ERDMAN: Okay. I just wanted to make sure that was on the record. Elaine, it's good to see you again, and I appreciate it. I've been on this committee for 7 years, and the last year, I think, is the only year that you haven't been here, and so I've appreciated the opportunity to work with you. And if you work as hard on the Retirement Board as you did in the Legislature and as a member of this committee, we will be well-served. So I look forward to your efforts, and I'll say hi to Boyd, because he is here. Hi, Boyd. So thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Any additional questions? Thank you, Senator.
[CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Appreciate you coming in this morning. Thank you.
[CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Thank you. Thank you very much. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: The committee will now entertain any testimony relative to the confirnee. [CONFIRMATION]

HERB SCHIMEK: Members of the committee, my name is Herb Schimek; that's S-c-h-i-m-e-k. I represent the Nebraska State Education Association, which is made up of approximately 25,000 classroom teachers. Senator Stuhr was an excellent Chairman. I've been around this body about 35 years, and she was very conscientious, extremely fair, and we thought the state was very well-served, and I think she'll make an excellent board member. Any questions? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Any questions from the committee? Thanks, Herb. Appreciate it. [CONFIRMATION]

HERB SCHIMEK: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Additional testimony? [CONFIRMATION]

MIKE DULANEY: Senator Synowiecki, my name is Mike Dulaney, D-u-l-a-n-e-y, executive director for the Nebraska Council of School Administrators. And we too feel

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that it's quite a privilege to sit here and speak on behalf of Senator Stuhr, and we think that she would do a marvelous job. We also feel that the department, the agency on a whole, is doing very well under the direction of Phyllis Chambers, and so we feel very good about that. This would be a nice addition to the PERB, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you for your testimony. [CONFIRMATION]

MIKE DULANEY: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Any additional questions or anything? Seeing none, thank you. Any additional testimony? Seeing none, that will close the hearing this morning. Thank you, everyone, for your attendance. Appreciate it. And thank you, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

ELAINE STUHR: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

Chairperson

Committee Clerk