

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, May 13, 2013, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Kathy Campbell, Chairperson; Bob Krist, Vice Chairperson; Sue Crawford; Mike Gloor; Sara Howard; and Dan Watermeier. Senators absent: Tanya Cook.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I think we will go ahead and start and open the hearings of the Health and Human Services Committee. Today we have two appointments, gubernatorial appointments to the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. And we will start with Michael Brummer. Just have a chair. Mr. Brummer, we try to conduct the hearings pretty casually to gain some information about you and your interest in the commission. So maybe you could tell us a little bit about yourself and why you're interested in serving. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: (Exhibit 1) My name is Michael Brummer. And for the last, can't count, 15 years I've been an educator for the deaf and hard of hearing and 5 years that's been at (inaudible) School for the Deaf in Iowa, in Council Bluffs; New Mexico in Santa Fe; and South Dakota in Sioux Falls. And the last seven years I've worked at Education Service Unit 10 as (inaudible) teacher. And between those two education careers, I've worked at the (inaudible) Service, also in South Dakota. I'm a graduate of Gretna Public School in '92, and I went to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln where I got my bachelor's degree in special education and also my master's degree in deaf education. In high school I was really active in football, wrestling, track, speech, one acts. And during my junior year I got on (inaudible). Then this is my family behind me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Would you like... [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: This is my wife Anna and my two kids, Gracin (phonetic) and Max (phonetic). This coming November will be our 20-year anniversary. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Congratulations. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Thank you. Let's see. The reason why I would like to serve on the commission is because of growing up before all the technologies. And I've received a lot of support from commission to advocate for myself, be able to become independent. And I thought now my turn to give back and give my time. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Exactly. How many students do you work with at Kearney?

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

[CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: My caseload is about 23. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Are they all ages? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Yes, birth to 21. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Interesting. Are a number of them getting ready to go on to school after graduation? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: It varies. Some are kind of ready to move on to college level and some just need more support. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Would they be able to get that support if they went to one of our community colleges or universities? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Yes. Yes, they do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: That's good. That's really good. Okay. Questions from the senators? Senator Crawford. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Thank you, Senator Campbell. And thank you, Michael. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: I wonder, you said that you had received a degree, and you said there was support available. I wonder if you just tell us a bit about what kinds of support were most helpful to you. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Oh, okay. For college I received... [CONFIRMATION]

INTERPRETER: From the college... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Yes, for college, yes, um-hum. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: For college, okay. I received Susan Buffett Foundation, which paid full...awarded full amount scholarship and also voc rehab helped too. Those two are the only ones that helped out. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Krist. [CONFIRMATION]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

SENATOR KRIST: You're an admiral. I was only a lieutenant colonel. I have to salute you. What's your goal for the commission? What do you want to bring there?
[CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: I would like to (inaudible) in education level and especially out in the rural area. My goal is to help the commission to find a way to support educational interpreters in that area as far as getting the respect that they deserve. Because instead of being looked at like a professional level, they look at them as para educational. And I don't know if this is something we could do with...to work with Department of Education into that area to get them more of a respect that they deserve. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: Second question, can we support a Nebraska hearing institute here? We used to have one. We closed it down, and most of our kids are out of state now. Do you think we could support one here in Nebraska again? [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Yes. I'll be starting my new job in July. I'll be moving to Omaha, and I'll be activity coordinator for Metro regional program, which is part of the Nebraska statewide activities. And I've been, as I'm working as a teacher, I'll also help (inaudible) with their activities. And from that experience (inaudible) we could continue to support our kids because it's really powerful experience. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Other questions, Senators? Mr. Brummer...oh, I'm sorry, did you have another question? Mr. Brummer, we wish you the very best in your new job. That's really exciting. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: It's a good thing Senator Krist kind of went a little further with his questioning. Before you leave, we want you to know how much we appreciate your service on the commission. The committee will recommend, I'm sure, your confirmation to the full Legislature and then you'll hear from there. But before you go, tell us what the interests are of your two children. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Okay. My daughter is interested in reading and she likes dancing and singing. And my son Max is more interested in playing (inaudible). And his little giraffe, I think it's giraffe, his name is "Mookie." And he just started wrestling and he seems to like it, but we'd like to try to get him into tumbling. And my wife just graduated from UNK just last week in social worker degree. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: That's great. [CONFIRMATION]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

MICHAEL BRUMMER: So we're very proud of her to graduate top of her class so.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We can tell you're very proud of her. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Could you tell us the ages of the two children. I'm sorry, you might have said and I forgot. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Yeah. My daughter will be 10 in July, and my son Max is 5.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Well, we're so delighted that you brought your family. Oftentimes we don't get to meet the families of people who serve, and we know it's extra time for you away from them when you volunteer to serve on a state commission. So we much appreciate it very much, and thank you for coming today.
[CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Thank you so much, Senator Campbell. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

MICHAEL BRUMMER: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And thanks for coming. Our next nominee is Margaret Propp. Good afternoon and welcome. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I have to ask you have we met before? Your name just seems so familiar. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: I used to stand over there. I stood over there a couple of times as an interpreter. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Ahhh. Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: And then my father, George Propp, was very active in legislation related to working with the deaf. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Right. And I noted from your information that both your parents were instrumental in the start of the commission. Your father served as the chair, I think

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

you indicated... [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Correct, correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...in the materials that we were given. So I'm sure it's from your standing over there that we probably... [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Maybe if I turn around and you look at me from the back you might recognize me (laugh). [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I could recognize then, huh. Margaret, if you wouldn't mind, go ahead and tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got interested in serving. And I'm sure you have your own reasons besides honoring your parents. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: (Exhibit 2) Yes. I did have a little bit written out here. I'm very excited about being selected and to serve on the commission to continue a family tradition here, so I did want to talk about my family. So 60 years ago there was a young deaf couple that got married and started a family. George was a teacher at the Nebraska School for the Deaf. He then went on to become one of the first deaf people in the country to earn his Ph.D., and then he continued his work with the education for deaf children at the University of Nebraska for several years. He's also a very active leader in the deaf community at both the state and national levels. And he was one of the leaders, as Senator Campbell mentioned, he was one of the leaders that helped to develop the legislation that created the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and he also served on the first board for the commission. After several years as a stay-at-home mom, Eleanor began teaching classes in American Sign Language. And in her many years of teaching, she has influenced many interpreters that are now at the top of their field. She has also taught police officers, lawyers, businesspeople who have gone on to make changes in how deaf people are served in their specific areas. And she became one of the first field representatives for the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and also served on the board for the commission. George and Eleanor Propp are my parents and are the biggest influence on where my life has been and where it's going. (Crying) As a young girl, I was one of the first interpreters in the courts and in the public schools here in Nebraska. And then I moved and taught for 25 years at the New Mexico School for the Deaf. I retired and now am back at home here in my home state where I continue to work as an interpreter part time. And now I'm looking forward to continuing the work that George and Eleanor started with the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I want to continue their work of bringing together the deaf, the hard of hearing, and the hearing communities, especially in the areas of education and interpreting. And I thank you for giving me the opportunity of serving on this board for Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. [CONFIRMATION]

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Margaret, one of the questions I had when I read--it's hard to talk about your family. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Yes, it is. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: One of the questions that I had, and because...and I'm asking you out of ignorance because I don't know, were you the only person in your household to be able to hear? [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: I have an older brother who is deaf; and then I'm the second; and then my sister Lorelei, who also works as an interpreter here in the state; and then I have a younger brother who...and so there's three of us who are hearing and three of us that were deaf so we were even (laugh). [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So you were even, huh? So, Margaret, as a very small child and for your sister, so hearing...I mean, so much of what we learn in speaking as a very young child is from our parents speaking to us. How did that work? I mean did you learn to speak mainly from your siblings or? [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Both my parents speak. My dad didn't become deaf until he was 15 years old. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Ah. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: So he was a very good speaker, very good speaker, not just in terms of diction and all of that, but he liked to talk. And my mother grew up hard of hearing, but more towards the deaf side. She comes from all-deaf family except for one hearing sister. But my mother would sign and speak to us. My father signed and spoke to us. And, well, I mean, they've also said that when I started off, I would sign all of the time and not speak and eventually picked up the speaking part. And I think I'm just kind of making up for lost time now so. But I think that both my parents provided enough stimulus around us and, plus, we grew up in this great neighborhood in Omaha, Nebraska, where we had our...I always said it was like I had my hearing mom and my deaf mom so lots of people and lots of support for the family. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I thought it was very interesting with my grandson, who I talk...they're all tired I think of hearing about him, but when he was very young and was... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: Andy? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: No, no, this is Will. This is Will. When Will was in early childhood development, very...I mean, and had...they taught them a whole series of

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

signs. And so when he came to visit me, I had to learn all these signs that Will knew because I quickly learned that this meant "more." He wanted more food or more whatever I had. And I just thought that was a terrific way to make young children very conscious of that. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Right. I think it's...sometimes I have to kind of laugh because there's this huge emphasis on hearing parents using sign language with their hearing children at a very, very early age. But the deaf still have to struggle, you know, a hearing family with a deaf child born into the family or a deaf family with a deaf child born, they have to like almost fight to be able to use sign language that they get medical profession and professional people around them that say, no, you shouldn't sign to them because then they'll never learn to speak. But it's encouraged with hearing children of hearing parents. So I always...every time I see something like that on television, I just kind of go, I don't get it. But... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yeah, I realize that. Senator Krist. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: My daughter Courtney was born when we were in Albuquerque, and she was...she's a syndrome kid. She's missing a piece of her chromosome, but they thought that she was deaf. We were lucky enough to be in Albuquerque with Lovelace Medical Center and with the school and with the community, very quickly found out that it was a physical thing where the bones were all fused in her inner ear, so we were able...but she didn't speak for the first three years of her life, which put her behind the eightball. The same question I asked Michael: Can we have our own, should we have our own facility here in Nebraska, or should we rely on proximity? Did you know each other while you were there, by the way? [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Yes, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: Oh, really. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Yeah. When I found out that he was also selected, I was kind of like, I need to write a letter to the superintendent and say you did good. (Laughter) Unfortunately, he should have kept us down there in New Mexico and not sent us back home to Nebraska, but we're Nebraska's gain. Yes, I am a firm believer in residential programs for the deaf. Just because...in growing up around the Nebraska School for the Deaf, as I said, my dad taught there. My mom and dad went to school there. My brother went to school there. We went to all of Connie's (phonetic) basketball games. We lived at the Nebraska School for the Deaf. And then I also...I did have the advantage of working as an interpreter in the public schools when mainstreaming was first really, really new. And so I...and then going on and teaching at the New Mexico School for the Deaf. So I feel like I've been able to see both aspects. And that both...I'm a firm believer in that both kinds of programs need to be provided for deaf students. That families

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

should be able to make a choice, depending on what the needs are of the deaf child. I think, my feeling, that in a mainstream program the deaf children lose out on the socialization. They lose out on that opportunity to participate in sports, in performing arts, in all those extracurricular activities. And they don't get that 24/7 or even if it's 24/5 exposure to language that they so desperately need. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: Wouldn't it be a great honor to your parents if you reopened it or someplace like it? [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: My mother would smile down from heaven. She'd dance with joy up there if we could reopen the school for the deaf here in Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KRIST: I think that would be a good thing. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Um-hum. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Go ahead, Senator Gloor. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: Thank you and welcome back to Nebraska... [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: ...although you've been here for a while I understand. We're glad to have you. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Glad to be back except for when winter drags on and on and on and on. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: And the balloon festival I'm sure. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Oh, the balloon fiesta is beautiful. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: I noticed Michael's desired appointment is full commission board. Yours is the Interpretive Review Board. Are those separate? [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: I was serving on the Interpreter Review Board. But then when the opening came up in the full board... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: So you're moving to the full board. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: ...then I moved to the full board. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: Okay. And is the Interpretive Review Board one of the

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

Health and Human Services Committee
May 13, 2013

subcommittees then of the full board that takes a look... [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: Is that where the credentials are issued? [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Yeah. That's where they look at the licensing, if there's any grievances or procedural things, the Interpreter Review Board looks at all of that and then makes their recommendations to the full board. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR GLOOR: Recommendations, okay, thank you for that clarification.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions? Well, we, too, want to thank you for your service and for your experience. I mean you'll bring a lot to the board as will Michael, so we very much appreciate that. I loved your statement, you know, coming back for both of us was Nebraska's gain. We certainly believe that after meeting both of you.
[CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So best of luck on the commission. And I know I echo for all the senators, please let us know at any point in which you think there is some information that we need to know... [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Oh, I will. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...and to hear about that. We encourage all appointees to get back to us. We hope that this isn't just a one-time thing that we see you, so thank you so much for your service. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: All right, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And welcome back. [CONFIRMATION]

MARGARET PROPP: Thanks. [CONFIRMATION]