

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature  
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Appropriations Committee  
January 30, 2015

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[LB430]

The Committee on Appropriations met at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, January 30, 2015, in Room 1003 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on LB430. Senators present: Heath Mello, Chairperson; Robert Hilkemann, Vice Chairperson; Kate Bolz; Ken Haar; Bill Kintner; John Kuehn; Jeremy Nordquist; John Stinner; and Dan Watermeier. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR MELLO: Good afternoon and welcome to the Appropriations Committee. My name is Heath Mello. I'm from south Omaha, representing the 5th Legislative District, and I chair the Appropriations Committee. I'd like to start off today by having members do self-introductions, starting here on my left with Senator Kintner.

SENATOR KINTNER: Hi, I'm Senator Bill Kintner from Legislative District 2, and that is Sarpy County and Cass County.

SENATOR MELLO: Sitting next to Senator Kintner, who will be joining us shortly, is Senator Jeremy Nordquist from the 7th Legislative District in south Omaha and downtown Omaha.

SENATOR KUEHN: Senator John Kuehn, District 38 in south-central Nebraska.

SENATOR HILKEMANN: Senator Robert Hilkemann, District 4, west Omaha.

SENATOR STINNER: Senator John Stinner, District 48, Scotts Bluff County.

SENATOR BOLZ: Senator Kate Bolz. I represent south-central Lincoln, District 29.

SENATOR HAAR: Senator Ken Haar, District 21, which is northwest Lincoln and part of Lancaster County.

SENATOR MELLO: Sitting next to Senator Haar, who's just walking in, is Senator Dan Watermeier from District 1, covering southeast Nebraska. Assisting the committee today is Rachel Meier, our committee clerk. Our committee page is Julia, and our legislative fiscal analyst is Liz Hruska. On the cabinet up here to your right you will find some yellow testifier sheets. If you're planning on testifying today, please fill out one of those sheets and hand it to Julia when you come up. It helps us keep an accurate record of today's public hearing. There is also a white sheet on the cabinet that if you do not wish to testify but would like to record your position on a bill, to fill out that white sheet. We will begin bill testimony today with the introducer's opening statements. Following opening statements, we will hear from supporters of the bill, then those in opposition, followed by those speaking in the neutral capacity. We will finish with a closing statement by the introducer if they so wish to give one. We ask that you begin your

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testimony by giving us your first and last name and spelling it for the public record. If you have any handouts, please bring up at least 11 copies and give them to Julia, our page. If you do not have enough copies, she can help make more for us. As a matter of general committee policy, I'd like to remind senators that the use of cell phones and other electronic devices is not allowed during public hearings. At this time, I would ask all of us, including senators, to please check your cell phones and make sure that they are on the silent or vibrate mode. With that, at this time we will begin today's public hearing with LB430. Senator Hilkemann.

SENATOR HILKEMANN: Good afternoon. We're going to begin testimony today on LB430 and the introducer of that bill is Senator Mello. Senator Mello. [LB430]

SENATOR MELLO: Good afternoon, Vice Chairman Hilkemann, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Heath Mello, H-e-a-t-h M-e-l-l-o, and I represent the 5th Legislative District in south Omaha. I'm here today to introduce LB430 which would correct an error in the appropriation of funds to the Nebraska Children's Commission. The Nebraska Children's Commission was originally located in the Department of Health and Human Services, and in 2013 the Nebraska Legislature passed LB269 which moved the Nebraska Children's Commission to the Foster Care Review Office. However, the \$94,000 of the appropriation for the Children's Commission was inadvertently left in the Department of Health and Human Services' budget. LB430 is simply a deficit request that reduces the fiscal year 2015 appropriation for Program 353 in the Department of Health and Human Services by \$94,000, while increasing the appropriation to Program 353 in the Foster Care Review Office by that same amount. This bill does not appropriate any new funding for the biennium. This deficit request is also included in the Governor's budget recommendations. Normally, a deficit request would be included with the budget package that we as a committee would introduce as part of the regular budget process. However, this early deficit bill needs to move from the Appropriations Committee quickly to the Governor's desk, because without doing so we have...unfortunately, the Nebraska Children's Commission will run out of funding some time in early March. Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. [LB430]

SENATOR HILKEMANN: You've heard Senator Mello's testimony. Are there questions to Senator Mello? I'm seeing no questions, Senator Mello. Are there other proponents for this LB430? I see no proponents coming forward. Are there opponents to LB430? Seeing no opponents, is there anyone that is neutral to LB430? Senator Mello, we have no proponents, opponents, or neutral, and you are free to close on this bill. [LB430]

SENATOR MELLO: Well, I originally was not going to close, but I will take the opportunity. Just in the sense that in my six years on the committee, this is a unique process and I would probably tell you, you may not see this kind of scenario happen again. And it simply was a small oversight that, luckily, our Fiscal Office was able to

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catch to ensure that we continue funding the Nebraska Children's Commission through the remainder of the biennium in regards to ensuring that they didn't run out of money come early March, simply because we forgot to transfer their appropriation from one department to a different department. So with that, I'd hope the committee looks friendly upon LB430. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. [LB430]

SENATOR HILKEMANN: Okay. With that, we will close the hearing on LB430. [LB430]