

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

General Affairs Committee
May 19, 2015

[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on General Affairs met at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, in Room 1510 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Tyson Larson, Chairperson; Colby Coash, Vice Chairperson; Matt Hansen; Dan Hughes; Merv Riepe; and Ken Schilz. Senators absent: Mark Kolterman; and Bob Krist.

SENATOR LARSON: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the General Affairs Committee. I am Senator Tyson Larson, Chairman of the General Affairs Committee. To my right--Senator Kolterman from Seward, he will not be joining us today--I have Senator Matt Hansen of Lincoln. Senator Coash will be joining us momentarily, the Vice Chair of the committee from Lincoln. I have Josh Eickmeier, legal counsel for the General Affairs Committee. On my far left I have Jeff Fryman, the committee clerk, Senator Riepe of Ralston, Senator Hughes from Venango might be joining us, Senator Krist from Omaha, and Senator Schilz from Ogallala. For any testifiers other than those representing themselves, be sure that you get a sign-in sheet to record your presence. After each testifier or nominee, the Chair will ask for testimony in support, in opposition, and in neutral testimony for each person. When you come up to testify, please, speak clearly into the microphone. Please tell us your name and, please, spell your first and last name. Also, please, tell us who you're representing if you're representing someone in terms of testifying in support or opposition. Please turn off your cell phones or put them on silent and keep your conversations to a minimum. Because this committee is going paperless, senators are allowed and even encouraged to use electronic devices during the hearings. Thank you for your consideration and we will start with Darrel Huenergardt. That...am I close enough? [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: I answer to anything that's really close. (Laughter) You did well. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Welcome to the General Affairs Committee. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Just a little bit about yourself and the appointment and... [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: (Exhibit 1) Okay. I'm Darrel Huenergardt, D-a-r-r-e-l H-u-e-n-e-r-g-a-r-d-t. I'm pleased that Governor Ricketts appointed me to serve on the Nebraska Arts Council. I am an attorney. I graduated from the University of Nebraska. The majority of my

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professional career was in Kimball, Nebraska, where I spent 42 years before moving to Lincoln a little over two years ago. My wife wanted to be near our grandkids. Three of our granddaughters live in Lincoln. I wanted to be near my wife and so we worked out a deal and we both moved to Lincoln. (Laughter) But I'm really interested in the Arts Council. I think it's a bigger thing than maybe a lot of people think about it. I'm sure there are many Nebraskans wondering, why in the world do...does the state even have an Arts Council? I'd suggest to those people that arts are a major element in the quality of a community be it state or local. And as you know, Governor Ricketts has selected as his focus, "grow Nebraska." And I'd suggest that can't happen unless there's a strong arts program within the state. We recruit doctors for our physical well-being. We need to emphasize the arts for our social and our mental well-being. Perhaps Lyndon Johnson summarized the importance of arts as well as anyone else has. When he made the statement when he signed the bill creating the National Endowment of the Arts, President Lyndon Johnson said: Art is a nation's most precious heritage for it is in our works of art that we reveal ourselves, the inner vision that guides us as a nation, and where there is no vision, the people perish. And I think that's...expresses why I'm excited about serving on Nebraska Arts Council. And I would ask your recommendation to the Legislature to approve my appointment to that council. I understand that each of you have my resume in front of you. I probably don't need to review that verbally. You can read it faster than I can tell you. So I thank you for the opportunity to appear. If there's any questions, I would be glad to answer. Otherwise, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Thank you, Mr. Huenergardt. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Huenergardt. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: I'm sorry. I'm still working on it. I appreciate you and it does sound like you have quite the passion for the arts and that's what we need on the Arts Council. Just for clarification, you're a new appointment, not a reappointment, correct? [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: And representing, like, the First Congressional District or is it statewide? [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: I don't know if they make appointments by congressional districts to the Art Council. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Okay. Okay. I was just...I didn't...I couldn't remember off the top of my head. That's why I was...I'm sure legal counsel will find out immediately. [CONFIRMATION]

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DARREL HUENERGARDT: Yeah. Anyway, I do live in Lincoln, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: No, I appreciate it. And we've had a few hearings on some Art Council members in the last week. And it had a good explanation of a lot. And I really appreciate your passion, so it's important. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Do...any questions from the committee? Senator Riepe.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you, Senator Larson. I have a quick question: You must have done something very good to get inducted into being a Nebraska Admiral from Senator Kay Orr. It goes back a ways, too. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Yes. Yeah, that was interesting. And before I directly answer your question, just to make that more interesting, my commission is signed April 1. I don't recall the year, so... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Well, there you go. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: I served as city attorney for Kimball for just short of 40 years. And the city administrator at one time thought I was doing a significantly good job that he made the recommendation and the Governor appointed me. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Oh, good. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: It is hanging...still hanging on the wall in my home now. Retirement is interesting. The major differences are, you have no secretary and you have no office and everything takes three times as long to get done. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: But you have a new boss... [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: ...your wife. [CONFIRMATION]

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DARREL HUENERGARDT: Exactly, especially after she retired a year and a half ago.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Yes. I understand. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Any further questions? Seeing none, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

DARREL HUENERGARDT: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Are there any proponents? Any opponents? Neutral testimony? And I will close the hearing on Mr. Huenergardt and we will open it up next for...Raven (phonetic), right?
[CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: Reven. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Reven. I'm sorry. [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: That's okay. We're getting you on the names today. (Laughter)
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Welcome the General Affairs Committee, Mrs. Wright.
[CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: (Exhibit 1) Thank you. My name, as you had mentioned, is Reven Wright, and that is R-e-v-e-n, last name is W-r-i-g-h-t. I am representing Kearney and the surrounding areas. I believe that's the third district. It's an honor. It's a privilege. I am born and raised in Wisconsin and my husband is from Connecticut. So how did we end up in Nebraska? By way of Colorado and Hawaii. The beauty of Nebraska...it's very difficult when you say the beauty of Nebraska when you compare it to Colorado and Hawaii but it is unique in itself and it's an acquired taste. And it's most, as I have found a passion for it, in landscapes. My best friend Jenny Homan is a landscape artist and I find the beauty captured in it. The sunsets, they're incredible. The vast, vast land that we have is unappreciated in its beauty. I'm a mother of three. We have three children. And I'd like to see more arts being reached out into our younger communities. Arts begins at a very young age and exposure not just through museums but through the outdoors. I think that a lot of the arts are underutilized. And the bus ride system that the Nebraska Arts Council...is something that we could really expand on in our communities to get them to these areas and museums. It is something that I am passionate about. Since a child, my

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grandfather has...you will see on my resume, as an architect, he worked with Frank Lloyd Wright. I still have his sketches framed in my home. It...the architecture in Nebraska is beautiful and it needs to be looked at through more serious eyes, more artistic eyes, and I would look forward to serving that purpose on the Nebraska Arts Council. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Thank you, Mrs. Wright. Are you...you're a new appointment as well then? [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: Yes, I am. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Excellent. You know, the Arts Council handles many things, whether it's community events, getting things there. It sounds like your passion is really more towards, you know, the culture of paintings and architecture. [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: And I can appreciate that. I worked at Sotheby's for a year so that's excellent and people do need to understand the history of art history and whatnot so I appreciate that. Are there any questions from the committee? Senator Riepe. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Of course I have one. Senator Larson, thank you very much. First of all I wanted to say, I'm very impressed with your volunteer work and your obvious ecumenical work. You're with the Kearney Catholic Schools and the Episcopal hospital so you've got the Episcopalians and the Catholics coming together. That's good. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: What are...what is at least one thing that you would hope to be able to contribute or, if necessary, change at the Arts Council? Do you have some...obviously, you've followed it for a while. [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: I wouldn't like to...I wouldn't, at this point, say change anything. I would like to become a lot more knowledgeable before implementing ideas. This is something very new to me. Most of the work that I have done in the arts has been through MONA. So it's been very single visioned. I would like to get beyond MONA although that is our state gem, I believe. And so I'd really like to become more educated. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. I was hoping you were going to say build a mountain or something, grade it up. [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: I'm not that powerful. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you very much. Thank you for being here. [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Thank you, Senator Riepe. Any further questions? Seeing none, thank you so much, Mrs. Wright. [CONFIRMATION]

REVEN WRIGHT: Excellent. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Are there any proponents? Opponents? Neutral testimony? And with that, I will close the hearing on Mrs. Wright and we will move to Ms. Julie Jacobson, an easier one for me to pronounce. How are you, Mrs. Jacobson? Welcome to the General... [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: I'm not Mrs. Jacobson, unfortunately. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Ms. Jacobson. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: No. Actually, I'm Candy Henning... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Oh. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: ...who is here for Julie Jacobson. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: I... [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: (Exhibits 1 and 2) And it's Candy, C-a-n-d-y, Henning, H-e-n-n-i-n-g. And I'm here this afternoon for Julie. I'm currently the chair...or the new appointed chair of the Nebraska Arts Council. And I believe that you all should have Julie's resume and letter. She sent that in prior. She's...Julie is on a business trip with her husband or she would be here. This is very important to her so this was not something she just decided not to attend. This is Julie's second

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nomination to the Nebraska Arts Council. She was appointed to the Arts Council by Governor Heineman in 2005 and was reappointed in 2008 and served through 2011. Her appointment on both occasions was approved unanimously by this committee and by the Legislature. Governor Heineman asked her to serve as the agency's chair during her second term which she did with distinction. As I said, you have in front of her (sic) her resume and...which I think demonstrates her qualification for this appointment. I've known Julie since our undergraduate days at UNL and I'll let you guys do the math on how old we are. Her graduation date is on her resume. Julie has been a tireless supporter of Nebraska and the arts, first when Julie and her husband, Mike, lived in central Nebraska and then during their years in Lincoln and after moving to North Platte, immersing herself in the North Platte area with her tireless commitment of energy, time, and finances to a variety of organizations and causes in the area and across the state. Julie is one of the best examples that I know of someone who has devoted her free time to bridging the miles between the west end of Nebraska and the east end. And as someone who grew up in the west end of the state, I understand how sometimes we all have good intentions of bridging those miles in but, you know, life gets in the way. And sometimes that five-hour drive into Lincoln is just too big of a commitment. And Julie has never, never failed to do that. I think her resume speaks for herself. She has outstanding qualifications for this appointment and in the...as a closing, I would ask you to approve her nomination to the Nebraska Arts Council. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: All right. Thank you, Mrs. Henning. Are there any questions for Mrs. Henning? I think you covered them very well. It is a reappointment. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: Well, I think Julie covered it very well. She did a great job with her resume and letter, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: She is a reappointment and I'm...we are...as I said, we're pleased with how the Arts Council has been going so far. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: So thank you for coming. [CONFIRMATION]

CANDY HENNING: Thanks. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Are there any proponents? Opponents? Neutral testimony? And with that, I will close the hearing on Julie and move to Sue Roush. Are you... [CONFIRMATION]

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CLARK ROUSH: (Exhibit 1) Good afternoon, Senators. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Clark Roush, C-l-a-r-k R-o-u-s-h. I am here to represent my wife who is out of the country on university business. I will read her testimony now: My name is Sue Roush, S-u-e R-o-u-s-h. I live in York, Nebraska but commute to Lincoln each day. I'm director of marketing and communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications. I have been in this position for ten months. Prior to this, I served the citizens of our state for three years as deputy communication director for Governor Dave Heineman. I also serve as an adjunct instructor at UNL. I'm an active volunteer, having served on a number of boards in the York area. I was a board member for United Way and served as vice president and president for one term each. I served as an ambassador for the York Area Chamber of Commerce. I have worked as either a volunteer board member or president of the Yorkshire Playhouse for 25 years. I have a passion for the arts and I am an active performer and volunteer in the arts community of York. I have written grants to bring various arts events to our community including the Omaha Symphony, Omaha Ballet, and several Lied Center artists. I believe everyone should have an opportunity to enjoy great art and shouldn't be limited because of geography. Lincoln and Omaha are filled with opportunities to view and participate in arts activities. But many don't know about the many activities that take place all across the state. Nebraskan citizens should not have to travel long distances to see professional artists. The Nebraska Arts Council has been a tremendous asset to our state because their mission is to promote, cultivate, and sustain the arts for all the people of Nebraska. They are able to do this by providing grant programs. Studies show that states that value the arts have an economic advantage. A community that values the arts attracts a strong work force, increases the number of visitors, as well as enhancing resident participation. Arts-related industries promote business development, create jobs, attract investments, and enhance tourism. The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices is an organization whose mission is to develop and implement innovative solutions to public policy challenges. In their document entitled "Arts and the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development" they write: Arts and culture-related industries provide direct economic benefits to states and communities. They create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. In addition, they enhance the quality of life. The arts and culture are an important complement to community development, enriching local amenities, and attracting young professionals to an area. That is why I want to be a member of the Nebraska Arts Council. It is my mission to make available every type of arts activity to the citizens of our great state. The Nebraska Arts Council has been serving the citizens of Nebraska for more than 40 years. It is vital that funding continue to grow. Thank you. At this time, I will try to answer any questions you might have. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Thank you, Clark, and obviously your wife has been very involved and it's like everybody that's been here today that we need on the Arts Council. So I appreciate you

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coming in and it's unfortunate that...but I understand she's traveling. That's what you have to do. Any questions from the committee? Senator Coash. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COASH: Thank you, Senator Larson. Mr. Roush, is your wife a nice lady? (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: You're on the record. [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: Actually, I was tempted to editorialize because everybody on the campus knows her as the queen because that's what I always call her. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COASH: Okay. Okay. Are you... [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: She is a wonderful woman. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COASH: And you're glad you married her? [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: Completely. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COASH: All right. This is all on the record. You can get a transcript and you can put it in her birthday card. [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: That's fine. I so hit it out of the park. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COASH: Nice work. That's all I have for him. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Senator Riepe. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: My follow-up question would be...is how much trouble would you be in if we didn't approve her? (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: That is not a contingency we have discussed, sir, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Senator Riepe is just toying around. I'm pretty sure she'll be all right. [CONFIRMATION]

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CLARK ROUSH: That's fine. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Any other questions? Senator Schilz. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR SCHILZ: So just to get this straight, you are not a boy named Sue? (Laughter)
[CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: I am not, no. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Lots of comedians all over here. [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: No, that is fine. That is fine. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Johnny Cash. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: And we're there. [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: I wish...in fact, I wish you could have all heard her be my soprano soloist in my April concert. She was absolutely as stunning vocally as she is as a human being.
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Good. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COASH: Very good. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: All right. Well, seeing no other questions, I appreciate you coming in, Mr. Roush. [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: Okay. Did I hear that there...is there a form or something I haven't filled out that I need to? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR LARSON: Yeah. Jeff will grab you one. Or the page will... [CONFIRMATION]

CLARK ROUSH: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR LARSON: ...in terms of testifying. All right. Thank you. Are there any proponents? Opponents? Neutral testimony? That will close the hearings for...the confirmation hearings for Tuesday, May 18 (sic) and the last confirmation hearings for the General Affairs Committee.
[CONFIRMATION]