

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

Health and Human Services Committee  
May 20, 2015

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[CONFIRMATION]

The Committee on Health and Human Services met at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20, 2015, in Room 2102 of the State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on gubernatorial appointments. Senators present: Kathy Campbell, Chairperson; Sara Howard, Vice Chairperson; Roy Baker; Tanya Cook; Sue Crawford; Mark Kolterman; and Merv Riepe. Senators absent: None.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Jim, do you want to just come forward and have a chair?

JIM TREBBIEN: You bet.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. We will open the hearings of the Health and Human Services Committee. Our agenda today includes two gubernatorial appointments. And I want to say at the beginning to my colleagues that Senator Howard will be leaving at an appropriate time because they will go to her bill--I checked with the clerk--and she will cover the committee amendments. And the clerk knows all that. So we are going to try to stay as long as we can to finish out what we need to do today, okay? And if Senator Howard needs help, she's going to have to get somebody to come get us, okay?

SENATOR HOWARD: Okay.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: All right. Our first nominee today is Mr. Jim...is it "tree-bin?" (Phonetically)

JIM TREBBIEN: Trebbien: "tray-be-in" (phonetically), yeah, yeah.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Trebbien.

SENATOR COOK: Trebbien, like "tres bien" (phonetically).

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Did I not say it right yet?

SENATOR COOK: No, it's...means something in French.

JIM TREBBIEN: You were close.

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: I'm close. Thank you so much. Welcome. And how we do the hearings is, it's very informal. It's kind of a discussion to get to know you and some of your ideas. And we'll start first to introduce so you know who all the senators are. Senator, I'm going to start with you.

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: I'm Mark Kolterman from the 24th District, Seward, York, and Polk Counties.

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR BAKER: Senator Roy Baker, District 30, Gage County, part of southern Lancaster County.

SENATOR HOWARD: Senator Sara Howard. I represent District 9 in midtown Omaha.

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes.

JOSELYN LUEDTKE: Joselyn Luedtke, I'm the committee legal counsel.

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I'm Kathy Campbell and I represent District 25.

BRENNEN MILLER: I'm Brennen Miller. I'm committee clerk.

SENATOR COOK: I'm Tanya Cook. I represent District 13.

JIM TREBBIEN: Good to see you, Senator.

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Senator Sue Crawford, District 45 which is eastern Sarpy County.

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes.

SENATOR RIEPE: I'm Merv Riepe. I represent District 12 which is Millard and Ralston.

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes. Thank you, Senator.

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: We'll start out, sir, by having you pronounce your name and spell it for the record so the transcribers get it and then tell us a little bit about yourself.

[CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: (Exhibit 1) Okay. My name is Jim Trebbien. And the last name is spelled T-r-e-b-b-i-e-n. I recently retired as the dean of culinary arts, hospitality, and horticulture at Metropolitan Community College after 35 years there. And although I got a degree in mathematics and sociology, I spent my entire career in the food industry, so.

[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Interesting, and how--I have to say this because my colleagues will all chuckle, but our family is in the horticulture business--how did you get into horticulture and food service? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: I think they perceived that I had the least load and so they had a program that needed a home. (Laughter) I'm not sure of all the motivations. I do know it turned out really good because both have a lot of emphasis on in-town, inner-city farming which is...maybe farming isn't the right word for it, but small market farming, gardening, that was a real good merger of culinary arts and horticulture programs. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Absolutely. In the agricultural business across the United States, horticulture is the fastest-growing segment of the ag sector across the United States. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yeah, I didn't know that, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So that would explain, certainly, the interest. Tell us what position, exactly what slot, will you be filling on the State Board of Health? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: I'll be a public member of the State Board of Health. It's due to a person just recently leaving and I will be filling that position from now through August and then possibly after that. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. And how did you become interested in serving on the State Board of Health? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Well, my wife is a dietician and so I'm...been very involved in issues of health. Of course, in the food industry, health in a little bit different way is of extreme importance with

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the emphasis on sanitation. I've also dealt with a number of health issues myself. And I appreciate good rules and regulations and licensing of professionals. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes, that...your background would certainly fit. And members of the public, it's important to have a diversity to the members in terms of the background and their interests so that's very good, excellent. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yeah, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any particular area on the Board of Health and that you're looking forward to more than another? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: No, I think I probably have a lot to learn about it. I think I would have a lot to add to it because of my background but I would probably also be a little bit intimidated with the number of doctors and professionals that are on the committee because I'm not a medical professional although I do hear that from my wife all the time (laughter), the issues facing the healthcare and the state regulations, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: You know, oftentimes, the professionals gain a lot of insight from the common sense of the private citizens who serve on boards. I've seen that time and again so don't underrate yourself, let's put it that way. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Oh, no, thank you. I appreciate that. And I will put my whole heart into the position to be current. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Absolutely. Questions from the senators? Senator Riepe. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Senator Campbell, thank you. I thought Senator Campbell was going to say you can learn a lot from the wife, you know, which is true as well. (Laughter)  
[CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: And you can, yes, and I have. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: It appears that we were both at Bergen at the same time too.  
[CONFIRMATION]

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JIM TREBBIEN: We were. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes. You were the executive vice president when I was assistant director of food service. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: And both worked hard, right? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: We did. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. The question that I had, the legitimate question, is on the...you appear to be co-owner of a chef store. Is that...does...with the Health Department is that going to create any conflict of interest of inspections or... [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: They inspect us twice a year. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: And so far we've always got top inspection. I suppose it could be but we don't produce food in the store. We sell oils and vinegars and a few other prebottled, canned products, yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Oh, okay. Oh, okay. Okay. Thank you very much. Good to see you. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yeah, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Where is your business located? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: At 3157 Farnam Street in the Midtown Crossing area. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Senator Howard. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: In my district. [CONFIRMATION]

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JIM TREBBIEN: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: My fiance loves your store. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Pardon me, Senator? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: My fiance loves your store. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Wonderful. Yeah, we need a few more people to love it yet. (Laughter) We love Midtown Crossing and the area is really starting to boom. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: It is. It's wonderful. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: It is. Yeah. And I think they're filled up now. I think they got all the stores leased, so yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Is Senator Cook a customer of yours? Is that how you two know each other? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: We are...thank you for that segue, Madam Chair. In a previous life, I worked at Metro Community College, as did Mr. Trebbien. And his lovely wife was...helped my mother when she was a resident at Immanuel Fontenelle Home, as the dietician, trying to figure out how to eat. I would also like to add that I think, as people take more personal responsibility for their health, having someone with a nutrition background on the Board of Health will help lean the board away from treating the disease or the condition after it's there toward prevention and maintenance of health. So thank you for your willingness to serve. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yeah. Yeah, thank you. Yeah, that...Patty, my wife, constantly says that, is that if people would be more healthy proactively that they would have better outcomes and, you know, sometimes it gets hard to treat somebody down the road. But that's what her love and passion is to do, so. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: Yes. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Other questions, Senators? Senator Riepe. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. I just want to make one comment. I've heard very, very good things about your culinary arts school there at Metro. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yeah, thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: And so I simply wanted to share that compliment. I think compliments should be shared along into...I think you turned it into a real strong program. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: If anybody hasn't ever ate at our bistro, they should go out there and eat sometime. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: I have. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So how did a gentleman who graduated from Mankato get to Nebraska? [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Well, I got out of...I graduated from Mankato--not the University of Minnesota--State. But I'm from northern Iowa. And I needed a job and I had worked for Boys Town going through high school and college. They have a summer camp at Okoboji. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: And that's actually where I learned how to cook. And I came here to get a job then because I knew the people at Boys Town. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. If we'd only known about all of your talents here, we would have moved the hearing so that we could taste some of your culinary expertise... [CONFIRMATION]

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JIM TREBBIEN: I could have brought some food. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...because this time it...we only have, like, such a short window to eat now at the final days. So anything about food, we have a great interest in, let's put it that way. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Any other questions from the senators? We thank you so much for coming today. And I know it's a short amount of time to drive up here but it really helps us to meet the people who will be serving. And the State Board of Health is one of our most important appointments that we look at. So we wish you the best. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Please, call any one of the members of the committee if you see things that...as a member of the Board of Health that you think would be helpful for us to know. We would very much appreciate hearing from you. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Okay. Excellent. I will do that too. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thanks. Have a great day. [CONFIRMATION]

JIM TREBBIEN: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Our next appointee is John Hogue...am I saying that right, Brennen? Mr. Hogue. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Good afternoon. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good afternoon. I hope I'm saying that right. So, Mr. Hogue, we've introduced ourselves. You know everybody. So would you state your name for the record and spell it for us? [CONFIRMATION]

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JOHN HOGUE: Sure. John, J-o-h-n, Hogue, H-o-g-u-e. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And, Mr. Hogue, your appointment is for the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. So tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got interested in that. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: (Exhibit 2) Sure. I've been in Nebraska for over five years. I'm a clergy. I'm ordained in the United Methodist and the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ. So I tend to be a little more open-minded and ecumenical. And so I came from Missouri and I'm interested because I want to empower those within the life of the hard of hearing and deaf community. And one of the barriers is, of course, for your discussion, the sermon interpreters that we've been discerning about. And I'm a Rotarian and I'm involved in youth ministries and I also work with...on the new board, human trafficking, trying to address some of those concerns with the United Methodist Church. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. How long have you been in Falls City? I should... [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: I was appointed in July. I was in Arlington, Nebraska. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And you were in Arlington for four years, is that right? [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Yes, correct. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: And so how did you become interested in the ministry? [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Do we have time for that? (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Sure. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Well, I lost 11 family members within about a year: uncles, aunts, grandfather, my father. So I went through a life-changing experience, a lot of questioning, and did some things I wasn't proud of but through that determined I wanted to help people. And I can't explain it. It's kind of hard to describe. But what I experienced is a mystical transformation and God spoke to me so I entered the ministry and that's how I became a pastor. It wasn't easy. I was

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Presbyterian. They said that I couldn't be a minister because I couldn't speak well. So even in discrimination within the church and I challenged myself and I proved to...the United Church of Christ brought me in and now the United Methodist. The other reason I'm in the United Methodist is because there's not many clergy members anymore, so they're hurting for human flesh, I suppose, to preach the word. (Laugh) So, yeah. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes. Absolutely. You know, John may be able to help us, but I thought that we had another member of the Commission on the Hard of Hearing and Deaf (sic) who was also a clergy member. Am I...does anybody remember the gentleman? That would have been about two years ago. The freshmen would not have but we had another gentleman who was a clergy. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: I feel like I'm on Jeopardy. No, I don't recall this time. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Is he still on the board? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: I don't know. Must not be. Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: I don't know. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: So your interest in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, I mean, we really appreciate that. What do you hope to achieve there as your service on that commission?  
[CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Helping John and the wider community and empowering those and spreading the word. It's amazing, even as a pastor, a lot of people don't know about the Hard of Hearing Commission and deaf community. So it's really about spreading the information and empower others. So that's how I see my role. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Excellent. Do you have anyone in your congregation who is deaf or hard of hearing? [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: I have three. And one is retiring from the Falls City School District and she wants to get more involved, you know, and she worked with speech pathology...or not pathology...is that the right word? [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Yes, yeah. And so she's retiring so...and she wants to get more involved in the life of the hard of hearing and deaf community. So that's one way we're going to talk to John about that and tie her in. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: That would be great. Questions from the senators that you'd like to know? Anything from...we should probably take a look at any of the interests that you listed. Oh, you listed a lot of committees that you were interested in: human services, health, government. You have a wide range of interests there, sir. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Um-hum, I do. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: You can bring a lot of experiences to the commission. I'm sure that would be very helpful for them. So what's Sunday's sermon on? [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: (Laugh) This coming Sunday? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Pentecost. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Ah, then we have some idea what that sermon may be about, absolutely. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Would you like to pass the offering plate today? [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR RIEPE: Okay. [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Well, Pastor, we very much appreciate your service on the commission. And as you heard me tell Jim, we would like to hear from you at any point... [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Sure. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: ...if you believe that there's information that would be helpful to us as we do our work as legislators. Thank you so much for your service. I am always amazed at the number of Nebraskans that step forward to volunteer and serve on boards. We are very fortunate. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Well, this is a wonderful state and I commend you for your service, too, for Nebraska. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Well, you never know, if we're in the vicinity, we might just pop up some Sunday. (Laughter) [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: You're more than welcome. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Okay. Thank you so much for coming. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Okay. Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Senator, can... [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes, I'm sorry, Senator. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR KOLTERMAN: Before we leave, can I make a motion we go into Executive Session? [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR HOWARD: I've got to go. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CRAWFORD: Senator Howard and I have bills... (Inaudible) [CONFIRMATION]

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SENATOR CAMPBELL: Yes, I know. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: There's still enough people? Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Thank you so much. [CONFIRMATION]

JOHN HOGUE: Thank you. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: Good luck, Senator Howard and Crawford. We'll be in, in a little bit.  
[CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR COOK: Yes. [CONFIRMATION]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: We're going to go into Executive Session so we would ask that you  
leave today. [CONFIRMATION]