

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee February 4, 2019

GROENE: [RECORDER MALFUNCTION] --hearing. My name is Mike Groene from Legislative District, senator from Legislative District 42. I serve as chair of this committee. The committee will take up the bills in the posted agenda. Our hearing today is your public part of the legislative process. This is your opportunity to express your position on the proposed legislation before us today. To better facilitate today's proceedings I ask that you abide by the following procedures. Please turn off your cell phones and other electronic devices. Move to the chairs at the front of the room when you are ready to testify. The order of testimony is introducer, proponent, opponents, neutral, and closing remarks by the introducer. If you will be testifying, please complete the green testifier sheet and hand it to the committee page when you come up to testify. If you have written material that you would like distributed to the committee, please hand them to the page, the page when you are-- to distribute. And that's only the people who are testifying. If you are not going to publicly testify or need to leave early you can turn in written testimony with a complete green testifier sheet. We need 12 copies of all, for all committee members and staff. If you need additional copies, please ask the page to make copies for you now. When you begin to testify, please state and spell your name for the record. Please be concise. It is my request the testimony limit to five minutes. We will be using a light system: Green for four minutes; yellow for one minute; and then red, please wrap up your comments. If you would like your position to be known but do not wish to testify, please sign the white form at the back of the room and it will be included in the official record. On that white form you can say proponent or opponent or, or neutral. Check the box. If you are not testifying in person on the bill and you would like to submit a written position letter to be included in the official hearing record as, as an exhibit, the letter must be delivered to the office of the committee chair or emailed to the committee chair of the committee conducting the hearing on or before 5:00 p.m. on the last legislative work day prior to the public hearing. If we're not test-- don't have a hearing, a legislative day on Friday of a week, we will take it through Friday. And if we have a holiday on a Monday, we will take it through Monday because a three-day weekend is too long to be denying people the ability to testify. Additionally, the letter must include your name and address, state a position of for, against, or neutral on the bill in question and include a request for the letter to be included as part of the public hearing record. When emailing, please include the subject line as letter of support, opposition to, to certain bills. This will ensure your request is taken in by the

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staff. Please speak directly into the microphone so our transcribers are able to hear your testimony clearly. Committee members today will introduce themselves beginning at the far right.

MURMAN: Senator Dave Murman, District 38: Clay, Webster, Nuckolls, Franklin, Kearney, Phelps, and part of Buffalo County.

MORFELD: Adam Morfeld, District 46: northeast Lincoln.

LINEHAN: Good afternoon. Lou Ann Linehan, District 39: western part of Douglas County.

WALZ: Lynn Walz, District 15: Dodge County

BREWER: Tom Brewer, District 43: 13 counties of western Nebraska.

PANSING BROOKS: Patty Pansing Brooks, Legislative District 28, right here in the heart of Lincoln.

KOLOWSKI: Rick Kolowski, District 31: southwest Omaha.

GROENE: Thank you. I will introduce the committee staff now. To my left is research analysis Nicole Barrett. To my far right is the committee clerk, Trevor Reilly. The pages are Erika Llano, if you would like to stand up. When you bring up your green sheet, try to give it to those. Is a soph-- Erika is a sophomore at the University Nebraska-Lincoln studying political science and sociology. And Maddie Brown is a junior at the University Nebraska-Lincoln studying political science. Please remember that senators may come and go during our hearing as they may have bills to introduce in other committees. I'd also like to remind our committee members to speak directly into the microphones. Lastly, we are in electronics-equipped committee and you might see Senator Morfeld and others on a computer or on their phones trying to ascertain some information from their staff back in their offices, so that we can act, we can ask reasonable and learned questions. So we will start with Senator Brewer's LB575.

BREWER: Thank you and good afternoon, Chairman Groene. And good afternoon, fellow senators of the Education Committee. I'm Senator Tom Brewer. For the record, that is T-o-m B-r-e-w-e-r. Again, I represent the 43rd District of western Nebraska. I'm here today to introduce LB575. I'm introducing this bill on behalf of the recruiters of the United States Armed Forces. The bill makes high-- the bill makes high schools give the same access to military recruiters as it does to universities, colleges, and trade schools. When a high school has what

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is called a career day and gives the students an opportunity to interact with people and institutions offering choices to pursue after high school graduation, military recruiters should be included in the mix. They should be given the same access that is given to all of these other organizations. Military recruiters have brought to my attention the fact that there are some high schools that they do not enjoy access to and this bill helps to correct that. I brought an amendment to this bill. The Bill Drafters raised some concerns that the bill had wording in a way that might have problems with the acronym FERPA, which stands for the federal law the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. It protects the privacy of students' educational records. Using an abundance of caution we tweaked the language to make sure we avoided any potential problems with FERPA. This concludes my remarks. If you would like to ask any specific questions about this bill and the design, I will be followed by U.S. Army Captain Kevin Kilker. He commands the U.S. Army recruiting detachment in Omaha and has firsthand knowledge of this problem. With that said, thank you. I'll go ahead and take any questions if they're not too specific.

GROENE: Questions? Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator, is there an opt-out option for school districts and or parents and their kids on this particular desire?

BREWER: Well I, and, and again, we'll get into more details when, when the captain gets up here. But I think the idea is that the schools afford the access and there's just a designated time and place. I think it becomes the parent, I mean, the parents, as far as I know, would have the option to not allow them to. I mean, it's optional to begin with. So, you know, it's called the parent on whether or not they would be able to go visit the recruiters. So I guess, was there something more?

KOLOWSKI: If I'm mistaken, correct me. But I thought it was a list that would be generated by the school of all the students in that particular class.

BREWER: Well, I think the idea is simply to have a time and place for the recruiters to be able to have access to anyone who's interested in finding out about Army, Marine Corps, whatever, so that, you know, post-graduation they understand the options available to them with that particular service. I don't think it's designating names and

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being specific like that so much as just a general access in a time and place, such as the career fairs, when, when you have, you know, open availability.

KOLOWSKI: OK, we'll come back to that.

BREWER: OK. Any other questions? Thank you.

KOLOWSKI: Staying around to close?

BREWER: Yeah, I'll stay around to close.

KEVIN KILKER: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me today. Kevin, Kevin Kilker, K-e-v-i-n K-i-l-k-e-r. I want each young person to have the opportunity to succeed. Not learning about what the military has to offer limits their job training education opportunities and medical benefit advantage. They're not commonly known. Additional life experience that comes from service is brought back to veterans to towns across Nebraska. Current issues the face our recruiters force are a consistent theme of odd rules that consistently change or adjust standards. At multiple schools across the state, while access may be allowed, school policy mandates the recruiter cannot initiate a conversation at schools including across Bellevue Public, Papillion Independent School District, and Elkhorn. Millard North, recruiters are escorted with a counselor, as if they're in a jail, to a small room. They cannot be escorted during inter, interperiod times and cannot initiate conversations or interactions. The, all interactions are supervised and limited. The principal at that specific school has refused to meet with me and informed the recruiter that he has no interest in developing a relationship with the military. While this is not the standard, this is a stance that some schools take. Overall, equity of access is also an issue. Lincoln Public Schools for an example has allowed the National Guard to teach a take charge class, granting them alone access and classroom presentations similar to partnerships that exist with local colleges and school districts like Elkhorn with the Metropolitan Community College and Millard school districts with UNO. Those partnerships grant direct access to universities to, I guess, recruit to go to their schools while negating or limiting the effects of our ability to go and recruit in those schools. Open to your questions.

GROENE: Senator Kolowski.

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KOLOWSKI: Just-- Captain, thank you very much for your service, number one. That's very important. And when you were reading through the listing there you said, you were giving an example of Millard North. So then you came back and said the Millard schools are not that way.

KEVIN KILKER: So Millard School District, they allow each school to adjust their policies based on, based on the principal or how they how they deem policy is required. So I've spoken-- after being rejected for a meeting with the Millard North principal I contacted the school district, and that's what I was informed.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you.

GROENE: Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: Thank you, Chairman Groene. Thank you very much, Captain, for being here today. So you just want the same access that colleges have, other career-- whether it be colleges or community colleges. An opportunity to-- but I read the bill quickly here. Do you want the list of the kids too, so you know who is graduating and who, because I assume that's what the colleges-- you just want whatever the colleges get?

KEVIN KILKER: It is currently a federal mandate that those are, those lists are provided. Our intent with this bill is-- my intent to support for this bill is to make, make it easier to portray that to the schools. So most schools already comply. We send out a request letter every year before the school year. That request is supposed to be to us before the end of October. However, a lot of-- we have continuous issues and it takes a lot of effort to get from, I mean, we have over 100 schools that we deal with in my area alone to a get those lists. But, yes, I believe this would be beneficial.

LINEHAN: Thank you.

GROENE: Senator Morfeld.

MORFELD: Thanks for coming in today, Captain. So right now it's required under federal law that they give you these lists of students?

KEVIN KILKER: Roger, for public schools.

MORFELD: For public schools. But it's not in federal law that you have access to the schools, is that--

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KEVIN KILKER: Roger.

MORFELD: Is that the-- and this would give you access and also reinforce the list aspect or just the access?

KEVIN KILKER: The expectation is there is equal access. That expectation is enough being met.

MORFELD: OK, good to know. Thank you for the clarification.

GROENE: So the first section says: The school board of each school district shall adopt the policy to provide, except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, access to routine, routine directory information for each student in the high school. Federal law already says they have to do that?

KEVIN KILKER: Yes, sir.

GROENE: And you're not getting that list from some--

KEVIN KILKER: Yes, sir.

GROENE: --schools. So if they're, if the public schools is taking federal aid, they probably have to apply.

KEVIN KILKER: Roger, sir. So what happens if they do not comply is what we would report them in our, in our system. If multiple branches report them, that school faces ultimately an investigation to see if they--

GROENE: Have you turned anybody, any school in to have them investigated?

KEVIN KILKER: I do my best, because I'm, I live in Omaha. Nebraska is where I live. And I would not like any school to be corrected. So I reach out personally and make sure that those lists eventually come to us. But because they're late, we do have to mark them as noncompliant.

GROENE: So they have career days or and you're not invited certain days?

KEVIN KILKER: Certainly not invited, yes, sir.

GROENE: So it would be individuals go into the military, they're looking for a career just like--

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KEVIN KILKER: Yes, sir.

GROENE: Technology. Any of-- there's a lot of careers in the military.

KEVIN KILKER: Yes, sir. We have, in the Army alone we have, we're the largest branch and I know a little bit more about the Army. I did serve in the Air Force for six years, so I know a little bit about the Air Force also.

GROENE: So if they can reject you, they could decide a certain--

KEVIN KILKER: Roger.

GROENE: --certain college with a Christian denomination they don't want there either, I'm assuming. So maybe we ought to broaden the law that it includes everybody who offers a career. Thank you.

KEVIN KILKER: Yes, sir. Well, that's what we're looking for is equity.

GROENE: Patty. Senator Pansing Brooks.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you for coming today, Colonel [SIC]. I'm interested, just-- I'm surprised. I guess, are there some schools that also don't allow the universities to have access? And so is that part of it is they just are protecting the kids' information from others? Or is it just they're solely looking at the military and saying no? Because I don't get that. I mean, I, I'm happy you're here. I just don't understand. The only thing that I can think of is that the schools are protecting students' information from an onslaught from everybody who'd like to get information, including credit card companies and others who want to prey on some vulnerable people. So I just don't know. Do you know?

KEVIN KILKER: I'm sorry. The question is do we have--

PANSING BROOKS: The question is do-- are there schools that also don't allow post-secondary schools to approach the students either, they just protect the inform-- I mean, maybe it's not discrimination against them the military, maybe it's an intent to protect the information of the students?

KEVIN KILKER: I'm sure out of the 126 schools there, there may be some. I have not, I don't have a direct example of that. I do have examples of where we are limited. That you cannot come in during

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school hours at all while universities are allowed to come in and speak.

PANSING BROOKS: And are you asking for additional time beyond what the universities get?

KEVIN KILKER: I'm asking for equity, whether it's for the military or for the universities. The military is a university in my mind. We, we train, you get education and there's benefits. But like I said, that life experience comes back to Nebraska and benefits Nebraska.

PANSING BROOKS: I would agree, so I'm just, I'm just interested in what, what the, what is happening. But maybe we'll find out with additional testifiers. But thank you for coming today.

KEVIN KILKER: Thank you, ma'am.

GROENE: Is there any other questions from the committee? Thank you, sir.

KEVIN KILKER: Thank you, sir.

GROENE: Next proponent. Any opponents? Any neutral? We have had no letters from proponents, opponents, or neutral on this legislation. So Senator, would you like to close on your bill?

BREWER: Well, just, just quickly. I think that for those that lack the resources, the option of going into the military is invaluable to them. And providing the time and a place that they can have interaction with recruiters to understand the opportunities that can be available to them. For some, it's, it's life changing and maybe their only opportunity to better themselves. So I would just ask for your support and, and, Senator Pansing Brooks, if you look at this Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, part of that is that the parents can opt out. So, you know, if that roster-- and keep them mind also that if the military is given a list of names and that that list is not kept confidential, they, I mean, they get an opportunity to go visit Fort Leavenworth. It's a very serious offense for them. So I don't think that would be an issue. I think they would have that in a very controlled environment. And that's why access to the recruiters, I think, is, is invaluable for all the branches. Anyway, questions? Yes.

WALZ: OK, so--

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GROENE: Senator Walz.

WALZ: And I'm just, I'm just curious. Anybody who is 18 years old, they have access. Female, male, regardless of-- just anybody who is 18?

BREWER: Well, I think that there would be a roster. And I don't know where the break is, 17, 18? If they're, they're graduating and they're eligible then I think they can have that roster of names or they could have, if the school determined they should have.

WALZ: Both male and female?

BREWER: Yes, yes. No, they-- I think if you see nowadays there's every job is occupied by everyone. My daughter is in the Special Forces so.

GROENE: Any other questions? Senator Pansing Brooks.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you for bringing this, Senator Brewer. I do think it's a valuable tool. I'm just very surprised that the schools would not allow the military to come in and provide options. And so that's why I was trying to just speak to the colonel [SIC] and say what, what, why would it be? Are they just-- whether they're protecting, do you know if they're protecting the kids at all costs and not allowing any student to receive any information from outside? I'm not worried about the military disseminating information about the child somewhere.

BREWER: I think that it's probably certain schools where maybe the principal didn't feel comfortable or, you know, I think it's very unique in, in certain places. I don't think it's across the board. I think generally, especially in Nebraska, the military is respected and in a lot of them understand that for those, that may be their only option. That they need to make sure they're, you know, giving them that opportunity to meet with them. And just for technical clarification, he's a captain. He wants to be a colonel.

MORFELD: Say, you give him a great promotion.

BREWER: He'll take the pay, I'm sure.

PANSING BROOKS: I'm really getting these military titles.

BREWER: That's OK, we'll work on it.

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PANSING BROOKS: OK, thank you very much, Senator Brewer. I can call you, Senator, right? I know you are-- what are you?

BREWER: A colonel.

PANSING BROOKS: Colonel. OK, sorry.

MORFELD: That's why he's touchy about it.

PANSING BROOKS: Well, I might have called you general. How about--

BREWER: No, that's all right.

PANSING BROOKS: OK.

GROENE: Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator, thank you for bringing this forward. I, having been in the Millard schools for 41 years; 38 years in Millard, 41 in public education, and the last 15 at Millard West as principal of the building from the day it opened, we had open arms for the military to come in and enjoy the possibilities of mixing with the kids and in the recruiting aspect. But as a principal there are also parents that don't want their kids approached. And we have to honor that. We have on honestly deal with that in an open forum and understand that there are different attitudes out there, no matter what we are doing or how we are doing that. So I, I worked with that, we had great success with the kids coming in with the military sign-ups and recruitment, as well as honoring those that had different opinions.

BREWER: And I think part of their concern is that if they can just have a place where they can come to them and not to, you know, I guess what you would say force it on or anything. But, but then there's a distinct opportunity for them to delineate between the Army and the Marine Corps.

KOLOWSKI: Has this been, has this been brought through the ranks of the lawyers and as far as the way it's currently written, just to make sure that we're doing the right things?

BREWER: Well, legal counsel, and then it was through the Bill Drafters that we determined that for clarification that we needed this amendment. So that's why the amendment is there.

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KOLOWSKI: Thank you.

GROENE: Senator Murman.

MURMAN: Well, thanks for bringing this in, Senator Brewer. I, as apparently some of the other senators are, surprised that this isn't being allowed in all schools in Nebraska right now. If I understand it correctly, it's compels all schools, public or private, to provide a list of graduating seniors to the military and then also allow the military equal access to fairs or whatever, whatever other colleges and universities access have to their students and also, of course, allow for an opt-out for the parents?

BREWER: You had a pretty broad umbrella there. I don't know that there can be any mandating for private schools, I believe. I think for any public schools this is the primary concern there. But I don't know that in order with the private schools that's usually not an issue. They usually seem to be very willing to allow them.

MURMAN: OK. So this would only pertain to public schools?

BREWER: I don't think we're forcing the private schools to do it. I mean, I don't think it's been a problem, that's why it hasn't been an issue.

MURMAN: Well I'm surprised that it's a problem anywhere, to be honest. But, but, but anyway, this bill only allows-- or only compels public schools to do this?

BREWER: I believe that's right. I'll have to go back and double check. But I don't think we mandate private schools in it.

MURMAN: OK, thanks.

GROENE: Any other questions?

BREWER: I get to--

GROENE: The amendment basically says after an individual turns 18 they make their own decisions, basically? Is that what it says?

BREWER: Yes. And that, that coincides with the requirements within this FERPA requirement for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

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GROENE: All right. Also, my staff, or the committee staff, not mine. The committee staff caught on line 17, it says the school board of each school district shall adopt the policy to provide military recruiters the same access a student in a high school grade. Should there not be a "to" in there? Access "to" a student. Because really if you put a comma there it kind of reverses and says the student should have access.

BREWER: I'm sure if you tell me it does, it does.

GROENE: So add the "to."

BREWER: Yeah.

GROENE: So you're asking us on a committee amendment. Supposed to be done in the committee to add anything so.

BREWER: All right, then. Go for it.

GROENE: Thank you. Any other questions?

BREWER: All right, thank you.

GROENE: Thank you, Senator Brewer. If you prefer to be called Colonel, that's fine too. Any-- that closes the hearing on LB575. We will now go to LB486. Welcome, Senator Lowe, to the Education Committee.

LOWE: Thank you.

GROENE: Please introduce your bill.

LOWE: I feel honored to be here today. Thank you, Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. My name is John Lowe, that's J-o-h-n L-o-w-e, and I represent the 37th District. I'm here today to introduce LB486, the Veteran and Active Duty Supportive Postsecondary Education [SIC] Act. This bill would create a state designation for postsecondary educations. The designation would mark that institution as military and veteran-friendly. To be eligible for this designation a university or college asked to apply with the Department of Veterans Affairs and they must match five out of the eight criteria that are presented in the bill. The idea for this bill occurred to us last session during a Government hearing. Senator Brewer had a bill dealing with the National Guard and tuition. During the course of the hearing I had discussions with representatives from several entities about what those colleges and universities were doing specifically to

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benefit our veterans on campuses. This led me to wonder what the state of Nebraska could also be doing to help our active duty and veterans on campuses. After doing some research I found two states that have introduced-- introduced legislation similar to this one: Arizona and Louisiana. I thought those states' ideas could be a great benefit here in Nebraska and so we started working on it as a potential bill. We worked with the university, the state colleges, the independent colleges, the community colleges, and the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the criteria would be a strong and supportive environment for active duty and veterans, veterans on campuses. And to ensure the criteria was something that was feasible for our campuses to offer. I urge, or I urge you to support this legislation because I believe it will be good for our soldiers and veterans on campuses, will be good for the postsecondary institutions, and in the long-run be good for the entire state of Nebraska. Thank you, and I'll be happy to answer any other questions.

GROENE: Any questions for Senator Lowe?

KOLOWSKI: Yes.

GROENE: Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator, on the listing here of the eight items, and you're looking at this as all post high school?

LOWE: Post high school, yes.

KOLOWSKI: Not connected to a high school--

LOWE: No.

KOLOWSKI: --any way shape or form?

LOWE: Postsecondary.

KOLOWSKI: And as you look at those, why was five out of the eight chosen?

LOWE: Because some of the, well, I will let-- I believe there are some better people behind me to answer that. But I believe because some of the colleges were able to fit more into their criteria.

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KOLOWSKI: And they would be, if this would pass, then a school could look at this and say we have three out of the eight right now, let's get number four and five and then we could be eligible for what?

LOWE: You know, they would be eligible for the Postsecondary Education Act. There would be, they would be known as a veteran-friendly and military-friendly education place, a school.

KOLOWSKI: OK, thank you.

GROENE: Any questions? I think the biggest one on here would bring more-- veterans would be-- (c) The institution shall give college credit for certain types of military training. Do you know, Senator Lowe, if they, if there's a list of-- I'm sure it's uniform across all of the veterans and the Army or the Air Force take certain classes to be a nuclear sub technician. Do you know if our Coordinating Commission does that, tries to coordinate with military about classes that could be given credit hours to help them?

LOWE: That I do not know. I think that it would be up to the universities and colleges, and they may have an answer for you on that one.

GROENE: Just curious if they do that now. Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. First proponent?

LORI SKARKA: Good afternoon, members of the Education Committee. My name is Lori Skarka, L-o-r-i S-k-a-r-k-a, and I serve as the assistant director of Military and Veterans Services at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. On behalf of the University of Nebraska, our four campuses, and 52,000 students, I'm here today in support of LB486. We want to thank Senator Lowe for bringing this legislation forward to recognize the work higher education and institutions are engaged in with respect to our active duty military and veteran students. While each of the University of Nebraska campuses are unique, each of us focus on providing student veterans and military members with the resources and services needed to support their academic goals. I will share with you today an example of the value of a specialized training in working with military students and veterans and why the criteria required to meet this Veteran and Active Duty Support Postsecondary Institution Act designation is important. In Kearney, a very frustrated industry student recently came to me for help in unraveling the confusing situation in which he had been denied VA education benefits. He had worked with a third party who failed at their attempt

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to help him and had been told he would not receive his benefits. As we became more comfortable with each other and the student realized I had ability to help him, he commented that his father had been killed while on active duty in the service. It was difficult to keep my composure with empathy for the enormous loss he had suffered but now realizing the impact of additional military education benefits he was indeed qualified for. As the VA school certifying official, I was able to work with the VA and the Buffalo County Veterans Services Office to submit his application to the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs for the waiver of tuition program, which waives 100 percent of the student's tuition and fees at Nebraska universities and colleges. As the child of a deceased service member he was also eligible for VA Dependents Educational Assistance Program, which provides a monthly stipend of \$1,224 a month while attending UNK. With a combination of the two benefits this student was able to not only attend UNK with his tuition and fees waived but also receive financial support for housing and expenses. And there's more. The student wasn't aware that he could receive benefits for terms he had previously attended. We submitted his enrollment history to the VA and he was awarded approximately \$10,000 in back pay for the prior fall and spring terms. This is just one of the many examples our campuses see every day with veterans and military-connected students. The university Nebraska supports LB486 because it will recognize the higher education institutions to provide students with the highest quality of service, who serve as advocates for these students, and who are committed to assisting veterans and military-connected students in achieving their academic goals. At UNK alone, our team members are connecting with the VA on a regular basis to enhance our training and network of services, facilitating best practices workshops, and evaluating strategies used across the country to support the success of veterans and military-connected students. On a personal note, I am currently pursuing a Veteran's Behavioral Health Certificate developed by the United States Department of Defense's Center for Deployment Psychology and the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare. Also at UNK we work daily to support our student veterans organization that was created to assist veterans and military-connected students with peer support, navigating campus life, and assisting students with reintegration to civilian life. We provide long, short-term and long-term accommodation policies for military absences. And have a counseling center staffed by Nebraska licensed mental health practitioners, with a full-time counselor who has advanced training in veterans' mental health. Our Army ROTC program is accredited and is a company within the, within the University Nebraska Big Red Battalion. While, I am just providing

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services and programs at UNK, some of the university's other campuses have their own student services and supports for veterans and military-connected students who are working hard every day to help provide present-- provide assistance and support those who have given so much to our state and country. Thank you for your time and consideration, and for the opportunity to testify on this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

GROENE: Any questions? Senator Brewer.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First up, well done. I think I had a chance to visit the UNO facility where they have a dedicated veterans' area there and there's all kinds of facilities for them to have like a study area and even have coffee and chow and everything else. So it kind of gives them a spot to go. But then to have representatives from the VA there to help them work through their problems, I don't know, it's as good as it gets. I have not been to Kearney but the idea of having almost a one-stop shopping to fulfill your needs and to understand your entitlements is the right thing to do. So thank you.

LORI SKARKA: Thank you, sir.

GROENE: Do you-- any other questions? What about the credit hours?

LORI SKARKA: Yes.

GROENE: Is there coordination between the military and some individuals, like I said, I know an individual, my nephew.

LORI SKARKA: Yes, sir.

GROENE: He was in the navy and was on a nuclear sub. He's gone to Colorado now. Do you coordinate that some of those physics classes he took and can be transferred?

LORI SKARKA: There are two ways for students to receive credit for their military experience. One is they submit a joint transcript, a joint services transcript. That's sent directly to the registrar's office who evaluates that. In our college catalogs it says that we do provide credit for at least basic training there. And then the American Council on Education or the ACE military guide is the actual guide that they use in postsecondary schools to convert the language of the military and the courses in the military to the civilian side

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of it. And that's how they evaluate the classes that they take based on their MOS.

GROENE: So they do transfer?

LORI SKARKA: Yes. I need to be sure it's clear that they attempt to transfer. Not all military experience can be transferred into academic credits.

GROENE: Thank you. But there is a process?

LORI SKARKA: Yes.

GROENE: Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you.

LORI SKARKA: Thank you.

GROENE: Next proponents.

LORI SKARKA: Thank you.

JOHN HILGERT: Good afternoon, Chairman Groene, members of educate, Education Committee. My name is John Hilgert, J-o-h-n H-i-l-g-e-r-t, and I'm the director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs. I'm here today in support of LB46. I would also like to thank Senator Lowe for introducing this bill on behalf of Nebraska's veterans. LB486 generates recognition for outstanding support and programming for veterans attending institutions of higher learning in our state. This recognition memorializes the time, energy, and funding of military and veteran-friendly campuses and also alerts prospective military and veteran students that they are welcomed and valued on those campuses. There are several outstanding colleges and universities in Nebraska that have been locally, regionally, and nationally recognized for their veteran success centers, access to benefits, and general support to those who have chosen to serve in our nation's military. LB486 would allow the state of Nebraska to add official recognition as well as through, through the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, the military and veteran students who receive this outstanding support will bring with them funding through the GI Bill. In 2017 there were 6,506 students utilizing GI Bill benefits in Nebraska. In that same year alone over \$24.2 million was spent in Nebraska for post 9/11 GI Bill. This money first and foremost provides for outstanding opportunities for education and job advancement but it's also a large economic driver, not just in Lincoln or Omaha but on campuses throughout our state: Scottsbluff, Hastings, Chadron, Wayne,

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Peru, Seward, Fremont, Crete, and many others. In summary, veterans especially can choose to live, go to school, and work anywhere in the United States when they leave the military. LB486 would help us make Nebraska the most veteran-friendly state in the union and add one more reason why we call Nebraska the "good life." Recognition of military and veteran-friendly schools is an important step to furthering that goal and will ensure that we provide that continued support to those who wear and have worn the uniform. That concludes my testimony and I'd be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

WALZ: Questions? Senator Pansing Brooks.

PANSING BROOKS: Thank you. Thank you for coming today, Mr. Hilgert. I'm, I think this is great. I'm trying to figure out what-- so it will be on a Web site or how, how does this help us? I'm interested, and maybe I missed it in the previous testimony.

JOHN HILGERT: No, and it's up. It's, it's a, we would be creating this. Obviously we would look first to the few states that offer this type of recognition Senator Lowe referenced as a guide. But what we would plan on doing in the immediacy is to have recognition electronically on our Web site, the utilization of our social media outlets that is continually growing, and use our capacity as an agency now that has the depth to do something like this.

PANSING BROOKS: I like that idea a lot. Thank you.

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you.

WALZ: Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, ma'am. Also, thank you for your presentation today. I appreciate that. Are we at full contingency as far as the ROTC programs at all three campuses?

JOHN HILGERT: You know, I don't have direct knowledge of that. I know that there is a vibrant ROTC program throughout our state on many campuses and some junior ROTC as well, as you're probably aware of. So I'm not sure if it's at full contingency or not. I know that the system itself is healthy across the state.

KOLOWSKI: What is the maximum number we can have at all, all three? Kearney, Lincoln, Omaha?

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JOHN HILGERT: I can get that information to you but that is interesting. I do not have that, Senator.

KOLOWSKI: I don't have any data like that so I was just wondering--

JOHN HILGERT: I'm sure it would be easy to get and we could get.

KOLOWSKI: Appreciate it.

JOHN HILGERT: We will call the university. They're very proud of their program, their support of the service, and I'm sure that they would be forthcoming very quickly if I were to ask that question.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you.

WALZ: Other questions? Senator Murman.

MURMAN: Thank you. Thanks. And thanks for coming today. Do, you gave us quite a list of colleges and universities in Nebraska there. And I was just curious of the eight criteria, do all of them meet five out of the eight? Or approximately?

JOHN HILGERT: We would welcome the opportunity for them to make application to verify that is indeed the case. After review of the eight criteria, we believe they're all reasonable. And five of the eight, certainly attainable and significant that they're supporting our veterans. We have not done that preliminary analysis, but we did test it for reasonableness and we do believe that this is indeed that.

MURMAN: OK, thanks a lot.

WALZ: Any other questions? Thank you so much.

JOHN HILGERT: Thank you for having me. Thank you.

WALZ: Other proponents?

PAUL TURMAN: Good afternoon, members of the Education Committee. My name is Paul Turman, I'm the Chancellor of the Nebraska State College System. That's spelled P-a-u-l T-u-r-m-a-n. I'm here testify in support of LB486. Just to let you know that across our three institutions we have a personnel and a variety of programs that are designed primarily to make sure that our veterans and support service representatives have the types of facilities and activities that are in place to make sure that they're progressing and graduating at the

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same level or even higher when you compare to other students at our institutions. To date, one of about the only mechanisms that institutions have to demonstrate their commitment to veterans or active duty military is through a military-friendly designation that comes from an outside national organization GI Jobs Web site that uses a set of criteria or methodology that they have to aspire to. And it never really applies directly to what it is that specifically a state designates as things that it wants its postsecondary institutions to try to achieve and aspire to. I think you all are quite aware of the range of financial programs that are available to veterans and active military personnel, things like the Yellow Ribbon Program, the Montgomery GI Bill, post 9/11 GI Bill Survivor and Dependents Assistance programs. Those are all extremely useful mechanisms to help provide that financial support that is needed. But without people on the ground at the institutions to help them work through the nuances associated with each one of those programs, I think the level of frustration that was talked about in one of the previous presenters really does highlight why having personnel on the ground helping them through this process is critically important. I think a number of the other things that are incorporated into Senator Lowe's legislation and that they have student organizations granting college credit for those military training, ACE awards, and also having mechanisms that allow faculty to look at previous life experience that veteran or military personnel may have had and how that can be translated into academic credit. So do you have that right mix of transfer policies, the counseling services, and also easy access to the range of resources that are needed. All of those are critically important to making sure that these are the types of students that are successful once they arrive. And so I certainly hope that if this bill garners support from the Legislature that we will be one of the first to come forward to the department and ask for the designation. I think as we look at that list of eight we meet all six at each of our campuses. We have two campuses that meet all eight and one just does not have an ROTC program and one doesn't give the designation on, at graduation. But I would imagine that that would change very quickly. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have about my testimony.

GROENE: Thank you, sir.

PAUL TURMAN: Thank you.

GROENE: Next proponent.

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MARY HAWKINS: Chairman Groene, members of the Education Committee. And I apologize, I've got a bit of a cold today. So my name is Dr. Mary Hawkins, M-a-r-y H-a-w-k-i-n-s, I'm president of Baylor University and here today representing the Independent Colleges. I think you're hearing from all of the sectors of education in the state in strong support of this bill. The CINC member institutions provide, are comprised of 13 independent, privately-owned and operated colleges and universities. We have all of the members who are private, not-for-profit. It was organized and operates on a not-for-profit basis exclusively for charitable, religious educational, and scientific purposes. Many of our institutions are already recognized as military-friendly. Some of the colleges and universities are homes to Student Veterans of America chapters, which donate the top 20 percent of colleges, universities, and trade schools in support of military. We also support spouses of military service members, whether they're attending our schools or not. Many of our institutions have also adopted the principles of excellence and eight keys to veteran success, which comes from the U.S. Department of Education; participate in the Department of Veterans Affairs Yellow Ribbon Program; as well as the Department of Defense Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding. Bellevue University I speak for sincerely is actually founded by a military hero who flew in the Battle of Midway in World War II and spent many hours in front of students and staff and educating. We've had a strong tradition of military students at the university, as have all of the privates. We all accept universe-- or credit where it applies for their degrees as was described before and are very strong in support. The members also offer priority registration of students, recognize and work with students during deployments and other military active calls to service. If necessary, when students have self-disclosed and provided proper documentation to faculty, reasonable arrangements are made to support their education from any military-related or other kinds of disabilities. And credit for prior learning is also often applied. Finally, I would say that we've got preferred tuition pricing at the private schools. As I said, many of us are supporters and participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program which does allow in schools participating to designate additional funds for military and veteran students where their tuition might not be covered by the costs-- or the benefits provided by the VA or Military TA. We've got not only a military success center at the university but we have voc rehab, veterans assistance people, guitars for vets, there's a number of activities. So summarizing, I think that the idea that Nebraska would have a means to recognize schools as well as we have through Purple Heart or

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through federal organizations, it makes a strong statement about Nebraska's commitment to the military. And the private institutions are in strong support of this LB486 and thank Senator Lowe for introducing it. Thank you.

GROENE: Any questions? I didn't ask one of the public colleges but graduation rates for veterans once they're enrolled, do you have any numbers how they compare to the average.

MARY HAWKINS: I can speak to Bellevue University. The military graduation rates are among the highest at the university and I think that there's three reasons. One, the strong support and understanding of their military role where there may be deployments or TDYs or other kinds of activities, faculty support; two, the fact that students do not have to transfer schools, they can complete at Bellevue University through on-line and distance education programs is really important; and three, the fact that the military and veteran service center has strut, such a strong outreach of support and works with other veterans organizations.

GROENE: Could it also be that they learned in the military how to get up in the morning and show up for it?

MARY HAWKINS: That's another one. We have a lot of staff and students military, and Bellevue University is stronger for the military members at our university. I'm actually a military dependent. My son is Army, my husband is Air Force, my sister is Air Force. We could go on.

GROENE: Do the colleges have any-- we heard earlier on a bill that there's some lack of cooperation from the public schools. Not all, just a few. Is there any backwards cooperation or, or that you're asking schools to support the military so that we could have more good students two to four years later when they get out of the military?

MARY HAWKINS: Senator, I've not run into any problems working with the schools in Nebraska. I think Nebraska is unusual and I think lucky because we have military bases in the state. I think we're, when I'm in states where there are not military bases, military facilities, military personnel, you find a different climate and culture. So because of the number of sites, and I think that's something Nebraska should really try to hold on to, it makes a huge difference. So we've not run into it.

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GROENE: So it's the exception to the rule.

MARY HAWKINS: I think so.

GROENE: Thank you. Any other proponents? We have one letter of support: Greg Adams, Executive Director of Nebraska Community College Associations will be added to the record. Any opponents? Neutral? We have no letters from opponents or neutral, so Senator Lowe, or "Glow" I heard you called too. Would you want to close?

LOWE: Thank you, Chairman "La Groene." You know, I'd like to thank everybody that came today to speak in favor of this bill, especially Lori. Thank you for coming. You know, I thought I was bringing this bill for the veterans and the military but it sounds like I'm really bringing it for the universities and colleges. It will make them better. We will have better campuses in the state of Nebraska and recognition for what they are already doing. They are doing a yeoman's job of making our veterans and our men that are still serving comfortable in our universities and colleges. And I'd like to thank them for doing that already. I'd like to thank them for working together. They all worked together on this bill with Director Hilgert to get this to come through. I believe this is a good bill, and thank you very much for, for hearing it today.

GROENE: Thank you. Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator, has this come up in other states in any way, shape, or form like, something like this bill? Do you know the track record so far?

LOWE: Yeah, we, we got the idea, well, we got the idea here from Senator Brewer when we were in Government and Military, but Arizona and Louisiana have passed similar bills to this.

KOLOWSKI: They have? Good, thank you.

GROENE: Senator Brewer.

BREWER: Senator Lowe, in the military when we have a relatively easy mission they call it low-hanging fruit. You, sir, have low-hanging fruit on this one, OK?

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GROENE: Senator Lowe, Louisiana and Arizona, have you had any-- did you do any research to find out if it's helped them advertise nationwide? That we might get out-of-state veterans?

LOWE: I did not do any research. My staff did all the research on that.

GROENE: Because they have support at the colleges? I'm just curious.

LOWE: No, they have not reported back to me on that but--

GROENE: Thank you. That ends the hearing on a LB486. That brings us to LB513, Senator Briese.

BRIESE: Thank you and good afternoon, Chairman Groene and members of the Education Committee. I'm Tom Briese, T-o-m B-r-i-e-s-e. I come here today to present to your committee my LB513. LB513 is essentially a property tax relief bill. It provides that for school bond votes in districts in which 75 percent of the tax base is ag land, a supermajority of 60 percent of the qualified electors voting in the election must approve of the measure for it to pass. There's two routes we need to travel on the road to property tax relief. One is to change how we pay for things, the other is to control spending. And this, this proposal impacts the second prong there. This proposal impacts spending. And LB513 arose from a common complaint I heard from folks in the ag sector in my district and across the state. That concern is that those individuals in agriculture pay a disproportionate share of K-12 infrastructure relative to their non-ag school patrons. This leads to an obvious concern. That concern is that in many districts ag producers are outnumbered at the voting booth and the disparity in tax burdens can serve to encourage excessive investment in K-12 facilities by unnecessary bond votes. To better illustrate this concern, let's look at some examples. In one county in my district, ag property comprises 80 percent of the property tax base while only 40 percent of the population live on farms or out, or otherwise outside of the incorporated communities. In another county, ag property comprises 74 percent of the tax base while only 32 percent of the population lives on the farm. Now, clearly some ag producers live in incorporated communities and many non-ag folks live on acreage is outside of those communities. So the numbers I've cited aren't definitive but the implication is clear. Those-- and that implication is that those in agriculture do pay a disproportionately higher share of the tab and have a disproportionately lower representation at the voting booth. And you can see the problem. A situation in which the

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minority of the voters pay a majority of the cost makes it too easy to spend money and pass bond issues. And is it too easy to pass bond issues for K-12 capital construction? That depends on who you ask. If we look at U.S. Census Bureau data on education spending from 2015, Nebraska ranks 15th in the country in long-term outstanding debt per pupil. At \$8,659 per pupil, we're higher than five of the six surrounding states. So you might conclude that, yes, we perhaps do take on public debt for K-12 infrastructure at an excessive pace. And note that the supermajority requirement of this bill is similar to what's found in several other states relative to public votes on bonding and capital improvements. Missouri-- my research indicates that Missouri requires a 57.15 percent majority on bond issues; North Dakota requires a 60 percent supermajority; as does Oklahoma; South Dakota requires a 60 percent supermajority; West Virginia requires a 60 percent supermajority. This bill is designed to reinsure the successful bond votes are driven by need. It will help to ensure public buy-in on decisions of this magnitude. It will help to ensure a minority of the population who are generally footing a majority of the cost have a little more say at the voting booth and this will help to inject a greater sense of fairness and equity into our school funding system. And with that, I would conclude my remarks and be happy to answer any questions.

GROENE: Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator, thank you for bringing this bill. And I have a mixed set of reactions to it. And it goes all the way from how districts are gerrymandered and who is voting in what area at what time; how towns are split, how rural areas are split up; the size of the rural areas, large or small. It goes on and on and on. And it, it-- I haven't got all, all those resolved yet but I want to get into that with my staff and, and yourself to make sure I have a good understanding of what you're asking for here. Because you're asking for two different numbers to be added into a vote, a voting situation where tax dollars are going to be charged one way or the other to the loser and the winner in different ways.

BRIESE: Well, no, no. That's not the intent, I don't believe. The intent is simply to require a 60 percent supermajority on K-12 bond votes.

KOLOWSKI: On the bond votes, which--

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BRIESE: Yes, but only in--

KOLOWSKI: --reflect schools or whatever else they're doing.

BRIESE: Sure. And, and only in rural districts. Districts with what, well, what I-- are comprised of 75 percent more of ag land. So it shouldn't have any impact in our urban areas and impact urban bond votes in any way. And it is an attempt to address that disparity between who's footing the bill and who's, who can dominate at the polls.

KOLOWSKI: Well, I have to react from the gut as far as two brother in laws that are farmers in Illinois. And the amount of land they added to their farms over, over time and how much they were bringing in as far as crops and all the rest compared to those around them, I just have a lot of questions that are flying around out there that are not securing an answer this time.

BRIESE: Sure. No, I'd be happy to work with you and visit with you about--

KOLOWSKI: Appreciate that.

BRIESE: --this going forward. You bet.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you.

GROENE: Senator Brewer.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All right, that answer actually kind of answered my question. And that was the rural versus urban. So let's, let's take an example in my district. Let's say Cherry County. I got really one town: Valentine. Population of Valentine far exceeds the west of the county but it's by far the largest county in the state. So the idea is that the population which exists in that town would not be able to vote without the supermajority to force the rest of this giant county, which most of it is going to be in the same, I mean, with the exception of Cody-Kilgore, everything's gonna be in that footprint to build, do whatever they want to have done. Because that's how you're gonna have the check, so that there's some representation for that huge area that's represented by a few people. I mean, is that kind of generally-- I'm trying to track with you here.

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BRIESE: Yes, I believe that's a fair description of what we're trying to do here, Senator.

BREWER: OK, thank you.

GROENE: Senator Murman.

MURMAN: Thanks, Chairman Groene. And thank you for bringing this in, Senator Briese. You may have answered this question but if you did, I missed it. About how many school districts in the state would have the 75 percent land?

BRIESE: I need to ask someone, we have that number.

MURMAN: Approximately.

BRIESE: OK, very good. We'll get it for you here in a second. But it's a good question. We did arrive at that number three- fourths. I'd better not hazard a guess here, but he will have it here shortly.

MURMAN: Well, we're gonna have it later.

BRIESE: Yeah, it was-- 112 would be 75 percent ag land, 112 school districts.

MURMAN: So that would be almost half.

BRIESE: Be in that area, yeah.

MURMAN: OK. Well, I think it's a great idea because we've had taxation without representation for, for a long time. And anything we can do to correct that a little bit would be very beneficial. Thanks.

GROENE: Any other questions? West Virginia, what was the other state you said? There were some other states.

BRIESE: Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri.

GROENE: Are they tied to ag land or they just say, you on any bond election it has to be 60 percent.

BRIESE: Any bond election. Any bond election is my understanding. I don't think it's tied to ag land.

GROENE: Why wouldn't we just do that? I mean, we're not talking about electing a state senator you can kick out in four years. You're

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talking about hanging somebody with a debt for 30 years on a bond that maybe we ought to have a higher threshold on those elections than just 50.00 percent.

BRIESE: I wouldn't be opposed to that. I wouldn't be opposed to that, Senator. But as we try to come up with the votes to do something like this it might be to our advantage to limit it to rural districts. But I'm all in on statewide.

GROENE: Some of these bond, bonds are long enough that they cross into a couple of generations are paying for it.

BRIESE: Sure.

GROENE: So thank you.

BRIESE: You bet. Thank you.

GROENE: Any other questions? Proponents?

MICK MINES: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Mick Mines, M-i-c-k M-i-n-e-s, and I'm a lobbyist here today, a registered lobbyist on behalf of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. I'm also here representing the Nebraska Agriculture Leaders Working Group which is comprised of elected leaders from the Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Corn Growers Association, Nebraska Farm Bureau Association, Nebraska Pork Producers, Nebraska Soybean Association, Nebraska State Dairy Association, and the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association. This bill is of particular interest to, to our ag leaders group and Senator Briese was very complete in explaining what the bill does and how it impacts agriculture. And the 60 percent supermajority to pass school district bonds is something that's very appealing to us and that we believe could be part of a larger property tax relief package. Senator Briese is working on from all directions to do that and we commend him for doing that. This is one of those tools that, that makes great sense to us. Nebraska agriculture is among the highest. Pick a, pick a study, you'll find that Nebraska is 2 or 3 or 1 highest property tax in the nation for, for agriculture. We, we just believe this is a common-sense approach, that our, our members in rural districts that own ag and horticultural land are paying a disproportionate amount of property tax to fund local, local government. So again, we thank Senator Briese for bringing the bill and I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

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GROENE: Any questions? Thank you, sir.

MICK MINES: Thank you.

GROENE: Any more proponents? Received no letters of support in the mail or email. Opponents?

COLBY COASH: Good afternoon, members of the Education Committee. Colby Coash here representing the Nebraska Association of School Boards here testify in opposition of LB513. Our legislative committee, which represents school board members from all across the state, urban and rural, I asked them to take a look at this and they have asked me to come and testify in opposition for, for a few reasons. One is, as a matter of public policy, kind of one person, one vote, we believe is good policy and would like to see that. During a lengthy discussion of bonds, and we did look through some of the history of it. You know, passing a bond is certainly a challenge, which is even more of a challenge in a rural district where there's a lot of ag land. And indeed, bonds in rural districts have only passed about 50 percent of the time. And I believe you've got a letter from the Rural Community School Association that illustrates that. But again, school boards are made up of elected, elected officials from across districts that include both urban and rural constituents. And those members take the responsibility to represent the entire district seriously and they don't put bonds up to a vote of the people. And they, they do take into consideration all of the landowners, the property taxpayers, and all the constituents. And so we believe that they're very judicious in the use of that and we would ask that you would hold this so that school board members across state can continue to do their job and represent their constituents. And with that, I will end my testimony.

GROENE: Any questions? Sir, even if you did this, they could still do their job. Just have a higher threshold to getting it passed.

COLBY COASH: That's correct.

GROENE: They can still do their job, can they not, and recommend that they build a school?

COLBY COASH: They still, they still can. Point of my testimony was, was to say that when they decide to put a bond issue they do it judiciously and they want to have it believe that all of their

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constituents deserve an equal say in whether or not what they put in front of them should, should come to fruition.

GROENE: Thank you. Senator Murman.

MURMAN: Thanks, Chairman Groene. Thanks a lot for coming in, Mr. Coash. You mentioned this goes against one man, one vote. Earlier we heard that, I don't remember exactly what the figures were, but like less than 30 percent of the students come from the agricultural land in several districts or many districts and they pay 75. Those, that agricultural land pays 75 percent of the property taxes to support the schools. Doesn't that go against one man, one vote?

COLBY COASH: Well, I think you could put it that way, yes.

MURMAN: Thanks a lot.

GROENE: Any other questions? Senator Linehan, do you still have one? Thank you.

COLBY COASH: Thanks. Thanks, Senators.

GROENE: Any other opponents? We have one letter from an opponent: Maddie Fennell, the Executive Director of the NSEA. We have two. And Jack Moles, Executive Director of the Nebraska Rural Communities Schools Association. Any neutral testimony? And we have no letters, so if you want to close on your bill, Senator Briese.

BRIESE: Thank you, Chairman Groene and members of the committee. Just a couple of quick comments. You know, the concept of one man, one vote is still preserved, I think, with a mechanism like this. Everyone still has a vote. And this bill doesn't just protect agricultural taxpayers, you know, it really protects, helps to protect all taxpayers. And it simply helps to ensure that bond votes are driven, are driven by need. But with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions.

GROENE: Any questions? Senator Kolowski.

KOLOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator, I understand where you're coming from but, I think I do, with the one man, one vote. But if you have, if you need 60 percent to get that passed it's way more than one man, one vote.

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BRIESE: Well, everyone still has an equal vote was my point.

KOLOWSKI: But the bottom line is who counts the votes and what 60 percent represent, represents is not a 50-50 split.

BRIESE: It, yes, it does require a supermajority.

KOLOWSKI: I'm just commenting on your comment.

BRIESE: Sure.

GROENE: Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: Thank you, Chairman Groene. Wouldn't it be the same as we do in the Legislature? If you, we have a 33 vote threshold out of 49. If it's critically important, we all think we need to slow down. We don't think, many times we don't think 50 percent of the vote is enough.

BRIESE: Very true. Even there, there the burden is even higher at 66 percent.

LINEHAN: Thank you.

GROENE: Senator Briese. Do you have any other-- did you research if there's any other places and law where we have, when the citizen's vote there's a supermajority?

BRIESE: I'd have to think about that, research that.

GROENE: I believe we do and--

BRIESE: We can sure find some.

GROENE: I believe we already do it. I think my bill last year on building fund, if they take it to the vote. But it has to be at a town hall meeting, it has to be 60 percent.

BRIESE: Yes, I am sure we could develop a list of a lot of examples of that.

GROENE: Yes, I believe you could. School board itself has a lot of rules where they have a supermajority to do something. And that's not one man, one vote or even one woman, one vote. But anyway, thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, thank you.

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GROENE: Believe that closes the hearing on LB513 and that closes our hearing for today.