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Transcriber's Office

Floor Debate
January 09, 2019

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FOLEY: Good morning. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the first day of the One Hundred Sixth Legislature, First Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Kolterman. Please rise.

KOLTERMAN: (Prayer offered.)

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Kolterman. We will now have the Presentation of the Colors from the Nebraska State Patrol Headquarters Troop Honor Guard.

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

FOLEY: Thank you, Nebraska State Patrol Honor Guard. Please be seated. Pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Section 10 of the Constitution of Nebraska, the One Hundred Sixth Legislature, First Session of the Legislature of Nebraska assembled in the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber in the State Capitol at the hour of 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2019, is now called to order. Mr. Clerk, will you please call the roll for purposes of establishing a quorum.

CLERK: Mr. President, members, members-elect, please respond audibly so I can hear your response indicating your presence. (Roll read.) Mr. President, I have a quorum present.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. (Doctor of the day introduced.) Items for the record, Mr. Clerk? We'll proceed now to the election of temporary officers. The Chair recognizes Senator Stinner.

STINNER: Mr. President, I move to appoint Patrick J. O'Donnell as temporary Clerk of the Legislature and Mr. Jim Doggett as temporary Sergeant at Arms.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Stinner. Members, the motion before you is the appointment of temporary officers. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, we'll proceed to resignation and appointment letters.

CLERK: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, a series of resignation letters. First is addressed to Governor Ricketts regarding the resignation of Senator Jim Smith. I have a second resignation letter addressed to Governor Ricketts from Senator Tyson Larson. A third resignation letter from Senator John Murante addressed to Governor Ricketts. And, Mr. President, a

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resignation letter from Senator Dan Watermeier, again addressed to Governor Ricketts. Subsequent to that action, I have appointment letters from Senator or, excuse me, from Governor Ricketts regarding the appointment of Andrew La Grone to replace Senator Murante; a second communication from the Governor regarding the appointment of Julie Slama as replacement senator for Senator Dan Watermeier. That's all that I have at this time, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Proceeding now to a motion regarding the Committee on Credentials. Senator Linehan, you're recognized.

LINEHAN: Good morning, Mr. President. I move that we proceed to the election of five persons to serve as the-- on the Committee on Credentials who will forthwith report to the Legislature on the credentials of those claiming to be elected to the Legislature in the general election in November 2018.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Linehan. Members, you've heard the motion. The question before the body is the adoption of the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Chair recognizes Senator Hilkemann for a motion regarding the nomination of five senior members.

HILKEMANN: Mr. Chairman, I move to elect the following five senior members of the Legislature to serve on the Committee on Credentials, those senators being Senators Chambers, Bolz, Crawford, Howard, and Kolowski.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hilkemann. Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, you've heard the motion. Those in favor of the motion say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Will those five members please retire to the rear of the Chamber to join with the Clerk and the Secretary of State. Chair recognizes Senator Bolz for a motion.

BOLZ: I move to approve the Committee on Credentials' report, as certified and presented by the Secretary of State.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Bolz. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Chair recognizes Senator Wayne.

WAYNE: I move that the committee appoint five-- appoint-- the committee of five be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislative Chamber for the purpose of administering the oath to the members of the Legislature.

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FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Wayne. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair now appoints the following five senators to that Escort Committee: Senators Wishart, Briese, Albrecht, Kolowski, and Kolterman. Will that committee of five please retire to the Clerk of the Supreme Court's Office to escort the Chief Justice to administer the oath. The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the great state of Nebraska, Mike Heavican.

FOLEY: Thank you, sir. The Chair recognizes the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

CHIEF JUSTICE HEAVICAN: Thank you, Mr. President. You all may be seated. Now I will call the names of all the newly elected and reelected senators and newly appointed senators, and when I call your name would you please come down to this area right in front of the podium, and then you will all take the oath together, and the right answer is I so swear or I so affirm: Julie Slama, Robert Clements, Robert Hilkemann, Machaela Cavanaugh, Megan Hunt, Wendy DeBoer, Steve Lathrop, John Arch, Ben Hansen, Brett Lindstrom, John McCollister, Mike Moser, Mark Kolterman, Matt Hansen, Patty Pansing Brooks, Myron Dorn, Tom Brandt, Curt Friesen, Matt Williams, David Murman, Tim Gragert, Mike Groene, Dan Hughes, Adam Morfeld, John Stinner, and Andrew La Grone. Now is there anybody whose name I did not call who was just reelected or elected or just appointed? Seeing no hands, raise your right hand, please. (Oath of office administered.) Thank you. Congratulations.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice. Will the Escort Committee please escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber. Pursuant to the agenda, we'll move to the next item, which is adoption of temporary rules. Senator Hilgers, you're recognized.

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I move that the rules, as now in our possession, be adopted for today only, Wednesday, January 9, 2019.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hilgers. For the benefit of the new members, the temporary rules are the rules that were in effect during the last session. You'll find a copy of those in your desk drawer. You've heard the motion to adopt those temporary rules. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We'll now proceed to the next item on the agenda, election of permanent officers. The Chair recognizes Senator Scheer.

SCHEER: Mr. President, I move that the following officers recommended by the Executive Board be elected to serve for the One Hundred Sixth Legislature: Clerk of the Legislature Patrick

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J. O'Donnell, Assistant Clerk of the Legislature Richard K. Brown, and the Sergeant at Arms Jim Doggett.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Scheer. Members, you've heard the motion to elect those permanent officers. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We have enjoyed having members of the family on the floor of the Legislature. There's still room for you under the two balconies. You're welcome to stay with us as long as you care to, but at this point we need to clear the floor of members of the families so we can proceed with additional business. If members would come to order, we can proceed with business. Pursuant to the agenda, the next item is the election of the Speaker. Senator Hughes, you're recognized for a motion.

HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. I move to proceed to the election of the Speaker of the Legislature.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hughes. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Nominations are now open for the position of Speaker of the Legislature. Senator Scheer, you're recognized.

SCHEER: Thank you, Mr. President. First, I'd like to welcome John, Tom, Machaela, Wendy, Myron, Tim, Ben, Megan, Andrew, Steve, Mike, Dave, and Julie to the floor. I hope you will find this to be as rewarding an experience as I have. It has truly been the experience of my lifetime. Two years ago I came forward and put my name in nomination for the Speaker's position. And those of you that are returning senators might recall that I told you I would act with integrity, with fairness, and I would be consistent. There would be no special deals or treatment for anyone, and there has not been. I hope that I have shown that to you over the last two years that I would deserve to be reelected in this position. For those of you that are newly elected and appointed, I will tell you the same promise holds true today as it did two years ago. I will always remember and have remembered that you are electing me to serve you. And I represent you as your representative in the public. I do so with humility and integrity. I will never embarrass this institution. I will hold it to high esteem. And I would appreciate your support to become the Speaker of this session. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Scheer. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares the nominations closed. Senator Hansen, you're recognized for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Scheer.

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FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Speaker Scheer. You've been elected. Members, there are some doughnuts being distributed on the floor of the Legislature at this time. They are courtesy of Senator Scheer, who's celebrating the birth-- who's celebrating the birth of his grandson in Dallas, Texas, Harris Paul Hoffman. Congratulations again, Senator Scheer. Senator Quick, you're recognized for a motion.

QUICK: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that a committee of five be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislative Chamber for the purpose of administering-- administering the oath of office to the officers of the Legislature. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Quick. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair now appoints the following Escort Committee: Senator Pansing Brooks, Senator Williams, Senator Lindstrom, Senator Halloran, and Senator Walz. If those senators could please retire to the Clerk of the Supreme Court's Office to escort the Chief Justice to the Chamber. The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the great state of Nebraska, Mike Heavican.

FOLEY: Thank you, sir. Members may be seated. The Chair recognizes the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

CHIEF JUSTICE HEAVICAN: Thank you again, Mr. President. We will begin by swearing in the Speaker of the Legislature, Senator Jim Scheer. Senator Scheer. Okay. Raise your right hand, please. (Oath of office administered.) Thank you very much and congratulations. And we will now have the oath of the Clerk of the Legislature, Patrick J. O'Donnell. Raise your right hand, please. (Oath of office administered.) Thank you. Congratulations. Next we have the oath of office for the Assistant Clerk of the Legislature, Richard K. Brown. Raise your right hand, please. (Oath of office administered.) Congratulations. Thank you. And now we have the oath of office for Sergeant at Arms Jim Doggett. Mr. Doggett, please raise your right hand. (Oath of office administered.) Thank you. Congratulations. Mr. President, that concludes today's swearing in.

FOLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chief Justice. Would the Escort Committee please assist the Chief Justice as he departs the Chamber. Pursuant to the agenda, the next item is the election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Committees. Senator Bostelman, you're recognized for a motion.

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BOSTELMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. And good morning, Nebraska. I move to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Committees.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Bostelman. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Nominations are now open for the position of Chair of the Committee on Committees. Senator Hilkemann, you're recognized.

HILKEMANN: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues and friends, I rise to place my name in nomination for the Chairperson of the Committee on Committees. For those of you who are new to the body, very first thing we did last year was to replace Senator All-- or Senator Craighead as Chair of the Committee on Committees, and I was pleased to win that election. I am proud to say that under my leadership we did not have a single meeting of the Committee on Committees last year. [LAUGHTER] Now in all seriousness, as we develop committee membership, I believe that chemistry matters. As Chairperson, I will work with integrity, honesty, transparency, and fairness, and also work to ensure that our committees have the right chemistry to carry out the important work that we put to them. So I would ask for your vote to continue as the Chair of Committee on Committees. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hilkemann. Are there further nominations? Senator Erdman, you're recognized.

ERDMAN: Thank you, Lieutenant Governor. I rise today to place my name for Committee on Committees Chairman. In my prior life I served on several commissions and boards. Some were sometimes difficult. I felt then my job was to make sure that we did the best job we could to come with a conclusion that made the most sense for the organization or the committee I was serving on. No matter whether it was my opinion it was the correct decision or not, it was best for the committee or the organization. We had several times when I was chairman of Panhandle Co-op when we were venturing out to expand our grocery business. It was a very contentious deal, very contentious discussion. We worked through that. I listened to both sides and made a decision to guide the discussion, not be part of the discussion but to guide it and make sure it was going the right way, that the conclusion was what was best for the organization and the majority. And that's the way that I would run the Committee on Committees as your Chairman. I served on that committee the first year I was here in '17. I believe that the committee process is very important and it's very vital that we get the right committee makeup so that we get bills to the floor that make sense for all Nebraskans, and I would hope that's what we accomplish when we set up these committees. So I place my name today because I wanted to give you a choice. I didn't spend a lot of time coming to your location, taking you out to dinner, calling you asking for your vote. In fact, I don't know that I called anybody in this room and asked for their vote. So

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I thought I would do it the most efficient way possible and that is ask you all at the same time today. I would appreciate your vote for Committee on Committees. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Erdman. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares the nominations closed. Because this is a contested election, we will have-- we will need tellers to serve us. And I hereby appoint Senators Morfeld, Senator Linehan, and Senator Lowe to serve us as tellers. If those senators could please vote first and then proceed to the dais, to the whiteboard to assist for the tally of the votes. There are note pads on your desks, Senators, for purposes of casting your vote. And the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will collect your votes when you have it prepared. Pursuant to the vote, Senator Hilkemann has been elected as Chair of the Committee on Committees. Congratulations, Senator Hilkemann. Senator Morfeld, you're recognized for a motion.

MORFELD: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of the remaining 12 members of the Committee on Committees and that we authorize the members residing within each of the three districts, as enumerated in Rule 3, Section 2, to nominate four members to be elected by the legislative body to serve on the Committee on Committees.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Morfeld. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, you're recognized.

CLERK: Mr. President, I understand the 2nd Caucus would like to have their caucus meet in the well. Please, members of the 2nd Caucus, please come to the well for purposes of confirming your-- your selections.

FOLEY: Legislature will stand at ease for a moment. Mr. Clerk, you're recognized for the purposes of reporting on the caucus reports.

CLERK: Mr. President, the caucuses have reported. District 1 has selected Senators Morfeld, Pansing Brooks, Hilgers, and Bostelman as their representatives; District 2: Senators Vargas, Lathrop, Howard, and Lindstrom; District 3: Senators Friesen, Groene, Erdman, and Murman.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Howard, you're recognized for a motion.

HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. I move the approval of the nominees to the Committee on Committees.

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FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Howard. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is approved. We'll now proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board. The Chair recognizes Senator McCollister for a motion.

McCOLLISTER: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board of Legislative Council.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator McCollister. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Nominations are now open for Chairperson of the Executive Board. Senator Bolz, you're recognized.

BOLZ: Thank you, Mr. President. First, I want to say welcome and welcome back. To all the new senators, I'm glad you're here. To the returning senators, I'm glad you're back. I want this session to be a success for each and every one of you. When we are successful, the people of Nebraska benefit. To the staff and the people who make this place run, thank you for your continued service to the Nebraska Unicameral. This is a special place, a place that was here long before us and I hope will be here long after us. I'm grateful to everyone who makes it what it-- what it is. As a senator and as your Executive Board Chair, I consider myself a steward of the goodwill of the people of Nebraska, a steward of the members of this body, and steward of the institution. The role of the Executive Board Chair is to partner with the staff that keeps this place running and, in doing so, to serve our democracy. I'll commit as many hours as I need to take to make sure that happens. The role is to guide bills to the committees with the subject matter knowledge to manage them with thoughtful consideration, and I'll do that with your help. The role is to find the ways to use the gifts and talents and strengths of everyone in this body, and I look forward to learning more about those and watching you all succeed. But most importantly, the Executive Board Chair works collaboratively with the body to make important decisions on behalf of the legislative branch. To me, the process and the outcome are both important. Decisions must follow protocol and protect the traditions and the voices of everyone in this room. Decisions on issues of our legislative powers and responsibilities must consider the best interests of our unique institution and its long-term success. To this work I bring the ability to collaborate, which I have done in passing now six budgets through the floor. I bring a commitment to the body and knowledge that comes from serving on special committees, including the Tax Modernization Committee, the Special Oversight Committee on the Department of Corrections, the Children's Commission, and more. And I bring two years of experience serving with my colleagues on the Executive Board and the depth of understanding that only comes from digging in and doing the work. I am committed to working and serving with collaboration, transparency, integrity, and willingness to work for this institution. I ask for your vote as your Executive Board Chair. Thank you.

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FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Bolz. Are there further nominations? Senator Hilgers, you're recognized.

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise this morning, colleagues, to place my name in nomination to be Chair of the Executive Board. Before I do that I would like to take this opportunity this morning, while we're all here, to say welcome back to all my colleagues who I've had the joy of working with over the last two years. I am excited to work with you over the next year as we make this state even better than it currently is. And let me say a special welcome to all the new colleagues. I remember sitting in your chairs, what seems like a minute ago, two years ago and it was such a special day with your family. So I'm excited to welcome you here and I, I very much look forward to working with you over the next year. With that, I would ask your vote to be the Chair of the Executive Board. I want to highlight just a couple aspects of my experience which I think will bring value to the body and to the board. The first piece of experience that I bring is my business owner experience. Over the last eight years, I've built, more or less from the ground up, a law firm that started with just a small handful of people but now has several dozen people across the country and is a large organization. The Legislature is not a business, but it is an organization that has very similar issues to any business that you would encounter. And over the last eight years I've had daily decisions, hundreds if not thousands of decisions, small, some small, some large, many of which the answers were not readily apparent that we had to deal with. And when you have that experience day in and day out, you have a certain procedure and you have a certain experience level that comes with that. How do you reach decisions? How do you reach good decisions? I think over the last eight years I've shown, at least in my business, that you treat people right, you create a good culture. With a good culture, people do good things. And you're able to focus on the details that matter. The second piece of my experience that I think will be relevant to this is my background as a lawyer. As many of you if not all of you know, over the last 15 years my profession has been as a lawyer, as a litigator specifically, in particular complex litigation. What I do day in and day out, what my profession has been has been two, really, pieces of experience. One is just the, the analysis, interpretation, and training when it comes to interpreting laws, looking at statutes, looking at cases, understanding precedent, what do rules mean, what-- when should we have exceptions to rules. And the second thing is, is I, I deal in complex, high-stakes cases all the time where the answers aren't readily apparent and the questions themselves often aren't apparent when you start the process. Over the last 14, almost 15 years, that's what I've done. I've fought in those cases. I've led those cases. I've managed those cases. I've been involved in those cases. Both pieces of that experience I believe will bring value to this, to the board in at least two ways. One way is through the referencing process. You certainly don't need to be a lawyer to reference bills, but I think that knowledge and experience, understanding the interplay between statutes, understanding the jurisdiction of committees will be very valuable. The second is this institution sometimes and currently is involved in litigation. There are court fights past, present, and potentially future that go to the very powers of this institution and this body. Those, those pieces

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of litigation, those cases look very similar to the types of cases that I work on every day. They aren't necessarily the same subject matter but the approach, process, procedure, understanding of the challenges of those types of litigation is what I do every day and what I'll bring to the Legislature. And I will fight, as the Exec Board Chair, to protect the, the powers of this body and institution. The third experience or at least approach that I bring is one of collaboras-- collaboration. In the last eight years, as I've mentioned, we've grown our law practice. We treat people right. I believe deeply that if you treat people right and you put them in a position to succeed and use their talents, they can do great things. That's what I've done. In the last two years I've had the honor of being the Chair of the Rules Committee in this body and I've worked hard to have that same approach, both with my staff along with the, with the committee itself. We had very strong personalities on that particular committee. And I'm proud to say that we worked collaboratively to try to get the right result and all of the major pieces of business that we did on the Rules Committee were 5-0 votes. I hope over the last two years I've shown in my daily interaction with each of you that that's the way that I approach my relationships in this body. We may disagree. We're all, we're all going to disagree with one another at some point or another. But I try to approach in the same way, which is treat people right, authentically listen, have the humility to know that you don't have all the right answers, and ultimately try to get right result and the best result, not for me, for the state of Nebraska and, in this case, for the Executive Board and this institution. With that, I would be honored to be the next Chair of the Exec Board and I would respectfully ask for your vote. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hilgers. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, I declare the nominations closed. Once again, we'll need three tellers to serve us. I hereby appoint Senator Clements, Senator McDonnell, and Senator Friesen to serve us as tellers. Could those senators please vote first, provide your vote to the Clerk or the Assistant Clerk, and then proceed to the whiteboard. Once again, there are pads of paper on your desk for the senators to vote. Pursuant to the vote of the members, Senator Hilgers has been elected Chair of the Executive Board. Congratulations, Senator Hilgers. Pursuant to the agenda, the next item is the election for the Vice Chairperson of the Executive Board. Senator Brewer, you're recognized for a motion.

BREWER: Mr. President, I rise to make a motion to elect the Vice Chair of Exec Board.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. We will proceed to the election. The motion is adopted. Nominations are now open for the position of, election of Vice Chairperson of Executive Board. Senator Geist, you're recognized.

GEIST: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. And I thank my colleagues as I rise to nominate myself for the Vice Chair of the Exec Board. I have been very honored to serve in this body for the past

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two years. And prior to my election, I served in the private sector for over 20 years. In that capacity, I've worked with numerous businesses, numerous teams, learned to draw consensus over various competing interests, and I did that with fairness and integrity. I brought that background here to the Legislature and I commit to working with each of you with fairness and integrity. I commit to treat each of you the way that I would want to be treated, to listen carefully, and to serve you to the very best of my ability. And with that, I would ask for your support as Vice Chair of the Executive Board. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Geist. Are there additional nominations? Senator Vargas, you're recognized.

VARGAS: Thank you very much. Colleagues, I rise to nominate myself for Vice Chairman of the Executive Board. First, I want to welcome everybody here and all the families that took time today to be with us. Two years ago this was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I'll have my soon to be next amazing experience with my soon to be little girl coming. I do want to thank my wife for being here with me today. And another welcome to the 13 new members of the Legislature. Colleagues, today I'm, I'm here asking for your vote for Vice Chair of Executive Board. Now my work over the past two years in the Legislature has been marked with a commitment to developing positive working relationships with senators from every corner of our state and from a variety of ideological perspectives. Together we've been able to pass legislation and a budget that is fair to as many of our Nebraska neighbors and communities as possible. I've been honored to serve on the Appropriations Committee under Chairman Stinner and Vice Chairwoman Bolz, two great leaders which have given me critical experience in having very difficult conversations to resolve differences and find compromises to balance our budget and make smart investments in our future, while make sure we're supporting every Nebraskan possible. Now last session I introduced and we unanimously passed my priority bill, which was on payday lending reform. This was not done by myself. I worked with the Banking Committee and a bipartisan coalition of urban and rural senators, and we came together around a common cause and a common goal that was supported by the majority of Nebraskans. Together we took a very pragmatic approach to tackle this important issue and to bring more economic fairness to working Nebraskans and working families. Now my values-driven and consensus-seeking philosophy has also been demonstrated in my time, Vice Chair of the Legislative Planning Committee and cochair of the Juvenile Detentions Alternative Initiative, where I've worked together with stakeholders on common-sense legislation, evidence-based juvenile justice reform. Now many of you know in my previous life I served on the Omaha Public School Board for three and a half years where I gained significant experience with working with people from all different walks of life to then find ways that we can do a needs analysis of our district, conduct a strategic plan to guide our work, and then also make sure that we're doing significant reform in the district to make sure we're elevating every single outcome for kids. Now aside from my legislative accomplishments, I think it's important to talk briefly about why I want to be Vice

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Chair of Executive Board. I think you heard there's a lot of different things that come through this board. A lot of this has to do with how we conduct the business and operations of the Legislature. I commit to you that I will be fair in our processes for everything that we do, no matter how mundane. This includes referencing, appointments. I want to make sure that we're leveraging every skill of the people that are in this room. And I will do everything I can to uphold the fairness of the Legislature. I believe my experience building consensus, seeking pragmatic legislative solutions, and developing strong relationships with my fellow colleagues gives me the framework and background necessary to effect constructive, forward-looking practices on the Executive Board. Now the most important thing I want you to take away from this, and that's worthy repeating, is that I really love this body. I love the Legislature. I respect and honor the Unicameral's nonpartisan tradition and the history of consensus building. Since day one I've worked every day to respect and uphold these values and I will continue to do so as Vice Chair. At its best, our country and our state's government and democracy highlight civility, honesty, and integrity. This sentiment is at the center of one of President George W. Bush's most quoted sentiments and statements that I believe to be true that, "Civility is not a tactic or a sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos." Now we can agree to disagree at times on things, we can work together on others; actively listen and engage in conversations on one issue, and then potentially disagree on the next. At our best, we find common ground and compromise that allows us to serve our communities honestly and with integrity. Now I know from many of these conversations that Nebraskans and ourselves, that what we sometimes observe outside of Nebraska in D.C. is not necessarily representative of what happens in the state. So today I urge you to look past whether I represent an urban-- urban or rural district and whether we agree on some hot-button ideological issues or not, and to think, instead, of the quality of work we've done together and your ability to trust me to listen, to work with you, to act fairly and justly and without bias and as a leader for you on our Executive Board. I know that I'm a person of my word and I hold myself up with integrity in the highest value of public service. I hope I've earned your trust, your confidence, and your vote for Vice Chair of Executive Board. I ask and thank you for your vote today. Thank you very much.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Vargas. Are there further nominations? I see none. I declare the nominations closed. Once again, we have a divided election. We'll need three tellers. If Senators DeBoer, Senator Arch, and Senator Lathrop could serve us as tellers, please cast your votes first and then proceed to the whiteboard. Thank you. Pursuant to a majority vote of the members, Senator Vargas has been elected as Vice Chair of Executive Board. Congratulations, Senator Vargas. Mr. Speaker, we're going to proceed to the motion first, then I'm going to recognize the Speaker. Senator Walz, you're recognized for a motion.

WALZ: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to proceed to the election of the other six members of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, as outlined in 50-401.01. Thank you.

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FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Walz. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Motion is adopted. Speaker Scheer, you're recognized.

SCHEER: Thank you, Mr. President. I would ask that the body stand at ease for the 1st District Caucus to meet in 2022 to deliberate on our selection of Executive Board members.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Legislature will stand at ease. Senator Chambers, for what purpose to you rise?

CHAMBERS: Did the Speaker say caucus or carcass?

FOLEY: Members, please come to order. Mr. Clerk, you're recognized.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have the reports of the three caucuses. The 1st Caucus has selected Senators Bolz and Kolterman as their representatives to the Executive Board; 2nd Caucus has selected Senators Chambers and McCollister as their representatives; and the 3rd Caucus, Senators Hughes and Lowe.

FOLEY: Senator Kolowski, you're recognized for a motion.

KOLOWSKI: Mr. President, I move the approval of the nominees for the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Kolowski. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Vargas, you're recognized for a motion.

VARGAS: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of standing committee Chairpersons in accordance with Rule 3, Section 8(a).

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Vargas. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Proceeding now to the committee Chairperson starting with the Agriculture Committee. Nominations are now open for the Committee on Agriculture. Senator Halloran, you're recognized.

HALLORAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning fellow colleagues and good morning fellow Nebraskans. This morning I humbly submit my name to be the candidate for the Chair for

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the Agriculture Committee. I will keep this brief. Those who know me or are the least bit familiar with me, know I have a natural proclivity to be short. [LAUGHTER] I'm a fifth generation farmer, retired farmer, overseeing the management of our farm which is relatively easy at this point in time because we rent the farm ground to two very capable young farmers and they are doing a terrific job. From the four generations which preceded me and from my personal experiences, I have naturally gained a deep respect for agriculture and for our hardworking Nebraska farmers and ranchers. I believe we have, as a Legislature, an obligation to legislate when necessary, and as importantly, an obligation to stay out of the way when necessary in order to sustain and prosper the most important industry in our state of Nebraska, namely, agriculture. If elected to the Chair of the Ag Committee, I will carry forward the respect that I have for agriculture to our farmers and ranchers and to all those who are associated. If elected, I pledge to conduct this committee being respectful to all who sponsor legislation, and just as importantly to those who speak in support of and who speak in opposition to proposed legislation. Colleagues, I humbly ask you to today trust my abilities, my leadership skills, and my willingness to serve this crucial industry as Chair of the Agriculture Committee. I would appreciate your support. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Halloran. Are there further nominations? Senator Chambers.

CHAMBERS: Mr. President, I wasn't going to say anything, but in view of the fact that Senator Halloran has put his name in as a nominee to the Chairperson of this committee, I want to let you know that I have been a member of the Ag Committee ever since I have been in the Legislature, just about. I was the one who saved the Ag Committee from being abolished and rolled into a different committee arguing that a state which boasts about agriculture being its number one industry would be ridiculous to get rid of the Agriculture Committee. So having said that, I want you to know that the term "ag" for me doesn't stand for agriculture, after all those years it stands for agony. That having been said, I want you to know if nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve. [LAUGHTER]

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, I declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen, you're recognized.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Halloran.

FOLEY: Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Senator Halloran, congratulations. Proceeding to Committee on Appropriations. Nominations are open. Senator Stinner, you're recognized.

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STINNER: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, I submit my name to be nominated for Chair of Appropriations once again. I was counseled to keep this brief. But I want to thank-- I certainly want to thank the Governor's Budget Committee, the Legislative Office, the Legislature, the Appropriations Committee for the support that I received over the last two years. I think we all recall how difficult the last two years, from a budget side, certainly is. We've got new challenges. Obviously, new budgets is going to be rolled out this year. But I'm not going to go into that. But I will promise, if you support me again, I will pledge that I will always listen, I'll work to seek consensus and compromise when necessary to develop good public policy. And I will continue to promote the Legislature as an independent branch. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Stinner. Are there further nominations? I see none. I declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen, you're recognized.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Stinner.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Stinner. Proceeding now to Committee on Banking, Commerce and Insurance. Nominations are now open. Senator Williams, you're recognized.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. President, and good morning, everyone, especially the new senators and welcome to this great experience you're about to embark on. And also, thank you for your willingness to make the significant commitment that it takes to do the work over the course of time in this body. Today I start my second term in this organization. During my first four years, I served on the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee, and also served as Vice Chairman during all four of those years. During that time, I've developed a strong working relationship with the Director of the Department of Banking, Mark Quandahl, and the Director of the Department of Insurance, Bruce Ramge, and many of the other stakeholders that bring legislation in front of this committee, recognizing that the financial service industry and the insurance industry are two of the largest industries that we have in our state. Upon graduation from undergraduate and law school at the University of Nebraska, I spent the next 45 years of my life in the financial services industry and continue to do that today. So today I stand here and humbly ask for your vote to elect me Chairman of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Williams. Are there further nominations? Senator Chambers.

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CHAMBERS: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the Legislature, being the oldest person in state government, there are certain prerogatives that the elderly will take. You think we don't know what's going on. We know what's going on. We know how to indicate we don't know what's going on when it's prudent not to know. You think we can't hear. We hear everything we need to hear. We don't hear that which would not be wise to hear. I'm going to support Senator Williams' bid for this office. But with him knowing my reputation, notice I say reputation, with reference to the police, I want to give him some lyrics from a song sung by the Police. He will understand it. Every move you make, every breath you take, every claim you stake, but no smile will he fake, I'll be watching you. And to those people, whoever put these doughnuts up here, you thought that I was going to say, if an apple a day keeps the doctor away, will a doughnut a day keep all the police away. I'm not going to say it. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chambers. Are there further nominations? I see none. Senator Matt Hansen, you're recognized.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Williams.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Williams. Proceeding to Business and Labor Committee. Nominations are now open. Senator Albrecht.

ALBRECHT: Thank you, President Foley. Good morning, colleagues, those new and those returning, I welcome you all. To the family, friends that came today, and to the Nebraskans that are watching us. I also want to thank my husband, my daughter, and my son-in-law for being here today. Usually it's hard to get the farmer off the farm. So it has been an honor to serve as Chair of Business and Labor Committee the past two years. As public servants, we strive to remain fair and impartial to meet the needs of our citizens. My 30 years of business management experience provides me with a strong understanding of many of the issues that business and labor and the hardworking Nebraskans face on a daily basis. I'm thankful for the Business and Labor Committee members that have been committed and dedicated to working alongside of me to pass meaningful legislation. Under my leadership, all four committee priority bills were signed by the Governor and enacted into law. These bills address were the rural workforce housing shortage, fair unemployment benefits, transparency and accountability in law enforcement, and efficient workers' compensation settlements. I strive to lead the committee evenhandedly, while ensuring only essential and prepared legislation is presented to the full Legislature. Colleagues, it is likely that we will have another tough year. It is crucial that we work together to keep Nebraska strong and successful and make the "Good Life" attainable for all Nebraskans. Today I come before you to ask for your support and vote for my reelection as

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Chair of Business and Labor Committee. We will continue this committee's rich history of ensuring good business practices, labor standards which are fair for both the employer and the employee, sensible safety regulations, and effective Workers' Compensation System for the greater good of all Nebraskans. Your support is greatly appreciated and I thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Albrecht. Are there further nominations? Senator Matt Hansen.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, I rise to nominate myself to be the next Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. My passion for the subject matter of the committee is one reason that leads me to run for Chair of Business and Labor. My interest in the issues facing the committee and how they connect with the priorities and values of my constituents are why I ranked it as one of my top committees when I joined as a freshman senator four years ago. They are why I tried and was successful in moving onto the committee two years ago, and why I have tried and plan to continue to be an active engaged committee member. However, I'm not running just for those reasons. I'm not just running because of my service in this committee these past two years or my passion for the subject matter, but I'm running for Chair because of what I have learned over my first four years in this Legislature. I have been fortunate enough to spend four years serving my district in northeast Lincoln and the state of Nebraska, learning from some of the great chairmen and women of our body, both past and present, during that time. One thing that I have learned and that I have been reminding myself this morning, while weighing the candidates in the other races, is the importance of the standing committee Chair to the process and basic functionality of the Legislature. This is something which I know I did not personally fully appreciate myself four years ago when I was first sworn in. When I look at the individuals who have been the best committee Chairs to work with in the Legislature, I find myself not thinking of Chairs that I necessarily agreed with in terms of issues, not the Chairs I agreed with in terms of bills, or even the Chairs who I best agreed with in terms of world view. The best Chairs I worked with in my four years in the Legislature are the ones who I agree with how the committee should function. The best Chairs are the ones who were effective, efficient, and helpful with the processes that are involved and who agreed with the values that are needed to help bridge consensus and build trust in this Legislature. As I have been considering my potential chairmanship and as I have been talking about my candidacy for Chair of Business and Labor Committee, it is those values that I know I bring to the table and with specific focus on two key values. The first one is an openness and approachability. I know that we may not always agree; after all, we represent diverse constituencies and have a diverse set of views in regards to how to best move the state forward. But I feel it is duty as a Chair to be able to approach everyone with openness and transparency. Ultimately, any piece of legislation that is introduced needs to tap into the consensus of this body to help get it passed and that way that piece of legislation becomes an embodiment of our efforts to work together. A second value that I think I possess and I think is very, very fundamental for this Legislature as a whole, and of any committee Chairman in particular, is the ability to be fair.

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I believe a proposed bill can only receive true discussion and debate when senators feel comfortable with the fairness of the process; they feel their voices are heard. They feel they have been able to make their arguments and make their case and that a final vote is representative of how well they have or have not proven the case to the committee because they know and have faith that the committee handled the process fairly. I hope that through my first four years in the body I have shown my commitment to these values, that I have demonstrated those values in my service as Vice Chair of Urban Affairs and leading those public hearings from time to time. Or shown those values in my efforts to work with different senators on individual bills these past four years across different committees. Perhaps the most transparent I have been for you returning senators is with your vote counts when you're racing to meet a deadline and trying to make sure something very near and dear to you succeeds. I do not think any senator who has asked me what I plan to do has ever seen a surprise come up on that board when it was time for final vote. I hope I've been able to build the trust within the body that I've shown a commitment to the accountability and openness in my individual work, as well as a passion for a fair process. I hope that all of you share those same values with me and that I have earned your trust to the point where you know you can work with me as a colleague. Finally, I hope that I can earn your vote and your trust as a committee Chair. I ask you and thank you for your vote this morning. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. I now declare the nominations closed. Once again, we'll need three senators to serve us as the tellers. Would Senators Dorn, Blood, and Hughes please vote and then proceed to the front to help us as tellers. Pursuant to majority vote, Senator Matt Hansen has been elected Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. Congratulations, Senator Hansen. Proceeding now to the Committee on Education. Nominations are now open. Nominations are now open for Committee on Education. Senator Groene, you are recognized.

GROENE: Thank you. Colleagues, I rise as a candidate for Chairman of the Education Committee. After two successful years as your Chairman of the Education Committee, I stand here honored to ask you again to entrust me with the leadership of the committee. Over the last two years, the committee successfully worked with the Appropriations Committee and the Governor to fit needed changes to funding of our schools into our budget. I worked hard to assure that the smallest of our schools, Loup County with 60 students to our largest Omaha public schools with 51,000 students, were treated equally and fairly. We plan on repeating that effort as we address the budget cycle that lies before us. We worked with the Department of Education to assure their annual priority cleanup legislation was passed into law. We have established a good relationship with the department and Commissioner Blomstedt, relationship built on trust. We enacted into law the hard work of Senator Linehan, with the help of Senator Pansing Brooks, to define into law the importance of citizens of Nebraska put in our children's ability to read and read well. And their expectations that reading must be the top priority of

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public education. For if one can read well and have the vocabulary to understand the written word, all knowledge is available to them. We passed into law legislation defining the necessity of public education to identify early a student with dyslexia, a learning impairment which can be one of the biggest hurdles standing in the way of a student's ability to reach their full potential. And we eliminated a growing abuse of early retirement pay-outs by a few districts. But much more needs to be done. It is time for this body to fix the state's school aid formula, the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunity Support Act known as TEEOSA. It is time for this body to fulfill the promise of our state constitution that the Legislature shall provide for the free instruction in the common schools of this state. We can no longer pass the majority of that duty over off to the over-burdened property taxpayers of Nebraska. Yes, local efforts should be part of the funding, but local taxpayers should not be required to pay the undue burdensome share in any of our common schools. The [INAUDIBLE] urban/rural split, we must make state funding truly equitable to all. As Chairman of the Education Committee, I will bring legislation that reflects the efforts during this past interim of an informal TEEOSA study group made up of 11 senators who had in the past showed a legislative interest in fixing TEEOSA. We can and must work together to fix it. This year we need to update our American civics and social studies standards--statutes to aid and guide the Department of Education as they update our schools' social studies standards. We must emphasize to our schools that our children must understand that freedom is not free. To maintain it, their generation must understand the sacrifices of the Americans who came before them. They must be informed of their civic duties. I will continue to pursue legislation to empower our teachers with the ability to protect our children and themselves from violence in the classroom and to enable them to be in charge of the learning atmosphere in their classroom. We expect much from our teachers. Some may say too much. But they are on the front lines of the cultural changes in our society. We must reemphasize to teachers they have the support of the citizens of Nebraska and give them the tools to aid in instilling behavioral boundaries within our children. The citizens of Nebraska expect this body to be successful as we address these issues. I am willing to help lead the effort as your Chairman of the Education Committee. My office is always open to any senator to discuss educational policies. Your vote of support will be humbly appreciated. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Groene. Are there further nominations? Senator Kolowski, you are recognized.

KOLOWSKI: Good afternoon, members of the Legislature. I have been an Education Committee member for six years and Vice Chair of the Education Committee for the last four years. With my 41 years of experience as a teacher and administrator prior to being elected to the Legislature, I am uniquely qualified to serve as Chair. I am running because I believe every student in Nebraska deserves a high-quality education. It's no secret to anyone here TEEOSA isn't working. So I have introduced legislation to study and overhaul our school funding formula. As Education Chair, I will bring together all the relevant stakeholders to rewrite school funding

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in a way that ensures both quality education and fair taxation. We can't overhaul school funding without everyone at the table. My commitment to you is this, I will work with all senators and all committees to get this done. I will work with small, medium, and large size schools, agricultural organizations, taxpayers, business leaders, educators, school board members, the Nebraska State Department of Education, and others. It's only by working together that we can meet this particular challenge. Strong public schools are the life blood of Nebraska's communities. Yet we can't rest on our laurels. I will support innovation and reforms where necessary to provide the very best possible education to our children. I'm the only candidate in this race who knows the people, processes, and programs that make our schools work, from early childhood education through graduate education. I will work tirelessly on behalf of our kids to make our great public schools even stronger. If it is to be, it is up to us. Us, not me, but us, to get this done. Only by working together can we solve the problems the citizens of Nebraska sent us here to fix. Thank you, and I ask for your support to be Chair of the Education Committee. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Kolowski. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, I declare the nominations closed. Once again, we will need three senators to serve us as tellers. I appoint Senators Moser, Quick, and La Grone to please serve us as tellers. Cast your votes first and then proceed forward to help us. Thank you. Members, we are going to need a second ballot on this election. Neither of the candidates received 25 votes. So if I could ask the same three senators to serve us again as tellers. Everyone please vote again, and give your vote to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk. Pursuant to a majority vote, Senator Groene has been elected Chair of the Committee on Education. Congratulations, Senator Groene. We will proceed now to the Committee on General Affairs. Nominations are now open. Senator Briese, you are recognized.

BRIESE: Thank you, Mr. President; good morning, colleagues. I, too, would like to welcome back my fellow colleagues, and I would especially like to welcome the new senators today. You are about to embark on a journey that I trust you will find fascinating, rewarding, yet frustrating. I rise today to place my name as a nominee for Chair of General Affairs. I would like to say first of all, there's a downside to running for a Chairmanship, and that's running against a colleague that you consider a friend, such as Carol Blood, Senator Blood, a colleague that I have utmost respect for. But with that said, I want to talk about the vision for the General Affairs Committee. I'm not going to belabor the point. But I want to make a few comments about it. I would strive as Chair of the General Affairs Committee for a committee that will promote and enable legislation that will help us grow our state, create opportunity for folks to live, work, and raise their families in Nebraska, while at the same time protecting public safety. But perhaps more importantly, I would like to have a running committee that will protect the integrity of the committee process. And by that, I mean that I would like to strive to have a General Affairs Committee that is open and transparent; a committee that treats fellow senators with fairness and respect; a committee that treats those that come before the committee with respect; and a committee in which all ideas are given a fair and impartial hearing and consideration. And finally, a committee that uses our

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time wisely, efficiently, and recognizes the time constraints we all live under. With that said, I would also like to point out that those of you that know me and have worked with me in the past, know that I am more than willing to work with colleagues across the political spectrum to do what I think is right for Nebraska, and I intend to keep working in that manner. I humbly ask for your vote and your support in this endeavor. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Briese. Are there further nominations? Senator Blood.

BLOOD: Thank you, Mr. President. As my friend Senator Briese said, I stand today to ask for your support for Chair of the General Affairs. I have not written down what I said because I want to speak from the heart. And so I want to say to all the new senators, I hope that you are as starry eyed and enthusiastic at the end of this year, because I can tell you when I stand here, I still feel as excited as the day that I was elected. I have wanted to be a state senator since I was in the fourth grade, and this is my dream and I'm living it. So I'm the happiest gal in Nebraska. I stand here today because part of this dream is that I would like to be the Committee Chair of General Affairs. As my esteemed colleague and friend, Senator Briese, so eloquently said, this committee needs some help. We need to bring decorum back to this committee. For those of you that know me, you know that you never have to guess what I'm thinking, be it right or wrong. You know that when I tell you I'm going to do something, I do it, and I research each and everything that comes before me, sometimes to a fault. I ask questions in the committees that we get into the transcripts, so when they come to the floor, you have something to look at to read to know what was discussed prior to it being kicked out of committee. I promise you that I will not make deals. I will not play favorites. I will treat each and every one of you the same: fairly, honestly. That I will run that committee in an efficient, concise manner. You will never have to come and beg to have your bill kicked out of that committee. Because that, my friends, is not how we do business in a bipartisan unicameral. I know today that you have a hard choice to make. I tell you to consider my experience that I have actually sat on that committee for the last two years. Prior to being a state senator, I sat on the Bellevue City Council for eight years where we dealt with the very issues that come into that committee, from alcohol to keno, and more. Prior to that, I ran a chamber of commerce. And as a business consultant, I have 15 years of working with municipalities across the state of Nebraska to help businesses start up, and with every start-up comes ordinances and state statute that we have to look at to make sure they comply with what's going on in their municipalities. I also served eight years on the legislative committee of the League of Municipalities. I would be honored today to have your vote, but I already feel honored that you are all my friends and I appreciate your ears and I look forward to whoever wins today's election.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Blood. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair declares the nominations closed. We will need three tellers to please serve us as tellers. I would ask Senator Chambers, Senator Slama, and Senator Ben Hansen to please serve us as tellers.

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Please vote first and then proceed to the white board. Thank you. Pursuant to majority vote of the Legislature, Senator Briese has been announced-- has been voted as elected Chairman of the General Affairs Committee. Congratulations, Senator Briese. We will proceed now to the election of Chair of the Committee on Government, Military and Veterans Affairs. Nominations are now open. Senator Brewer.

BREWER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise today to ask for your support as Chair of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs. As others have said today, you need to be a champion for the cause of that committee. For the 13 freshmen, which are the ones I will primarily focus on, because the rest of them know me, I think you need to understand that there are some that are concerned that I may not be as kind and gentle as Senator Murante. Let me assure you that I will not be. The Chairman on the Committee on Government, Military and Veterans Affairs needs to have a foundation in those very issues. I think if you look at the fact that I have the largest district in size, in number of counties, townships and villages, that puts a unique responsibility on me. I have been the Vice Chair for the last two years and have filled in multiple times for Senator Murante as Chair. The other parts of the committee: military, I bring 36-plus years of service, 13 tours, 8 of them combat tours, and during that period was wounded multiple times. That carries us over to the last issue: veterans. I think because of that, I bring a unique ability to appreciate their needs. So with that said, I would ask for your vote for Chair of Government, Military and Veterans Affairs.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Brewer. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. At this point we will declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen, you are recognized for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Brewer.

FOLEY: Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Brewer. Members, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce a new member of the Clerk's team. We have with us Mr. Brandon Metzler; he's a third year law student and will be serving us this year as a research analyst. Welcome, Brandon Metzler. We will now proceed to election of Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. Nominations are now open. Senator Howard, you are recognized.

HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor. I rise today to nominate myself for the position of Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. I feel my six years on the committee, two years as Vice Chair, along with my professional experience outside of the Legislature, these have all prepared me well to serve in this leadership position. I would like to

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just take a very brief minute to tell you about my background. For those of you who don't know, I graduated from law school in Chicago with an emphasis in child and family law with the intention that I would immediately go and work in juvenile court. My mom had been a social worker, a front line social worker for the state of Nebraska for 34 years for DHHS, and I just figured I would go directly to juvenile court. But my first job was actually as an attorney at a nonprofit that did maternal and infant health policy. Basically, I was working to get healthcare for moms and babies in the state of Illinois. But I decided to move home after my sister passed away. My first job at home was working at a federally qualified health center in south Omaha where I got to see firsthand how important healthcare access is to the state of Nebraska. And this background gave me a full view of the work of the Health and Services Committee, from child welfare to healthcare practitioner licensure, insurance coverage, and healthcare access. We have a lot of challenges in our health and human services arena. We are looking at budgetary challenges, and I feel it's imperative to have a leader who has firsthand experience with the array of fiscal impacts of programs and the agencies that this committee oversees. I anticipate a lot of changes on the federal level to a variety of programs including TANF, Aid to (Families with) Dependent Children, LIHEAP, Medicaid that will require a strong understanding of their function and a steady hand. Further, oversight of the Medicaid expansion will be a key part of this committee's work for the next two years. I anticipate many scope of practice bills during the next two years. During my time in the Legislature, I have carried and passed a bill of that kind through a contentious debate, and it concluded in a compromise that both sides agreed upon. Finally and most critically, I believe we have significant challenges and opportunities facing us in our child welfare system. As leaders in our state, this committee is tasked with addressing the most pressing concerns in child welfare; that includes sexual abuse of our youth in foster care, an increase in suicide rates among this population, and the death of wards. These are examples that keep me up at night and compel me to seek this leadership position. I believe the role of Chairs in our body are as fair-minded arbiters who usher legislation that ultimately improves the lives of all Nebraskans. I want to make sure every member of this body has a voice, and that each piece of legislation that is brought to this committee is considered equally. I would be honored to have the opportunity to lead the Health and Human Services Committee as it carries out its important work. I appreciate your consideration and would appreciate your vote. Thank you, Mr. Lieutenant Governor.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Howard. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. We will declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Howard.

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FOLEY: Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The ayes have it. Congratulations, Senator Howard. We will proceed now to leadership of the Judiciary Committee. Nominations are now open. Senator Lathrop.

LATHROP: Mr. President and colleagues, I rise to place my name in nomination for Chair of Judiciary Committee. As many of you know, this is my second tour. I served for eight years from 2007 to 2014. During that period of time, I spent all of my previous eight years on the Judiciary Committee and served as Vice Chair. Before I got to the Legislature back in 2007, I had been a practicing attorney, and I think that's important, an important consideration. I graduated from law school in 1981, began my practice, which was pretty general. I was exposed to an awful lot of practice areas, including criminal law, probate, some real estate, trial work, and as my practice evolved, it has specialized in civil trial practice. I think that's important because Judiciary Committee is going to deal with an awful lot of issues that face this Unicameral in the area of crime and punishment on various practice areas that touch on matters that lawyers deal with in their practices. It's also going to deal with prison reform. We have much work to be done yet in reforming the prisons and bringing down the overcrowding, dealing with a pending lawsuit against the state of Nebraska. In addition to spending eight years on the Judiciary Committee, I served on the Business and Labor Committee for eight years previously, six of those as Chairman of that committee. And in addition to chairing the Business and Labor Committee, I was also privileged to chair two special investigative committees. And I'll tell you, colleagues, those special investigative committees put out reports that were unanimous, they provided a way forward for services for the developmentally disabled, and some of the measures that you passed in 2015 for prison reform. It is my belief that a Chairman must-- the role of the Chairman is to provide a fair hearing, also to apply expertise to the subject matter. And I think I can do that. I have the background both in the practice of law and in investigation of the Department of Corrections, which is going to be significant issues before the Judiciary Committee. I would appreciate your fair consideration and your support for my nomination for Judiciary Committee. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Lathrop. Are there further nominations? Senator Chambers.

CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, when I'm sad, I sing, then the rest of the world is sad with me. When I feel pleasure, I may articulate the words or lyrics of a song without attempting to put a melody to it. With reference to Senator Lathrop coming back, "happy days are here again."

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Are there any further nominations? I do not see any. We will declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen, you're recognized.

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M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Lathrop.

FOLEY: Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Lathrop. We will proceed now to the Committee on Natural Resources. Nominations are now open. Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, colleagues, and welcome back; to all the new senators, welcome. I hope you find this experience in this body as rewarding as I have for the last four years. I have served the last four years on the Natural Resources Committee, the last two years as Chairman. And in those two years, I believe I ran the committee fair, efficient, and in a professional manner. All the bills that we bring to the floor are ready for prime time. There's not a lot of work that needs to be done on those once we finish with them. Some of the issues that the Natural Resource Committee deals with are water, public power, natural resource districts, environmental issues, energy, recreation, and the ethanol industry. I would humbly ask you for your vote. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hughes. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. We will declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Hughes.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Hughes. The motion is adopted. We will proceed now to leadership of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. Nominations are now open. Senator Kolterman, you are recognized.

KOLTERMAN: Thank you, Mr. President. As has been stated, welcome back to all my past colleagues, and welcome to the new colleagues as well. As past Chairman of the Nebraska Retirement Committee, my goal and obligation as Chair has been to protect all plans that we manage. I promise to utilize my staff to the best of their ability and to work in collaboration with my colleagues, each and everyone of you, as well as the plan holders who we manage the plans for. I would appreciate your vote for Chair of Nebraska Retirement Systems. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Kolterman. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. I declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

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M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Kolterman.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say no. Senator Kolterman, congratulations, you're elected. We will now proceed with the Committee on Revenue. Nominations are now open. Senator Lindstrom, you are recognized.

LINDSTROM: Thank you, Mr. President, and good afternoon, colleagues. I stood on this floor two years ago to ask for your support for Chairmanship and I'm here again today asking to extend that same trust and belief in me that you did two years ago. We have a lot of work ahead of us in this biennium. We must address property tax reform while properly funding our educational systems. We must strengthen our workforce development efforts and prepare the next generation to lead our state into a better position for our children and grandchildren. Having been a member of the Revenue Committee, I've listened to hours of testimony on these issues and tax-related economic issues. I've spent time the last few years meeting with business owners, farmers, and bankers, from the smallest of towns to the largest of municipalities and everywhere in between to find the best solutions to give our state the highest rate of success. I have seen what Nebraskans are experiencing in all of your backyards. There's an urgency across the state from our business owners, large and small, to our ag producers to put together the best tax policy that moves us in the right direction. We need an experienced Chair to lead the Revenue Committee to accomplish these difficult tasks. Through my work as Chair of Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee, I have firsthand experience with large-scale reforms. In 2017, we overhauled the banking act and the securities act for the first time in 50 years. I have also helped push Nebraska to the forefront of the country on the opioid fight with our prescription drug monitoring system, and most recently passed tax relief for our seniors through reforms and the state Social Security tax with an overwhelming passed with 44 votes. Those of you who have worked with me as Chair know that I don't play games, I don't push forward legislation that's not ready or good for Nebraska. I like to run an efficient committee, and I believe giving every bill a fair shot and working with you to make your legislation the best it can be before it hits the floor. I plan to be a facilitator as your Revenue Chair. I believe my role is to put together the best packages of legislation you have introduced to address school funding, property tax incentives and present them to the floor. My main goal is to put Nebraska in the best possible position to be an economic leader in our region and nation. You have voted for me into leadership position since my freshman year. I served as Chair and Vice Chair of the State Travels Relations Committee; Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee; and Vice Chair of the Retirement Systems Committee. The task ahead of us is daunting and it's going to take all of us working together to get it done. And I ask that you to give me that opportunity to put your legislation in a position for success. I believe we can accomplish this heavy lift by focusing on

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what we can do and should do for the citizens of Nebraska. With that, I ask for your vote for Chair of Retirement-- excuse me, Revenue Committee. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Lindstrom. Further nominations? Senator Linehan, you are recognized.

LINEHAN: Thank you, Mr. President; good morning, colleagues. First, I would like to welcome all the new members. And I especially want to recognize their family, whether it be their parents, their spouse, or their children; and maybe a special recognition to the young people that are here today, because what we do in this Legislature is most important to the youngsters, and they are sitting around the floor this morning. So thank you for letting your spouse, child, or parent run for this office. It's important. You will miss them, but we are very glad that they are all here. Thank you. I rise this morning to nominate myself for Chair of the Revenue Committee. When I ran for the Legislature two years ago, the concern I heard most frequently was about Nebraska's high taxes. I feel very confident, I've actually spoken to many of you, new members, when you ran for office last year, you heard frequently about high property taxes. Public opinion is clear. We need to reduce the burden of high property taxes on ag producers, commercial property, and on homeowners. Our solution must not only address property taxes, but our tax climate must work for all sectors of our economy. We want to encourage young people, retirees, veterans, and businesses to stay and grow in Nebraska. We also must fund the essential services that our citizens need and deserve and expect. To address our overreliance on property taxes to fund K-12 public education, especially in the rural areas, every person serving this body is going to have to be part of the solution. Yes, much work will fall to the shoulders of the Revenue Committee, Education Committee, and the Appropriations Committees. But to get to 33, which is what we have to do to get a tax policy that addresses property tax and our school funding, we are going to all have to work together regardless of what committee you are on. I want you to know that I will listen to everyone, I welcome input from everyone, and I encourage you to bring your ideas forth. What I commit to you is this: I will be honest, I will be forthright, I will be strong in the face of threats to take us off course, I will work with each of you, I will work with administration, and our many stakeholders. That's my promise. I humbly ask for your vote for Revenue Committee. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Linehan. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. We will declare the nominations close. Senator Matt Hansen, you're recognized for a motion. I'm sorry. My error. We will need to appoint three senators as tellers for this election. Would Senators Cavanaugh, Murman, and Gragert please serve us as tellers. Please vote first and then proceed up front. Thank you. Pursuant to majority vote, Senator Linehan has been elected Chair of the Revenue Committee. Congratulations, Senator Linehan. We will now proceed with the Committee on Transportation and Telecommunications. Nominations are now open. Senator Friesen, you are recognized.

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FRIESEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to place my name in nomination for the Chair of Transportation and Telecommunications. I have served in the Transportation Committee now for four years. I have served as Chair for two years, Vice Chair for two years, and I also served as Vice Chair on the Revenue Committee. For those senators and my colleagues who I have worked with for these past years, you know who I am, and I hope I have earned your vote. For the freshmen that are out there, I will earn your respect, and I will earn your vote down the road. I hope you can vote for me. And I thank you in advance for your support for my Chairmanship of the Transportation and Telecommunications. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Friesen. Are there further nominations? Senator Chambers.

CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I'm not going to make a play on Senator Friesen's name about being cold. But if you take the three letters of his committee, T-N-T, it gives you an idea what kind of sledding people might be if they come before his committee and don't have all their ducks lined up in a row. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. I declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Friesen.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Friesen. Proceeding now to leadership of the Urban Affairs Committee. Nominations are now open. Senator Wayne, you are recognized.

WAYNE: Thank you. First, I would like to nominate Senator Chambers-- oh I'm sorry, sorry-- myself [LAUGH] for the nomination of Urban Affairs. I'm going to be brief, but I think it's important to share the vision that we have for Urban Affairs moving forward, because this vote you cast this isn't just a vote for chairmanship, but it's also a vote for the vision, I think, where Urban Affairs should be going. We need bold and assertive leadership, and Urban Affairs is going to lead the way in that conversation. Economic development, jobs, housing, transportation, public safety, education, they are all interconnected. As we approach the next two years in Urban Affairs, we are going to focus on many of those facets and a multifaceted approach. For example, we are going to work on affordable housing. If you look at affordable housing, it is the linchpin to the American dream. And it's critical that we develop affordable housing throughout the state as we look to grow our population. We are looking at bills such as density bonuses to allow more rental and urban core development. We are looking at affordable housing bills to

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allow those first-time homeowners to purchase bills in extremely-- purchase homes in extremely blighted area. And we are also looking at a big conversation around an "atropolis" and you're going to hear me say that word quite a bit. It's about port authority. It's about growing Omaha and around the airport and turning this into one of the economic hubs of transportation logistics. The reason I think it's time for bold and assertive leadership, because the last two years I have been able to do something that nobody else in this body has been able to do. I brought Senator Groene and the League of Municipalities together and in favor of the same bill. That was supposed to be a joke, but I guess it didn't work out. [LAUGHTER] But no, we had comprehensive studies in the last two years in Urban Affairs regarding TIF. We created a peace treaty in which many of you all supported to stabilize TIF and provide economic framework for developers to go in and help build the urban core. We also had other bills around cleanup statutes that were very complicated. If you recall the first day, first bill, I got grilled for about an hour from Schumacher to everybody, and we were able to get that done. As we continue to grow Urban Affairs, as we continue to develop and bring economic housing to Urban Affairs, we will continue to grow this state. So I humbly ask for your vote. I humbly ask for your support of the vision of Urban Affairs and me as Urban Affairs Chair. And it's time that we move Nebraska from good to great. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Wayne. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. I declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Wayne.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Wayne. Proceeding now, pursuant to the agenda, to the elections of special and select committee Chairpersons. Senator Briese, you are recognized for a motion.

BRIESE: Thank you, Mr. President. I hereby move to proceed to the election of the special and select committee Chairpersons in accordance with Rule 3, Section 8, Paragraph a. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Briese. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. First of the special committees is the Committee on Rules. Nominations are now open. Senator Crawford, you are recognized.

CRAWFORD: Thank you, Mr. President; and good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back, welcome to our new members, and welcome to our family members and friends who are here to celebrate this day with us. It's been an honor to serve in the Legislature for six years, and I'm

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happy to be here my last two years, and have had in those six years, much experience with the rules, and also experience in being a committee Chair. And I'm asking for your support in being committee Chairperson of the Rules Committee. It's a committee that meets for a short time period usually, but it's very important. It's very important that we have integrity in our rules; very important we have integrity in that process of deciding what those rules are. And so I pledge my hard work and diligence to you and my integrity to you and humbly ask for your support to be Chairperson of the Rules Committee. Thank you, Mr. President.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Crawford. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. I declare the nominations closed. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Crawford.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hansen. Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Motion is adopted. Congratulations, Senator Crawford. Proceeding now to the Chairmanship of the Enrollment and Review Committee. Senator Wishart, you are recognized for a motion.

WISHART: Thank you, Mr. President. I nominate Senator Slama as the Chair of the Enrollment and Review Committee. I want to congratulate her on being the youngest of your class, and I believe the youngest ever appointed to the Legislature. So congratulations on that. It is with some sadness, but also some relief that I pass the baton on to you. I do have two words of advice. First, utilize the expertise of the Clerk, Patrick and his team, as often as you need in this role. And the second is, appoint as many as possible Vice Chairs to take over when you are busy and need someone else to take over. So anyway, congratulations.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Wishart. Are there further nominations? I do not see any. Senator Matt Hansen for a motion.

M. HANSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote by acclamation be cast for Senator Slama.

FOLEY: Members, you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Slama. Proceeding now to election returns. Senator Lowe, you are recognized for a motion.

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LOWE: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the committee of three be appointed to escort the Secretary of State to the Chamber to deliver the election returns of the General Election of November 2018.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Lowe. Members you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair appoints Senators Bolz, Lowe and Brewer to be the Escort Committee. If those three senators could please retire to the rear of the Chamber to escort the Secretary of the State. Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting Secretary of State, John Gale.

FOLEY: Please welcome Secretary of State, John Gale. Members, please be seated. The Chair recognizes Secretary of State, John Gale.

JOHN GALE: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Clerk, I deliver to you the abstracts of the 2018 General Election from the 93 counties in Nebraska for canvass by the members of the 106th Nebraska Legislature.

FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. While you are here with us, I would like to recognize the Speaker of the Legislature, Speaker Scheer.

SCHEER: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Secretary, on behalf of myself and the colleagues seated in front of you, we would like to thank you for your dedicated, tireless commitment in the state of Nebraska as Secretary of State. You have served humbly and efficiently and effectively for 18 years. You are the epitome of a public servant. You are a model for anyone that is going into public service to follow. We thank you for your dedication, we thank you for your hard work, and wish you well in your retirement. Thank you.

JOHN GALE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We're given a little grace of time by the Clerk of the Legislature, I would like to tell you what an incredible honor it has been to serve as one of your constitutional officers for 18 years and to be so proud of the state the entire time, no matter where I was or who I was visiting with. This state is an absolutely outstanding, wonderful state. What a great place to live and raise our children. I'm a fifth generation Nebraskan, so I'm very proud of that. But it has been an incredible honor to serve and to work with this unique Unicameral Legislature and the tremendous work that you do. And I wish you the very best in this legislative session. And may it be one of great success for all of you. Thank you for having me. Thank you.

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FOLEY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Would the Escort Committee please assist the Secretary of State as he departs the Chamber. Senator Kolterman, you are recognized for a motion.

KOLTERMAN: Mr. President, I move, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4, to approve the report of the Secretary of State and the candidates stated therein be declared duly elected.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Kolterman. Members, you've heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Senator Blood, you are recognized for a motion.

BLOOD: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to arrange to hold the inaugural ceremonies for the newly elected state officials on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Blood. Members you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk for an announcement. Senator Hilkemann, you are recognized first, please.

HILKEMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There will be a meeting of the Committee on Committees in one hour in room 1525; 1525, one hour after adjournment. Thank you.

FOLEY: Thank you, Senator Hilkemann. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Albrecht would move to adjourn the Legislature until January 10 at 10:00 a.m.

FOLEY: Members you heard the motion. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. We are adjourned.