

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office  
Education Committee March 23, 2022

**WALZ:** We'll go ahead and get started. Welcome to the Education Committee public hearing. My name is Lynne Walz, from Legislative District 15, and I serve as the Chair of the committee. The committee will take up the bill-- bills in the order on the posted agenda. Our hearing today is your public part of the legislative process. This is your opportunity to express your position on the proposed legislation before us today. To better facilitate today's proceeding, I ask that you abide by the following procedures. Please turn off your cell phones or other electronic devices. The order of testimony is introducer, proponent, opponent, neutral, and closing remarks. If you will be testifying, please complete the green testifier sheet and hand it to the committee clerk when you come up to testify. If you have written materials that you would like distributed to the committee, please hand them to the page to distribute before you begin. We need ten copies for all committee members and staff. If you need additional copies, please ask a page to make copies for you now. When you begin to testify, state and spell your name for the record. Please speak directly into the microphone so our transcribers are able to hear your testimony clearly. Finally, please be concise. Testimony will be limited to five minutes. We will be using the light system: green, your time has started and you may begin speaking; yellow, you have one minute remaining; and you will wrap up your comments-- comments when you see the red light. The committee members with us will introduce themselves beginning at my far right.

**MURMAN:** Hello, I'm Senator Dave Murman, from District 38, and I serve seven counties in southern Nebraska and part of an eighth.

**LINEHAN:** Hi, I'm Lou Ann Linehan and I serve Elkhorn and Waterloo.

**WALZ:** And I'd like to introduce my committee staff. To my immediate right is research analyst, Nicole Barrett, and to the right end of the table is committee clerk, Noah Boger. And our pages today-- our page today is Bobby Busk. Please remember that senators may come and go during our hearing as they have bills to introduce in other committees. I'd like to also remind our committee members to speak directly into the microphones and limit side conversations and making noise on personal devices. We are an electronics-equipped committee and the information is provided electronically as well as in paper form; therefore, you may see committee members referencing information on their electronic devices. Please be assured that your presence here today and your testimony is very important to us and crucial to our state government. And with that, we will open on LR335. Just come up.

**MIKE BAUMGARTNER:** Good afternoon, Chairperson Walz, members of the Education Committee. My name is Mike Baumgartner, M-i-k-e B-a-u-m-g-a-r-t-n-e-r, and I'm the executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. I come before you today to support LR335 and to offer my profound thanks to you and all members of the committee for introducing LR335. Talent development, recruitment, and retention are top priorities for Nebraska employers, educators, communities, and legislators, and LR335 was fashioned through an extensive collegial development process that involved many people who share those priorities. We know that high state educational attainment is strongly correlated with higher state GDP, per capita income, greater labor force participation, better health outcomes, better community amenities, and better quality of life. Nebraska is in competition with other states and, indeed, other countries for talent and innovation. We need to grow talent and retain it in Nebraska, and we need to attract as much talent as we can to Nebraska and keep it here. Many states, including Nebraska's neighbors, have adopted ambitious, quantifiable educational attainment goals in recognition of their need for talent and innovation. LR335 sets a state educational attainment goal that 70 percent of Nebraskans aged 25 to 34 will have a postsecondary degree, certificate, diploma, or credential valued by industry by 2030. Adopting and achieving that goal will put us among national and global leaders in educational attainment. It will signal that our young people have the knowledge, skills and aptitude to fill our evermore technology-rich jobs and to create new ones. This goal is challenging but achievable. With about 58 percent of young Nebraskans currently meeting the standard, our schools, colleges, universities and business and industry trainers will need to educate, graduate, and train almost 3,400 more young Nebraskans each year than the status quo. But those potential students and apprentices are all around us. Many Nebraskans start postsecondary education, but leave without a credential; others complete high school but don't enroll in further education or training, while still others need to complete high school and training or are currently in high school; and to reach our goal, we must redouble efforts to close the persistent attainment gaps that plague Nebraska and other states. Setting the educational attainment goal will make us focus and organize our most promising strategies for both workforce development and retention, economic diversification and innovation, and diversity and inclusion. We'll help state leaders, K-12 education leaders, college and university officials, employers and community leaders establish a shared education and training agenda and measure progress at regular intervals. The goal will be a north star for our state and a measure of accountability. And speaking on behalf of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, I

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assure you that with the passage of this resolution we will adopt the goal under the state's comprehensive postsecondary plan and report the state's progress to you annually. I would be happy to address any questions you might have.

**WALZ:** Thank you. Questions from the committee? I see none. Thank you. Any other proponents that would like to speak? Any opponents that would like to speak? Anybody in the neutral-- neutral capacity? I don't see any. Thank you for attending. That ends our hearing on LR335 and our hearing for today. Thank you, guys.