

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Floor Debate September 14, 2021

HILGERS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the second day of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, First Special Session. Our chaplain for today is Senator Williams. Please rise.

WILLIAMS: Good morning, colleagues. Would you please join me in prayer? Dear Lord, we thank you for today and we thank you for all days. This past Saturday marked the 20th year anniversary of 9/11, a dark day in our country's history. 9/11 also marked a time when our nation came together in a tight bond as Americans. We became united in thought, united in direction, and united in action. Twenty years later, we seem to be divided. Lord, please help us understand that our divisions are by our choice and it's also our choice to step up and accept the responsibility for the difficult task ahead. Lord, we pray for the Redistricting Committee and thank them for their hard work and commitment. Lord, we also ask for your guidance and strength as we make difficult decisions. With your guidance, solutions will be found and compromise can be achieved. Let our combined wisdom, our independent imagination, and our abundant compassion lead us to find opportunities in the obstacles we face and the solutions for the challenges ahead. Amen.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Williams. Senator Gragert, you're recognized for the Pledge of Allegiance.

GRAGERT: Please join me. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

HILGERS: Thank you, Senator Gragert. I call to order the second day of the One Hundred Seventh Legislature, First Session. Senators, we'll need you to record your presence. As you know, most of our electronic systems are down, so we're going to do this old school this morning. Please come up or raise your hand to the Clerk's desk up here and we will record you. If you think that you have not been recorded, please make-- just come up to the front and let them know. Thank you.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have a quorum present.

WILLIAMS: Mr. Clerk, do you have any corrections to the Journal?

CLERK: I have no corrections.

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WILLIAMS: Do you have any messages, reports or announcements?

CLERK: Mr. President, I have neither messages, reports or announcements at this time.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Speaker Hilgers, you are recognized.

HILGERS: Thank you, Mr. President. Good morning, colleagues. As promised yesterday, I wanted to give you a little bit of a scheduling update. And as a reminder, I appreciate in advance your-- you know, your recognition of the difficult nature of this Special Session and having some nimbleness and flexibility as we proceed. So I'm going to start big picture and then zoom down to this week. So big picture, as a reminder, we are currently scheduled to be done with this Special Session at the end of next week. And I want to make clear that means, really we need to be done with General File at the beginning the first half of next week in order to make that deadline, because you have to take into account your layover day, you have Final Reading, you have layover day, you have Select File and then you have General File. So if you look at the deadline as you work backwards, really General File should be complete in order to make that deadline by the first half of next week. So I think that's really important for everyone to keep in mind since we're not going to start debate until Friday. Secondly, on this-- I have had many people ask me about this Saturday. I'm going to speak with Senator Linehan and Senator Wayne by tomorrow to talk through. And I will tell you that yesterday it was announced the game time for the following Saturday and I want to make very clear that Nebraska football, while very important to us, to the extent it conflicts with our work, our work will take priority. I want to make very clear about that. That being said, if we can accommodate those and make sure that we have everyone here, I think that's most important. So next Saturday there's the game-- game time was in the evening at 6 o'clock. And as you recall, I asked to keep this-- this coming Saturday and the 25th available. So I'm going to speak with Senator Linehan and Senator Wayne, but I just want to preview so everyone knows it very well might be that we'll-- we will be in session next Saturday all day versus this coming Saturday. Just try to give you as much advance notice as possible. As for this week, tomorrow, one note on the agenda. We've been coming in at nine. I anticipate some variation. Be prepared for some variation on starting days to make sure we have enough time to get our debate in. Tomorrow morning we will be checking in at 8:45. The reason is, is because the Redistricting Committee's Lincoln hearing starts at 9 o'clock. So to enable the Redistricting-- Redistricting Committee to come in and check in and still make their hearing, we will be checking in tomorrow

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at 8:45. We will do no more tomorrow than we have today, which is we will check-in and have some short period for bill introduction. Thursday will be a check-in day. Friday will be a long day. We will have General File. I'm going to speak with Senator Linehan and Senator Wayne after the least-- the first hearing, the first couple of hearings to get a sense of what might come out Thursday from Exec. My-- what I anticipate, although we can't be sure until the hearing start, is that we will take on the maps that have fewer districts. So that would be something like the congressional map on Friday. But again, I need to confirm that with the Redistricting Committee before and the Chair and Vice Chair before we set anything. But just to prepare you, Friday, we will go-- we will start General File and you should all anticipate going late that night. Whether that means 10 p.m. or 6 p.m., we'll know by Thursday with what we actually will have in front of us that Friday. But we will-- we will go long and we have to accommodate the hearing for the Redistricting Committee to have one final hearing that Friday, which I think will be during-- over the lunch hour, depending on what other bills get introduced, that might be an hour and a half, it might be two hours, it might be one hour. So we'll be flexible with that day, but we will have to break to accommodate for the Redistricting Committee to have that final hearing. One last nonscheduling reminder and then-- and then one last point and then I'll wrap up. So I sent a memo on Friday regarding floor procedures and I hope everyone read that. If-- if you haven't had a chance yet, please go back and take a look. There's one thing I just want to emphasize, which is the application of the filibuster rule this year for this Special Session. The rule, 8-4-2, does not change. So that doesn't change for filibuster. What's unique about the Special Session, unlike a regular session, in a regular session the filibuster, if a motion for cloture is not successful, as you know, generally, the bill comes off the agenda because we have to accommodate all the other priority bills and the work for the year. That's how it had-- traditionally works. Because we're here to do redistricting, that doesn't-- that does not happen in the same way. And so the rule under Rule 7 explicitly says if a motion for cloture is not successful, then that-- that bill can be brought back on the next legislative day and then cloture is in order after two hours. So I put this in the memo. You can refer to the rule. You can talk to me off-line, but I want to make sure people understand if a motion for cloture is not successful, we're here to redistrict. Those bills will come back and the cloture doesn't go another eight hours, so-- on General File, for instance, if-- or four hours on Select File. So just-- I want to make sure that's-- that-- that I have emphasized that on the mike. I have put that in the memo last week. And the last thing, next-- next week in-- and this is in particular, I think, with

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the legislative maps, although it's true for all of them, but I think with the legislative maps, since there are so many districts, I think some of you are starting to recognize how difficult it is to draw those maps, especially if you're trying to just draw a little area in isolation, because everything has to link together. And we have to do-- we have to follow county lines. We have to do within our population deviation and everything else that's in the redistricting guidelines. And so if you're thinking about amending a map, there's something you don't like, there's something you want to change, I'm just going to highly encourage people to start now to work in LRO to figure out how to do a full map that can be-- that as part of an amendment, as part of the process, as we get into those, end of the floor debate on those-- those particular bills. It's very difficult to just do it in isolation and it's very difficult to do it just-- if you don't have the full map, to do it in an hour or two or three. For those hearty few who have actually gone down to draw your own maps, and I appreciate everyone who's done that, by the way, and I think everyone who has done that has now come to me and said, oh, I really-- I really am now-- I recognize and appreciate the work of the Redistricting Committee because it takes up to 20 hours to do some of these maps. I would just highly encourage you to take this time this week while we're not in floor debate to spend some time in LRO to work through those maps. I think that will make our process go a lot-- will go easier when we get to floor debate. So that's all I have for this week. Again, I appreciate your nimbleness and flexibility. I don't know if I'll do a daily update as we go, but I'll try to update everyone about the weekend by no later than Thursday and about what will become on Friday no later than Thursday. Thank you, Mr. President.

WILLIAMS: Thank you, Speaker Hilgers. Members, if anyone has a new bill to introduce, now would be the time to bring that up while we are still open. Once again, members, if anyone has a bill to introduce, if you would please bring it up now, we would appreciate it. Thank you. Mr. Clerk, for an announcement.

CLERK: Mr. President, the Education Committee will have an Executive Session following their hearing in Room 1525 today. Education, Exec Session, Room 1525. Mr. President, priority motion. Senator Friesen would move to adjourn the body until Wednesday, September 15, at 8:45 a.m., 8:45 a.m.

WILLIAMS: Members, you've heard the motion. The question is, shall the Legislature adjourn? All those in favor say aye. Opposed say nay. We are adjourned.