

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee March 19, 2024
Rough Draft

MURMAN: Well, welcome to the Education Committee. I'm Senator Dave Murman from Glenvil, represent 38 districts. I serve as Chair of the committee. The committee will hear from 3 gubernatorial appointments before the Education Committee today, in the order posted. We will begin with each gubernatorial appointment's statement or introduction, following by questions from the committee, then any appro-- proponents, opponents, and finally, neutral. I will now have the committee members with us today introduce themselves, starting at my right.

LINEHAN: Good afternoon. I'm Senator Lou Ann Linehan from District 39.

ALBRECHT: Hi. Joni Albrecht, District 17, northeast Nebraska.

WALZ: Good afternoon. I'm Lynne Walz, from Legislative District 15.

MURMAN: And let Senator Conrad introduce herself. She's just coming in.

CONRAD: Hi. I'm Danielle Conrad. I represent north Lincoln.

MURMAN: And to my right is Jack Duggar. And to my--.

LINEHAN: Jack Duggar. Jack Spray.

MURMAN: --far right-- or excuse me, Jack Spray. I was looking at Jon over there.

JOHN DUGGAR: We're both so pretty.

JACK SPRAY: We're excited, we're excited to be here.

CONRAD: Other Jack.

MURMAN: Jack Spray, and then to my far right is Shelley Schwarz, the committee clerk. And Senator Sanders just came in, so I'll let her introduce herself.

SANDERS: Good afternoon. Rita Sanders, District 45, which is the Bellevue/Offutt community.

MURMAN: OK. With that, we'll begin today's hearings with the gubernatorial, gubernatorial, gubernatorial-- it's a long word-- appointee, Dr. Le-- LeDonna Griffin. She's up for the position of

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Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, with a term through January 1 of 2030. Good afternoon.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Good afternoon.

MURMAN: Go ahead. Thank you.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Dr. LeDonna Griffin, educator of many years. LeDonna, L-e-d-o-n-n-a Griffin, G-r-i-f-f-i-n.

MURMAN: And LeDonna, could you tell us a little bit about yourself, and, and why you're running for the Coordinating Commission-- or why you've been appointed for the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Absolutely. So I bring a large-- great number-- years of experience in education. It is pre-K-12, which feeds right into postsecondary education. I look forward to being a part of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, to continue to push education and the importance of education forward in the state of Nebraska.

MURMAN: OK. Thank you. Do we have any questions for Dr. Griffin? Yes, Senator Conrad.

CONRAD: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Dr. Griffin. Nice to connect. I was just hoping and-- I hope I have my files right here, but if not help me. You're involved with maybe some consulting work now, is that right, through a group about-- I'm sorry. I don't have the exact title. Legends. Legends. Is that right?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Oh, Leaders to Legends.

CONRAD: Leaders to Legends. OK. Can you help me understand what that organization is and your role in it, and how that may interface with your work on the Postsecondary Coordinating Commission, if, if confirmed?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: I do not see any conflict of interest there.

CONRAD: OK.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Leaders to Legends, I am the founder of Leaders to Legends.

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CONRAD: OK.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: It is an alternative education--

CONRAD: OK.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: --economy, that I work with families who are seeking a private homeschool education.

CONRAD: OK.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Pre-K-12.

CONRAD: OK. OK. And that's very helpful. Thank you. And I, I know our committee has been digging into all aspects of education, whether that's homeschooling or private or parochial school or public school. So it sounds like maybe you have some experience in the public schools and then also in providing consulting or guidance to, to those involved in homeschooling now. Is that a fair assessment of-- I know that's a, a generalization on a lot of work over many year-- years.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Yes.

CONRAD: But is that-- OK. And then what kind of consulting does your organization provide to homeschool families? Is it curriculum-based? Is it regulatory? Is it leadership? Is it professional development? Can you just help us kind of understand that?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Absolutely. So it is a-- the model is you're working directly with parents--

CONRAD: OK.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: --who have opted to educate their children in the home setting. And so it is a plethora of resources that will be provided to the family.

CONRAD: OK.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: And sometimes just sitting down, just letting them know they're not alone--

CONRAD: Yeah.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: --and working directly with the families that educate their children.

CONRAD: Very good. And then, just in terms of the work of the Postsecondary Coordinating Commission, can you tell me about your vision or ideas for bringing that K-12 perspective, kind, kind of, to the lens of higher education, and, and making sure that we're the best that we can be when it, when it comes to, to higher ed in Nebraska, and kind of how that, that role might, might-- or that experience might fit this role.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Absolutely. So I look forward to-- as a commissioner and working in the postsecondary education. Naturally, K-12 does feed right into--

CONRAD: Of course.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: --so looking forward to all of the options that will be available through postsecondary education, as well.

CONRAD: OK. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MURMAN: Any other questions for Dr. Griffin? Senator Sanders, did you have a question?

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Murman. And thank you, Dr. Griffin, for stepping up to do this. I know it takes a lot of, a lot of your time. And you have just a breadth of knowledge, and background. Very impressive. What do you think, in a nutshell, will you be able to bring to this commission? You've probably already attended 1 or 2 meetings. And so you might have some idea of, of what that would mean to you.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: So I definitely look forward to-- taking into consideration the, the background knowledge that I am bringing with me-- as-- working as a commissioner. And working directly with postsecondary education and the needs that we see in the communities, and being able to push the work forward, at commission level, as well.

SANDERS: Thank you, again.

MURMAN: Any other questions? I have one. You are involved with homeschooling. Are you familiar with classical education?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: I am.

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MURMAN: I, I know, nationwide, there's consideration of using the-- or at least by some colleges of using the classical education test for college admission. Do you have any ideas on that or suggestions?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: I, I do not. In the homeschool world, again, it's led by parents. And so, parents make that decision. And currently, at this time, I do not work with anyone who is in the classical education curriculum.

MURMAN: OK. Thank you. Any other questions for Dr. Griffin?

WALZ: I just thought of--

MURMAN: Yes, Senator Walz.

WALZ: --just a real quick question. You have quite the resume? Very, very impressive.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Um-hum. Thank you.

WALZ: I was looking, you've done a lot of work at-- did you start at Omaha Public Schools as a teacher? I'm trying to go back to where I-- you started out as a teacher?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: That's correct.

WALZ: And I think it was like first, third, fifth. I can't remember.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Multiple grade levels, yes.

WALZ: Yeah. And then you went on to a principal-- assistant principal?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Assistant principal.

WALZ: OK. And then a principal?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: And then a principal.

WALZ: Can you just tell me about your career at Omaha Public Schools?

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Absolutely. So I started teaching right out of college. You know, all of my teaching has been in the urban setting. Started out as a classroom teacher, and then on to an assistant principal, and then my last 17 years as a principal.

WALZ: Wow.

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LeDONNA GRIFFIN: That was my career in Omaha Public Schools.

WALZ: And then you just decided to retire, and do something different? What was--

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Well, absolutely. So transitioned out after that, and community came to me and said-- and that-- COVID did it. You know, just said COVID did it.

WALZ: Oh, yeah.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: And just said, I no longer-- my child-- I need help with my child, you know, seeing some success with them. And that is how I began Leaders to Legends, and working directly with families in the community.

WALZ: Got it. Got it. You know, you have a very, very impressive resume. And thank you for all your work--

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Thank you.

WALZ: --experience.

MURMAN: Any other questions for Dr. Griffin? If not, thank you very much. And we will vote soon. And, hopefully move your nomination to the floor. And thank you for--

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Thank you.

MURMAN: --personal-- coming here, personally.

LeDONNA GRIFFIN: Absolutely. Thank you.

MURMAN: Next, we have Christy Hovanetz, and-- PhD. And she'll hopefully be here by teleconference. And she is-- been nominated for the Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee for statewide Assessment. Were you able to get her on, Shelley?

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: I texted her. Let me see if [INAUDIBLE].

MURMAN: OK.

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: Hey, Christy. We are in the hearing right now. And I wanted to give you the phone number to call. It's 402-471-3278.

JOHN DUGGAR: Yeah, she'll have to call back.

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SHELLEY SCHWARZ: I'll have her call back. Sorry. Hi, Christy. Can you try and call back? We somehow got cut off here. 3278, correct. That's correct. Thank you. OK. Bye bye. She's calling.

MURMAN: Hello, Christy?

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: Yes.

MURMAN: I am Senator Dave Murman, Chair of the Education Committee. Thank you for putting yourself out there via teleconference. We have most of the committee here-- available. And we are ready to hear your advocacy for yourself, to be reappointed to the Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: Thank you, Chair. Murman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and the committee this afternoon.

MURMAN: Well, thank you.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: My name is Christy Hovanetz. I appreciate you considering me for reappointment to the Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment. I'm excited to remain engaged with Nebraska on education issues, specifically the assessment and school accountability policies.

MURMAN: Excuse me, Christy. I should have asked you to spell your first and last name, first.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: Sure. Christy, C-h-r-I-s-t-y Hovanetz, H-o-v as in victor, a-n-e-t-z as in zebra.

MURMAN: Thank you.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: You're welcome. I believe every child deserves the opportunity to reach their potential. The K-12 education system plays a foundational role in ensuring that success. Over the last 25 years, I've worked to ensure K-12 education systems provide these opportunities to all students. My practical experience, coupled with formal university training, equips me with the qualifications to serve as a member of the Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee. During my career, I've had the pleasure of learning and leading with the nation's most intelligent and skilled policymakers, researchers, and educators, to advance education. Since 2009, I've worked as a senior policy fellow at ExcelinEd, assisting states across the country in the development of cutting edge education policies in critical areas such

student assessment, school and teacher accountability, school intervention, reading and math policies, and large-scale education research, evaluation and data collection. Past leadership positions I've held include serving as an assistant commissioner at the Minnesota Department of Education, leading the research and assessment office responsible for the state K-12 assessment program. And I also served as a deputy commissioner in, in the State of Florida at the Department of Education, leading the accountability, research and measurement office. I have worked with the federal government as a national expert and a peer reviewer. I am a traditionally trained teacher, graduating summa cum laude from St. Cloud State University, with a bachelors in education and a minor in mathematics, and still maintain my teaching certificate in the state of Minnesota. I have a master's of public administration from the University of Minnesota, and a doctorate of philosophy in public administration and policy from Florida State University. Serving as a member of the national technical-- or the Nebraska Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment has been an honor, a challenge, and a responsibility that I take very seriously. So thank you, again, for considering my application for reappointment.

MURMAN: Well, thank you very much. You have quite an impressive resume. I was able to attend the ExcelinEd conference, I think it was back in November, in Atlanta. And was very impressed by ExcelinEd's advocacy for students and for-- especially for different methods of education, I guess, different pathways for K-12 students. Could you maybe expand on that a little bit or if you-- I don't know if you're familiar with that conference, but what ExcelinEd does.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: Yes. I've had the pleasure of working for ExcelinEd for just over 15 years now, and am part of the planning committee that puts on and determines the content for the event. So at the summit, we try and feature or highlight a lot of our key policies that are getting national attention, through early literacy and math policy innovation. Started to delve into some social media policy and, and opportunities, a lot of policy on accountability and assessments, particularly screening assessments for instructional purposes, as well as accountability for schools. Looking a lot at college and career pathways and really defining what it means to be successful in secondary education, to equip kids for life after high school in the postsecondary arena, whether it is attending a university or entering the workforce. So the content and programming really spans all of our main education policies at ExcelinEd. We are a nonprofit education organization, entirely funded-- funded entirely by private entities

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and foundations, and philanthropies, and do work in just about all 50 states across the country.

MURMAN: Well, thank you, Dr. Hovan-- Hovanetz, Hovanetz. Dr. Chris-- Christy.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: That works, or just Christy.

MURMAN: Do we have, do we have any other questions for you from the committee? Yes, Senator Sanders.

SANDERS: Thank you, Senator Murman. Thank you, Senate-- Dr. Hovanetz, for your worldwide knowledge that you bring to this commission. Greatly appreciate that. I just have one quick question. Your address is in Minnesota, I believe. Is that a conflict, at any time, from out of state?

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: A conflict for--

SANDERS: Of getting or meetings or being able to jump on Zoom? Thank God for Zoom.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: It, it has not been a conflict. No.

SANDERS: Terrific. Thank you so much, again.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: My pleasure.

MURMAN: Any other questions? Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: Thank you very much for being with us. I appreciate you calling in. I think this position is supposed to be somebody from out-of-state, right? It's supposed to be a non-Nebraskan.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: There is, a number of different requirements for membership on the committee, including local representation, as well as national experts.

LINEHAN: That's what I thought. OK. So you represent the national expert?

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: Correct.

LINEHAN: Thank you.

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MURMAN: Thank you. Any other questions? If not, thank you for being here via teleconference. We appreciate it. And we'll take a vote soon, and hopefully move your nomination to the floor and keep you on the committee until July 18, 2026.

CHRISTY HOVANETZ: Thank you very much, Chair Murman. I appreciate your time.

MURMAN: And with that, we'll move on to the third nomination. And that is Timothy Daniels for the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. And his term is through January 1, 2030.

TIMOTHY DANIELS: Good afternoon.

WALZ: Good afternoon.

MURMAN: Afternoon.

TIMOTHY DANIELS: My name is Timothy Daniels. That's T-i-m-o-t-h-y Daniels, D-a-n-i-e-l-s. And I'm looking for confirmation for the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. I was first appointed to the commission by Governor Ricketts the summer of 2019. And I do serve at-large. At present, I am vice chair. I am a resident of Omaha, having moved here from Gering about 7 years ago. I am retired from the telephony, Internet, and broadcasting industries. Prior to my move to Omaha, I had served just about 14 years as a member of the Western Nebraska Community College Area Board of Governors. So I've had a little bit of experience in higher education.

MURMAN: Thank you. Any questions for Mr. Daniels?

WALZ: I just have--

MURMAN: Senator Walz.

WALZ: I just have a quick question. Did you say you have some background in broadcasting?

TIMOTHY DANIELS: Yes.

WALZ: What, what did you do?

TIMOTHY DANIELS: Well, I started in broadcasting at the ripe old age of 16. And throughout my various careers, was in production staff, in

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sales staff, management, also doing on-air broadcasting in news and weather, both in Scottsbluff and also in Kearney.

WALZ: Nice. OK. My husband is a broadcaster in Fremont, so that's why I was kind of curious.

TIMOTHY DANIELS: We are a great breed.

WALZ: You are. Yes, you are. Thank you so much.

MURMAN: Any other questions for Mr. Daniels?

CONRAD: Either way. Go a-- I can wait.

SANDERS: No, go.

CONRAD: OK. OK.

MURMAN: Senator Conrad.

CONRAD: We're all so Nebraska nice, we're [INAUDIBLE]. Thank you, Chair. Thanks, Mr. Daniels, for being here. I just wanted to ask you if you could provide-- could you tell me about the organization or the institution of higher education that you mentioned right at the tail end of your introductory comments? Was it Western Governors?

TIMOTHY DANIELS: It was the Board of Governors of--

CONRAD: Board of Gov--

TIMOTHY DANIELS: --Western Nebraska Community College.

CONRAD: I got it. OK. That makes total sense. Yes, I'm very familiar with their good work. Thank you so much.

MURMAN: Yeah. Any other questions for Mr. Daniels? Could you tell us a little bit about what your-- look at-- what you look at as being the most important thing going forward, that the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education will be doing?

TIMOTHY DANIELS: We have so many things that are equally important. Obviously, the role of the commission, in my estimation, has been to serve Nebraska taxpayers by partnering with the Legislature to help develop results-driven higher education policy, ensuring that tax dollars are efficiently used in construction projects, ongoing budget requests, approving or disapproving academic programs that are based

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on need, demand, unnecessary duplication, use of resources, and cost. So I think that working for the state of Nebraska taxpayer is probably-- in higher education, to make sure that it is more-- as most efficient as possible is the number 1 role.

MURMAN: OK. Thank you. Any other questions for Mr. Headrick [SIC]? If not, we'll take a vote soon and hopefully move your nomination to the floor. Thank you very much for being here.

TIMOTHY DANIELS: Thank you for your time.

CONRAD: Thank you.

MURMAN: And then, we'll move on to Dorothy Anderson. And she is--

CONRAD: Oh, wait. Did you want to testify?

MURMAN: Oh. We should have, should have asked for proponents.

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: Dennis Headrick.

MURMAN: Pardon?

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: Dennis Headrick. Doctor.

MURMAN: Oh, OK. Didn't mean to skip you, Dennis. We'll move on to Dennis Headrick, Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. And his term will run, I think, also through January 1, 2030.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Name is Dennis Headrick, D-e-n-n-i-s H-e-a-d-r-i-c-k. Thank you for my opportunity to visit with you a little bit about myself. I know you probably have my resume, but to just kind of hit it quickly. I'm an old Nebraska boy, grew up in a little town of Shickley, Nebraska, south central Nebraska. And ironically, went to a junior college when we had one in Fairbury. And in that second year, you switched over to a community college. So I ended up with a degree from Southeast Community College. From there, I went to Kearney when it was still a state college, and got my bachelor's degree there. And teaching in business, had the opportunity to teach for several years in central Nebraska. But of course, the family was coming along and wanted to move back closer to home, so we moved to a little town of Plymouth, which is in southeast Nebraska, my wife's hometown and Senator Brandt's hometown. And as you can see, went to work for the state of Nebraska, in different positions there. And after 10 years, which, ironically, when they interviewed me, they said, well, how long

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will you be here? And I'm like, 10 years. And when I left, it was 10 years and 2 weeks. Anyway, I got hired by Southeast Community College as the assistant campus director. After 4 years, moved into the campus director position. Several years later, got academic affairs added to that. And in 2009, we moved to Lincoln, and was in the area office until my retirement in 2020-- or 2020. So, that's a little bit about me.

LINEHAN: Well, thank you, Dr. Headrick. Do we have any questions for Dr. Headrick? Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: Thank you, Chair Murman. I don't really have a question, but I grew up very close to Beatrice, and I have a brother who works at Southeast Community College. And I just want to thank you for all you did for that community while you were there, and for your continued service. Appreciate it very much.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Thank you.

MURMAN: Any other questions? If not, I want to thank you. And Shickley is not far from where I live, either. And I know a lot of people from there.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Where is that?

MURMAN: Shickley is not very far from where I live.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Yeah, but where do you live?

MURMAN: Glenvil.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Oh, absolutely.

MURMAN: Sandy Creek School District. It's right next door.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Yeah.

MURMAN: But thank you for being here, and we'll vote soon on your appointment.

DENNIS HEADRICK: Thank you.

MURMAN: Thank you very much. And next, we will have Dorothy Anderson, Dorothy C. Anderson. She is the candidate for the position, position of Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission.

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SHELLEY SCHWARZ: And we're a little ahead. Do you want to do--

MURMAN: Skip.

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: --Mr. Probyn [INAUDIBLE]?

MURMAN: Yeah. We can.

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: Let me give him a call.

MURMAN: OK.

LINEHAN: What? OK.

MURMAN: Maybe we can get her-- Dorothy's not here.

LINEHAN: She's not here yet. She's coming though, right?

MURMAN: Must not be-- I guess.

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: I think she was scheduled at about-- maybe 1:30ish.

SANDERS: Looking for parking. 1:30?

ALBRECHT: 1:30. Is that right? It's 1:00. They changed it.

LINEHAN: OK. But someone should call her and tell her.

ALBRECHT: They changed the clock.

SANDERS: She's up next.

ALBRECHT: Oh, boy.

SHELLEY SCHWARZ: Yes, I was calling for Mr. Probyn. This is Shelley Schwarz. Doing good, doing good. Do you want to call into the, the number in the hearing room? That is correct. That sounds good. Hold one moment. Thank you.

MURMAN: Hello, Dwayne?

DWAYNE PROBYN: Hi. Dwayne Probyn here. How are you? Who is this?

MURMAN: This is Senator Murman. I'm Chair of the Education Committee here, here in Nebraska. We have most of the committee here, and we are looking forward to your-- to promote yourself for appointment to the Board of Educational Lands and Funds.

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DWAYNE PROBYN: Thank, thank you very much for calling. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about what I consider to be a very important part of the program with the K-12 organization. I'll start off by telling you who I am. The last name is spelled P-r-o-b-y-n. And the first name is spelled--

MURMAN: And could you spell your first name, too, please? Thank you.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Yes, sir. I [INAUDIBLE]. It's D-w-a-y-n-e.

MURMAN: Thank you.

DWAYNE PROBYN: And I will then go on and, and say that this is my second appointment. The first appointment that I had was with Governor Pete Ricketts, and that was from January 28, 2019, to October 1, 2023. And the term I have upcoming, that you're being involved with is with Governor Pillen. And that is from October of 2023 through October of 2028.

MURMAN: Well. Thank you. We did have another appointment about a week ago to the Board of Educational Lands and Funds. And we, we should apologize to him for-- a little bit. We put him kind of on the spot, asking him to talk more about the board, and the way they-- the board handles the sale and the management of-- sale and buying of lands, I guess, and the management of the lands and funds. Could you, just expand on that a little bit for us?

DWAYNE PROBYN: Yeah. So I'd be happy to. The board consists of 5 folks. There's the Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. I'm representing District 2. And then there is another district that is an at-large position and that is appointed by the Governor. And that is Jon. That's who you spoke with last week.

MURMAN: Yes.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Of the 5, I am serving my second year as the vice chair. And if you'll permit me to get into some of the, the details, I'll try to answer your questions.

MURMAN: That would be good.

DWAYNE PROBYN: And if I don't have them, I will make sure that they are then referred to the appropriate people, so that we can get them answered to your satisfaction.

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MURMAN: Thank you.

DWAYNE PROBYN: So, shall I, shall I go ahead?

MURMAN: Yes, please.

DWAYNE PROBYN: OK. The primary duty of the board is to manage the approximately \$2.54 million acres of land now held in trust for Nebraska's K-12 public schools. And in fulfilling this duty, the board serves as both land owner and land manager. And in its capacity as land owner, the board expends funds for maintenance, conservation, and improvement of the land under its care. A substantial portion of the budget each year is dedicated to these purposes. In its capacity as the land manager, the board issues and services both surface leases, primarily for agriculture use, and subsurface leases, permitting exploration for and extraction of oil and gas, minerals, and other natural resources. The board currently manages and collects rent on approximately 3,130 leases. Sales and [INAUDIBLE] of the school trust land are discretionary with the board.

MURMAN: Well, thank you. That is a great description [INAUDIBLE]. Go ahead, if you have more to add.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Yeah, I do. The board and its staff are firmly committed to their fiduciary duty of maximizing the income and preserving the assets of the school trust for the benefit of Nebraska and its citizens. In preserving those, every effort is made to manage and conduct the board's business operations on the profit motive, patterned as closely as possible on business operations conducted by the most efficient enterprise in the private sector. The board and his staff believe this business-like approach will make possible the continued success in the pursuit of the trust objectives. I could, I could, now go into the disbursement if that is the next question that you might have.

MURMAN: The-- excuse me. What? I didn't hear what you said. The, the what?

LINEHAN: Disbursement.

DWAYNE PROBYN: I said I could now go into the disbursements of the trust revenues.

MURMAN: Yes.

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DWAYNE PROBYN: I have the up-to-date, during 2023, if you would like me to go into that for you.

MURMAN: Yes. That would be great.

DWAYNE PROBYN: OK. [INAUDIBLE]-- as you know, we have 93 counties, and the K-12 per, per, per pupil apportionment is \$59,688,237.31. The real estate that includes that. Was one of the subjects that came up with Jon, and they also came up with me during my last appointment was the real estate tax payment for that same period, and those landowners of the 93 county. And that currently is \$11,803,407.08, which makes the total disbursements \$71,491,712.39.

MURMAN: OK. Thank you.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Now, you might-- it, it might also be of interest to you-- I, I don't feel, feel like-- you know, I, I don't want to rush you through this. And so, if you, if you would like to stop me at any time, I have a great deal of information here that I will-- in trying to make sure that I share it appropriately with you. We have the 9-- the number of board members is 5, and we've already discussed those. We have a professional staff of 8 people. And we have a staff of field people that is a total of 11. So you can see we have a very streamlined and highly professional organization at BELF that is responsible for a great deal of money and a great deal of opportunities to serve our K-12 students. So that's at 24 total people.

MURMAN: Well, thank you.

DWAYNE PROBYN: [INAUDIBLE] write it down. I am averaging \$160 per pupil. And that is a per pupil disbursement.

MURMAN: Thank you. That was a very good description of the board and what you do and, and how you manage the land. With that, I think we'll see if we have any questions from the board. And by the way, I would like to have a, a briefing from the Bureau of Lands and Trusts sometime in the near future. But, just for now, and I'll see if any of the board members have any questions-- committee members. Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: Thank you very much for calling in today, and willing to do this work. What, what were the liquid-- so you've got the agricultural lands, but you also have liquid assets that you invest with the Nebraska Investment Council, right, or they invest it for you.

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DWAYNE PROBYN: That is correct. Everything is run through them as their fidu-- in their fiduciary control.

LINEHAN: And do you remember-- I think I remember what Mr. Abegglen said, but how much, how much liquid assets that the trust holds?

DWAYNE PROBYN: I do not have that information-- if Jon gave it to you. I will have to get back with you and get a specific number. I do not have that available.

LINEHAN: So just a heads up. I think the question is-- I mean, yes, \$59 million is wonderful for K-12 schools across Nebraska-- or almost \$60 million. But when you look at what you've got, real estate, farms, and how much you-- I think we're trying to figure out if it's-- if your total assets are generating-- how much money they're generating. I think that's the real question is why-- I mean, he used-- I don't want to get Jon in trouble. And he told us several times-- not in trouble, but he told several times he was new, so we were probably pushing too hard. But like the Chairman said, I think the sooner you guys brief some people, the better off it will be.

DWAYNE PROBYN: OK. So noted. We will make sure you get that answer.

MURMAN: Thank you. Any other questions for-- let's see who are we talking-- for Mr. Probyn? Well, if not, thank you very much for your service. And thank you for the great description of what you do. And appreciate you being available by teleconference today.

DWAYNE PROBYN: You're very welcome. And I enjoyed it. And please feel free to get back with any of us if you have any questions. Shelley and I have talked about getting together. Shelley said that [INAUDIBLE] our CEO and executive secretary has kind of asked me to spearhead an opportunity to talk with you, personally. And if you have any other questions, I know all of our board members and all of our members in total would be happy to explain the further-- problems that we might face, if we don't come across with the answers that you're looking for. I would also recommend a, a contact through belf.nebraska.gov. If you would like to consult that point, be happy to see that come across. Also, just on a, a lighter note, today is Agricultural Day, along with the first-- of spring. And we're looking forward to a little nicer weather and some rainfall. We need it bad.

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MURMAN: Well, thank you. Yeah, I agree. I'm a farmer myself, so I know what you're talking about. And thank you for your service, again. And we'll move your nomination to the floor soon.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Thank you very much for your opportunities. And let us know how we can further help.

MURMAN: Thank you.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Thank you.

MURMAN: Yep.

DWAYNE PROBYN: Bye bye.

MURMAN: Bye. And with that, we'll move on to the nomination of Dorothy C. Anderson to the position, Nebraska Education and Telecommunications Commission. And her term will run January 23 through January 12 of 2027. Welcome, Dorothy.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: Thank you. Good afternoon to all of you.

CONRAD: Good afternoon.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: You want me to-- last time, I know I had to spell my name out. Do you--

CONRAD: Yes.

MURMAN: Yes, please.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: D-o-r-o-t-h-y, middle initial is C, and the last name is Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. And I'm here for appointment, as you mentioned, to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission. I served the last 2 years of another person's term, so I'm second round up here. By way of introduction, I was born and reared in West Point, Nebraska. Came to the University. Graduated from the University. Went to Germany for a couple of years, lived there for several years as an army wife, and came back. I was a librarian at Love Library. And then I was home with my children for 17 years, during which I was very active in the community statewide. I watched a lot of educational television with you folks because I was very involved in government and campaigns. And, and my children, of course, grew up with Sesame Street, and my grandchildren grew up with Sesame Street. And I've just always been a real addict for public television.

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During those years, I, I did-- I was active in a lot of organizations, community-wide organizations, everything from PTAs to Junior League to the Lincoln Citizens Police Advisory Board, which I was on for 16 years. I seemed to always end up as president or chairman or in a leadership role for almost everything I was involved in. I did get appointed to-- well, let's see. During that time-- yeah, I had gubernatorial appointments to the Commission on the Status of Women and Nebraska Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission for the First District. And then I did go to work as a deputy election commissioner for Lancaster County. And I was there until I left to go to work full-time for Congressman Doug Bereuter. And then I was there until I left to go to work full-time for Senator Chuck Hagel. And I was the-- I managed the Lincoln office, and I was the director of the constituent services division there. I had 12 people and 4 offices across the state, and managed, trained, supervised them. We were the ones that solved people's problems, and enjoyed it very much. My background in research was very helpful there. And so then, I-- after, after retiring-- let's see if I can remember to tell you everything. Yeah, after retiring-- of course, I'm one of those people that absolutely loves learning. And so, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, I-- some of you are familiar with that. It's known as OLLI, but it's operated through the University of Nebraska. And its mission is to provide continuing education to people who no longer-- you don't particularly want to get a degree. You just want to learn for the love of learning. And so, yes, I was, you know, an officer on that board, and served on that board for a long time. And I also facilitated a lot of courses for that. One of the ones was, we called it State Government Day, and it was really-- people just swarmed to it. We had all the constitutional officers speak for 20 minutes, and people could ask questions and-- of the-- everything, the Governor, all the way down. We ended up-- we also went to the Supreme Court. Mike Heavican had us in there and talked about that. We did lunch at the Governor's mansion. We came back. Bob Ripley took us through. So, I mean, it was a very popular course during the years that that was offered. But I've offered-- I facilitated a lot-- a huge range of those courses. I guess-- let's see. What else would I want to talk to you about? I have, of course, read all the bylaws and statutes and, and all of the information about the Communications Commission. I'm fully aware that the commission has 19 specific powers and duties that is involved-- that they're involved in. They operate 4-- we operate 4 channels on the television network, the Nebraska Public Media main channel. We have another one called World, another one called Create, and another one called FNX, and that stands for First Nations. And that's the one

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with the Native American programming. But I guess I'd like to point out that under World, we do a lot of-- bringing in a lot of international information. For instance, when you folks aren't on, on channel 19, from 4-6, Monday through Friday, you can access France 20-- 24, Deutsche Welle, which is the German one, NHK, which is-- comes from Asia, and BBC World. And so those are all 1/2-hour programs that are produced in their countries in English, [INAUDIBLE] come to us. And then on evenings, from 10:30-11, you get BBC World, again. So we do have a, a terrific international presence, also. Our mission mainly, of course, is is educ-- well actually, we have 3 focuses. When the University of Nebraska first got its license in 1951, that whole situation was known as the Public Broadcasting Service. And its mission, frankly, was nothing but early warning alert system. And that's who-- NOAA, the National Oceanograph-- Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Defense. Because we're talking 1951. It was still duck and cover nuclear. And so, the network was set up so that the local licensee would be aware of all of the local stations, and then they would feed the information into the Public Broadcasting Service, and they would head out. And actually, that still works that way. They've added Amber Alert and Silver Alert to that, too, but it still functions that way. So that's number 1. Number 2, of course, is education. Education for adults, education for children. And I don't-- you know, what can you say about the adult stuff? There's just a huge array, whether it's history, science, travel, concerts, ballet, you name it. The whole cultural theatrical range is there. And when we talk about the children's programming, that's what gets really interesting. Because as I said, I'm sure-- my children grew up with Sesame Street-- grandchildren. And I'm sure many of you have family members, too, that depended on that. But what we call Kids PBS is very important, because 52% of the children-- preschool children in the United States, have no access to preschool education, either by virtue of where they live or because they cannot financially afford it, or get to it by-- didn't have trans-- don't have transportation. I spent the last week of February in Washington, D.C., attending the annual Public Television Stations Conference. And there were 5 of us that came from Nebraska-- 3 are staff members, I represented the commission, and then we had a young woman from the Sandhills, who was there on behalf of the Nebraska Public Media Foundation. And she had a really interesting story to tell, because she grew up on a ranch out there in the Sandhills. She graduated from Rushville High School, went to Creighton, spent a semester abroad in Estonia, came back, finished at Creighton. And after graduation, she went to Boston, and she worked there for 5 years. And during that time

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period, she married, had a family. And when she had a baby and 2 preschoolers, decided nope, didn't want to raise them out there. So they came-- she came back to the ranch. And as she said, I would have been part of the brain drain had it not been for educational television. Because when we came back to the ranch, there was no way I was going to be driving my children 45 miles each way, twice a day, to take them to preschool in Rushville. But she said, living out on the ranch, my children were able to grow up with all of that same education-based-- research-based education that the children in the cities and other towns could, because she could access Nebraska Educational Television.

MURMAN: Well, thank you, Dorothy.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: Yeah.

MURMAN: Appreciate it. Appreciate your thorough description of what, what you're doing and what you've done, and, and NET. With that, should we-- see if we have any questions from the committee.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: Yeah, because you didn't even let me get to civic leadership and the community building. Civic leadership is you guys, and all those forums that we do. And community building is all [INAUDIBLE].

LINEHAN: We're convinced.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: We would not have a volleyball state if it had not been--

CONRAD: Yes, that's right.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: --for NET and Terry Pettit doing that. But all those high school broadcast-- all those high school championships, speech and debate, all of that, that's all part of the community building. And it's very important to our people.

CONRAD: Yeah.

MURMAN: Thank you. Any questions for Ms. Anderson?

LINEHAN: Are we-- there's no press here, right? Which [INAUDIBLE].

CONRAD: But, but we're still on the mic.

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LINEHAN: Oh.

MURMAN: Yeah.

LINEHAN: You came very prepared. It's very impressive.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: You didn't even let me get to all of the good stuff that we do.

LINEHAN: This is bringing back memories, Dorothy.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: I know. The 1-page memo. But I wanted to tell you about our wonderful programs that are seen all over the world.

CONRAD: Yes.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: OK, guys.

CONRAD: Your reputation precedes you.

MURMAN: I really appreciate NET.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: I, I ask for your respectful consideration of my application.

LINEHAN: You got it.

MURMAN: Yeah. Thank you very much.

SANDERS: Thank you.

CONRAD: So good to see you.

SANDERS: Thank you, Dorothy.

CONRAD: Thank you.

DOROTHY C. ANDERSON: You're welcome. Thank you.

MURMAN: Thank you. And thanks for being here. With that, we will close the hearing on gubernatorial nominations, and have a discussion.