

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Executive Board March 24, 2023

BRIESE: Let's go ahead and call a meeting to order. Get going here.

SLAMA: So moved.

BOSTAR: Second.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: OK. Technically, we're not in exec session.

BOSTAR: Oh, nevermind. All right.

GEIST: Well, we were all ready.

BRIESE: Thank you. Thank, thank you, anyway.

RIEPE: Second.

VARGAS: Hang on a second.

BRIESE: So what's the deal with administrative leave over Easter?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: We need to do names for the recording.

BRIESE: Oh.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Sorry. Sorry.

BRIESE: That's OK. Go ahead.

BOSTAR: Eliot Bostar, District 29.

GEIST: Suzanne Geist, District 25.

LOWE: John Lowe. District 37.

VARGAS: Senator-- sorry. Tony Vargas, District 7.

RIEPE: Merv Riepe, District 12.

BRIESE: Go ahead, Trevor.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Trevor Fitzgerald, committee legal counsel. You never introduced yourself.

BRIESE: Welcome, everyone. I'm Tom Briese, Chair of the Executive Board. Welcome to our meeting today. First thing on the agenda, discussion of Easter administrative leave. Where are we at on that, Trevor?

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TREVOR FITZGERALD: So for those who haven't been on the Executive Board before, traditionally, the Executive Board will grant administrative leave, to legislative employees, the two recess days that surround the Easter holiday. So that would be Friday-- I apologize. I didn't write down the dates. It's the Friday before Easter and the Monday before Easter.

GEIST: Seventh?

RIEPE: April's the 9th.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Yeah. It's the 7th through the 10th. So-- and I did include, in your materials, just a brief spreadsheet outlining the history of that. We've-- the Legislature has typically done some form of administrative leaves every year since 1977, with a few-- with the exception of 2020, when we didn't have administrative leave, due to COVID.

BRIESE: That's almost consistently two days, correct?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Correct.

BRIESE: OK. So what do we need here?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: The-- if the board would like to do that again, there would just need to be a motion made and, and adopted, to grant administrative leave those two days.

BOSTAR: I would move to grant administrative leave for those two days.

GEIST: I will second.

BRIESE: We have a motion and a second, Senator Bostar, Senator Geist. Any other discussion? Seeing none, let's do a roll call.

SALLY SCHULTZ: I'm going to start with Senator Bostar.

BOSTAR: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Briese.

BRIESE: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Geist.

GEIST: Yes.

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SALLY SCHULTZ: Lowe.

LOWE: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Riepe.

RIEPE: Yes.

SALLY SCHULTZ: Vargas.

VARGAS: Yes.

BRIESE: Let's leave it open for the others then. And the second item is update on the NCSL pay study discussions. Where are we at on that?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Right. So just wanted to, since we were meeting, wanted to go ahead and brief the committee and give them an update on how things have been going. I think members will remember that Senator Briese sent a letter to NCSL, basically expressing our interest in having a pay study conducted. That letter was sent out on February 24. I met, via Zoom, with the director of NCSL's Center for Legislative Strengthening, which typically coordinates these kind of studies for, for, for our states, on March 9. NCSL staff is working on getting a proposal to the Executive Board for a potential study. They're hoping to start working on that next week. So the hope is within, maybe, two weeks, we will have an actual proposal to look at and consider, as well as, then, an idea of kind of what the numbers look like, so we can get some information to the Appropriations Committee. Generally, from NCSL's perspective, the, the costs that are involved in that kind of a study, kind of come in three buckets: staff time, which is largely dependent on kind of the scope of what we are looking at having studied; travel, if there's any onsite site visits-- in 2000, obviously, they did, they did predominantly onsite site visits. There's a possibility for less travel costs because we've got the opportunity to use Zoom and other technologies; then, of course, overhead. Typically those costs are split between the states and NCSL. So for example, in 2000, the, the cost was roughly \$60,000. That was Nebraska-- the state's share of the cost, that was the Legislature's share of the cost and then, NCSL had a, a comparable number. It does sound like, based on the conversations I've had with NCSL, that the scope we are looking at this year is slightly smaller than the scope we looked at in 2000. So, of course, inflation over 20 years will have an impact, as well. So that's the information I have for the board. But we just want to keep you briefed on that and then as more information becomes available, we'll make it available.

BRIESE: Senator Bostar.

BOSTAR: Thank you, Chair Briese. I think it would be-- I mean, I'm sure they'll do a comprehensive job. Just one thing I want to note for the study-- would be valuable is as we examine what other states, where they're at right now, it'd be good to know if the other states that are being examined are also in a position where we are now, where they're feeling like they're behind the curve and they also need to catch up. Because, you know, if we were essentially pulled for someone else's study what our numbers are right now, wouldn't be helpful to them, for understanding where the numbers should be. And especially with the inflation we've had going on, we just-- I just want to make sure that as we look around, that we're not just asking folks who also feel the way we do, where we're like, OK, we're not in a good place. What's the right place? And we're using that information to make our own decisions.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: Sure. To, to your point, Senator Bostar, I think when the, the 2000 study was done, that most of the comparisons were done with other jobs within the area, within you know, the Omaha-Lincoln job markets. So I, I would presume that would be the case in this instance as well. Typically, other states legislative positions were looked at, from a comparison standpoint, when there was no comparable position in the private market--

BOSTAR: Sure.

TREVOR FITZGERALD: --or elsewhere in government to compare to. In 2000.

BRIESE: Why is the scope of this study somewhat smaller than the previous one?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: The 2000 study took a, a look at a number of, kind of, alternative concepts, issues like merit pay and, and that, that involved a lot more research on NCSL's part [INAUDIBLE] time.

BRIESE: But at this point, we don't have any very good indication as far as cost or as far as timing. Correct?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: No. We do not.

BRIESE: OK. I think timing is very important, but-- be at their mercy, likely. Senator Vargas.

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VARGAS: The question-- I know you mentioned that we're trying to get some numbers so that we can adjust for corporations and budgeting process. What's the timeline for that again?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: The hope is that they will have a proposal to it. They're starting work on the proposal next week. The hope is that by the week after, they would have a proposal for us to actually look at.

VARGAS: Do you remember what this cost, back in 2000?

TREVOR FITZGERALD: In 2000, the Legislature's share of the cost was just under \$60,000.

VARGAS: Oh. OK.

BRIESE: Anything else?

BOSTAR: Can you swing it?

VARGAS: I mean, I will speak to my committee.

BRIESE: OK. No other discussion? Anything else? I think, with that, the meeting is adjourned.

BOSTAR: Thank you.

BRIESE: Thank you, everyone.

RIEPE: Thank you.

Like you and Julie, we voted to.