

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Agriculture Committee March 11, 2025

DeKAY: We will now start the hearing in the Ag Committee. And with that, welcome to the Agriculture Committee. I'm Senator Barry DeKay of Niobrara, Nebraska. I represent the 40th Legislative district, and I serve as chair of this committee. The committee will take up the bills and confirmations in the order posted on the agenda at the door. Our hearing today is your public part of the legislative process; this is your opportunity to explain your position on proposed legislation before us today, to offer insights and information for our consideration. The committee members might come and go during this hearing; this is just part of the process, as members can have bills to introduce in other committees. I have asked that you abide by the following procedures to better facilitate today's proceedings. Please silence or turn off your cell phones. Introducers will make initial statements, followed by proponents, opponents, and neutral testimony. Closing remarks are reserved for the introducing senator only. If you're planning to testify, please fill out a green sign-in sheet that is at the table at the back of the room before you come up to testify. Please print, and it is important to complete the form in its entirety. When it is your turn to testify, hand the sign-in sheet to a page or committee clerk. This will help us make a more accurate public record. If you do not wish to testify today, but would like to indicate your position on a bill, there is a yellow sign-in sheet at the back of the room; these sheets will be included in the hearing record. If you have a written statement or other handouts, please have 12 copies and hand them to the page when you come up to testify, and they will distribute those to the committee. If you do not have enough copies, the page will make sufficient copies for you. Please speak clearly into the microphone. Tell us your name, and please spell your first and last name to ensure that we get an accurate record. We will be using the light system for all testifiers. You will have three minutes to make initial remarks to the committee. When you begin, the green light will be on. When you see the yellow light, that means you have one minute remaining, and a red light indicates your time has ended and you should conclude your remarks. Questions from the committee that follow will provide an opportunity to further explain your position. No displays of support or opposition to a bill, vocal or otherwise, are allowed at the public hearing; offenders may be asked to leave. The committee members with us today will introduce themselves, starting to my far left.

McKEON: Senator Dan McKeon, District 41; eight counties in central Nebraska.

HOLDCROFT: Rick Holdcroft, District 36; west and south Sarpy County.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Agriculture Committee March 11, 2025

RAYBOULD: Jane Raybould, Legislative District 28, which is the center of Lincoln.

IBACH: Teresa Ibach, District 44; eight counties in southwest Nebraska.

KAUTH: Kath--

DeKAY: And, and Senator Ibach is our vice chair of this committee. And now--

KAUTH: Kathleen Kauth, LD31, Millard.

STORM: Good afternoon. Jared Storm, District 23; Saunders, Butler, Colfax County.

DeKAY: To my immediate right is committee research analyst Rick Leonard, and to our-- and our committee clerk, Linda Schmidt is seated to the far left. Our pages for this committee-- and they will be introducing themselves.

TATE SMITH: I'm Tate. I'm a third-year student at UNL, and I'm studying political science.

LAUREN NITTLER: I'm Lauren. I'm from Aurora, Colorado. I'm a second-year student at UNL, and I'm studying agricultural economics.

DeKAY: With that, we will open the hearing for the first item of the agenda. Castner Wightman [SIC], appointment for-- you can come on up.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: Thank you very much. I am Anna Castner Wightman, spelled Anna, A-n-n-a; Castner, C-a-s-t-n-e-r; and Wightman-- although it's often silent-- is spelled W-i-g-h-t-m-a-n. I am honored to be here today, and I appreciate Governor Pillen appointing me to the Nebraska State Fair Board. I am very proud of my 4-H roots, and specifically my club, the Dandy Bakers. When the governor called me about this appointment, I offered up reciting the 4-H pledge in an effort to seal the deal. He stopped me, but it's my time right now, so-- I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to a greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health for better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world. Think about these words. The world would be a better place if we all lived by that pledge. I am grateful I can still remember those words from my days as a dandy baker in Columbus. In 4-H, I learned countless life skills that I've carried with me. I vividly remember-- I vividly remember the pride and excitement one of, one of my projects had the sticker on it which denoted it would be going to the State Fair. Personally, my greatest

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Agriculture Committee March 11, 2025

memories of 4-H were not only my friends and my club, but spending time with my mom. She guided me through my sewing projects, cooking, gardening, as well as the speech and demonstration contests. My first job out of college was working for Congresswoman Virginia Smith of Chappell in her D.C. office. When Mrs. Smith retired, I worked for many more years for her successor, Bill Barrett of Lexington. It was during those years and under Mrs. Smith's very watchful eye that I became more educated and interested in all corners of the state, and became keenly aware of what agriculture means to the state of Nebraska. I am a fifth-generation Nebraska, and as of recently, a fifth generation landowner. I love the State Fair for many reasons, including the celebration of Nebraska's heritage, as well as agriculture and youth. For me, though, the Fair is and was about family. Our family has made annual trips to the Fair. It was a special time for our family, as well as many other families around the state. The Fair is also a time to highlight the University of Nebraska and the great work done by the extension offices around the state. The extension offices work tirelessly to strength [SIC] things that are important to Nebraska, ag community, and our food systems. I hope I can share my enthusiasm for the State Fair with family and businesses on the eastern end of the state. The Nebraska State Fair is something that can unite all Nebraska, including families. I thank you for this opportunity, and I'm open for any questions.

DeKAY: Thank you. Are there any questions from the committee? Senator Raybould?

RAYBOULD: Ms. Wightman, thank you very much. You have, like, an extraordinary background and credentials. However, I was really disappointed that you didn't mention the fact that you traveled all across the state of Nebraska cycling.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: Yes. I--

RAYBOULD: Can you tell us a little bit more about that, please?

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: What a great way to see Nebraska. You can see it at about 16 miles an hour. So, if you ever want to join Senator Raybould and I, the third week of June, that's how we're going to be seeing Nebraska. But I, I, I am going to drive to the State Fair.

RAYBOULD: OK. All right. It's your call.

DeKAY: Any other quest-- she left you speechless. Any other questions? Yes, Senator Holdcroft.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Agriculture Committee March 11, 2025

HOLDCROFT: Thank you, Chair DeKay. So, I see you worked for F-- First National Bank?

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: Yeah. And I know your brother very well.

HOLDCROFT: That's what I was just going to ask. I asked him for a recommendation, and he did-- he came back and said yes.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: OK.

HOLDCROFT: So, you, you have his approval.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: All right. I, I am humbled. Yeah. Yeah, I worked on the same floor with him for many, many years.

HOLDCROFT: Yes. Very good. Thank you.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: Yeah. Great guy.

DeKAY: Any other questions? Thank you.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: All right.

DeKAY: I do have to say, though, I never got that little dog on-- I showed cattle, and I only got a blue ribbon on my chocolate chip oatmeal cookies, so.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: Yeah. Yeah, the trip-- the trick for the cookies was to get the pan right out of the dishwasher so the butter melted naturally, so. Sorry you didn't get that tip.

DeKAY: Anyway, thank you for being here. First, we'll have our first proponent. Any proponents? Seeing none. Any opponents? Seeing none. Anybody in a neutral capacity? Seeing none. For the record, there was 1 proponent, 0 pro-- opponents, and 0 in the neutral capacity. So, with that, that closes the hearing. Thank you very much for being here.

ANNA CASTNER WIGHTMAN: All right. Thank you.

RAYBOULD: Thank you.