

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Executive Board February 27, 2025

HANSEN: --name is Senator Ben Hansen. I represent the 16th Legislative District in Washington, Burt, Cuming, and parts of Stanton Counties. And I serve as chair of the Executive Board. And I would like to invite the members of the committee to introduce themselves, starting on my right with Senator Clements.

CLEMENTS: Rob Clements, District 2.

BALLARD: Beau Ballard, District 21.

BOSTAR: Eliot Bostar, District 29.

IBACH: Senator Ibach, District 44.

DORN: Myron Dorn, District 30.

FREDRICKSON: John Fredrickson, District 20.

ARCH: John Arch, District 14.

JACOBSON: Mike Jacobson, District 42.

HANSEN: Also assisting the committee is our legal counsel, Benson Wallace; our committee clerk, Natalie Schunk; and our committee pages, Sam and Jacob. A few notes about our policy and procedures. Please turn off or silence your cell phones. We will be hearing two bills and will be combining them in a single hearing. On each of the tables near the door to the hearing room, you will find green testifier sheets. If you're planning to testify today, please fill one out and make sure to identify which bill or bills you'll be taking a position on, and hand it to the page when you come up to testify. This will help us keep an accurate record of the hearing. If you are not testifying at the microphone but want to go on record as having a position on a bill being heard today, there are yellow sign-in sheets at each entrance where you may, may leave your name and other pertinent information. Also I would note if you are not testifying but have an online position comment to submit, the Legislature's policy is that all comments for the record must be received by the committee by 8 a.m. the day of the hearing. Any handouts submitted by testifiers will also be included as part of the record as exhibits. We would ask if you do have any handouts that you please bring 12 copies and give them to the page. We use a light system for testifying. Each testifier will have three minutes to testify. When you begin, the light will be green. When the light turns yellow, that means you have one minute left. When the light turns red, it is time to end your testimony, and we will ask you to wrap up your final thoughts. When you come up to testify, please begin

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by stating your name clearly into the microphone and then please spell both your first and last name. I would ask that you also state which bill or bills you will be testifying on. The hearing will begin with each introducer giving an opening statement. After the opening statement, we will hear from supporters of the bill, then those in opposition, followed by those speaking in a neutral capacity. The introducers of the bill will then be given the opportunity to make closing statements if they wish to do so. On a side note, the reading of testimony that is not your own is not allowed unless previously approved. And we do have a strict no-prop policy in this committee. So with that, we will welcome Senator Hunt and open on LR27CA.

HUNT: Good afternoon, Chairman Hansen and members of the Executive Board. My name is Megan Hunt, M-e-g-a-n H-u-n-t. And I represent District 8 in the northern part of midtown Omaha. I'm proud to be introducing one of our twin bills today. This is LR27CA, a proposed constitutional amendment that would extend current legislative term limits from two consecutive terms to three consecutive terms. Most of us who have served understand that it really takes a couple years, more than a couple years, to kind of get your feet under you and figure out not just the lay of the land here physically in the Capitol, but the relationships. You know, who is it that you need to know? Who is it that you need to work with in order to accomplish your goals? I remember my freshman year. One of my main mentors was Senator Sara Howard. And she was in her seventh year, as I am now. And she was telling me-- you know, talking about term limits. And she said something like, well, I feel like I'm just starting to get the hang of it. I can't believe I'm almost done. And I remember thinking, you know, it didn't make a lot of sense to me because, to me, seven years seemed like a really long time. And she also was someone who was so experienced, as her mother had been in the Legislature before her. And, you know, she was chair of the Health and Human Services Committee and had a lot of great accomplishi-- accomplishments under her belt already. And I thought, how could Senator Howard just feel like she's getting the hang of things? And I cannot even begin to compare myself to her in terms of how effective she was with relationships and with policy. You know, I'm-- I'll never reach that level. But now in my seventh year, I totally understand what she meant. I mean, many of us come in here with little or no knowledge on many of the public areas that we're asked as policymakers to kind of become experts in overnight and make serious decisions about for the people we serve. And I found as many who have come before us have shared with us, as I just conveyed to you, that it's just not enough time. And what that effectively ends up doing is it puts a lot more power and influence in the hands of

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bureaucrats, for better or for worse-- you know, lifers, people who have been here a long time, including the people in the lobby. You know, there's people in the lobby who had been here for 40 years, and they end up being the people that we turn to for institutional knowledge and wisdom, which may not be ideal for the people that we serve. And, you know, every four to eight years, the process starts all over again, freshman learning the ropes. And I don't know if we're able to really dive deep into the issues that our constituents are sending us here to work on when the turnover is so high all the time. I think that 12 years-- I'm, I'm frankly against term limits, but I think that 12 years is good. It would encourage legislators to engage in more long-term thinking while policymaking instead of just getting political points for their party or trying to accomplish something that is doable and maybe easier instead of taking a bigger picture view and maybe trying something that's a little more challenging, because we come in here knowing that we just don't have enough time. When we think about, you know, some of the major accomplishments that we've had in Nebraska: the Imagine Act, the Advantage Act, TEEOSA, just different initiatives that we've had over the decades in Nebraska, a lot of these did not happen in a four-year cycle or even an eight-year cycle. It was a decade-plus of work with stakeholders to create really transformational change that helped Nebraskans and helped build a legacy that we're still proud of today in our state. And I think that with term limits, the turnover time, I don't know if it's realistic that we will have something like that again. Another point I would make is this is about expanding choice for voters. Either way, voters have the power at the ballot box to replace a legislator that they don't like for their district. But under the current constitution, they don't get the choice to reelect a person if they're doing well. The political interests that pushed to get this passed in the first place removed that choice for voters. The reason I don't support term limits is because I think it takes a choice away from voters. And what I think this LR does is it strikes a balance between preventing career politicians, quote unquote, but still allowing effective leaders to serve their communities. Another point I would make is that no other state that has term limits has a Unicameral. In many, many other states, we probably have colleagues around the country that we can all think of where maybe they do, you know, six years in the House, and then they go do eight years in the Senate, and they go back and do six years in the House, and-- they can go back and forth between the two chambers that they have in their legislature. So even though they have term limits, they don't lose that institutional knowledge and experience. In Nebraska, we don't have the advantage of that. So I'm excited that Senator Dover and I, while ideologically different in many respects, we do have-- we're of

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the same mind on this type of policy. And I think that just from, you know, the decade-plus of experience with the term limits, many Nebraskans and fortunately many lawmakers can see that it has not been the most effective tact for good outcomes for Nebraskans. And I'd be happy to answer any questions.

HANSEN: All right. Thank you. Are there any questions from the committee? Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Hansen. Thank you, Senator Hunt, for bringing this and for your opening there. I think you said a lot of things that struck a chord. I think particularly one thing I think a lot about with term limits is this idea of, you know, these legacy issues that senators work on for years and years and years and-- which oftentimes require relationship building to get something that big over, over the finish line. I think that one of the maybe unintended consequences of term limits is that sometimes we aren't able to play as big as we could as a Legislature. We sort of--

HUNT: Exactly.

FREDRICKSON: --chip away at smaller issues because bigger legislation that does require years of work and relationships are-- becomes more difficult to pass. My question for you is the-- should, should this go on the ballot and should the voters decide that this is what they want for the state, when would this take effect and how would that impact current members of the body? Like, what, what-- do you, do you, do you have a sense of when we would be able to--

HUNT: This would take effect the next election cycle.

FREDRICKSON: OK. So 2026--

HUNT: So it would, it would be on the ballot for the next election cycle.

FREDRICKSON: --and then 2028, it would be-- got it. OK.

HUNT: That's right.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you.

HANSEN: Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: I, I guess I just have a couple of issues. I know when these bills were first being discussed, I fully support giving the voters the

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opportunity to decide if they want lawmakers to spend three consecutive four-year terms. I do have indigestion about, I guess, lines 7, 8, 9, and 10-- or, 7, 8, 9, in that then you lay off for 4 years and you can come back and do another, another 12. That gives me a lot of indigestion. It seems to me if we make this concession to go to three four-year terms, it ought to be three and done. Or better yet, if you don't get reelected, you're done and you don't come back. So if I were going to make a change, that's what it would be. I think that's what voters are looking for. I, I wholeheartedly agree with your comments about-- there are a lot of senators, I think, about it-- when I first was appointed and got here, I got the end of that senior class all the, the institutional knowledge and the people that were here then. And I thought, boy, it would probably be nice that they could spend four more years here. I saw that again this last go-around with people that we've lost and, and now they've left it in our hands. OK. What were they thinking of? And-- so it seems like-- you're, you're right with talking about Sara Howard. You get to year seven and eight and you really have hit your stride. And if you had four more years, I think we could continue to move the place forward, perhaps provide better leadership for the underclassmen. But I do think there's a point-- if this passed, I'm telling you eight's going to be enough for me. But, but, but I don't-- I, I have indigestion giving anyone another-- beyond 12. I think it goes-- I think one reason we got to where we are today is because of career politicians, and I don't think anybody wants that.

HUNT: That's a, that's a perspective. It's not one that I share. I-- and I, and I hear what you're saying too, that after you do eight, you're going to be done. And-- could you be here for ten, actually?

JACOBSON: I could-- actually, I could be here for eight and a half.

HUNT: Eight and a half. OK. One-- I'm going to get this 80% right-- actually, it'll either be right or wrong, but I'm 80% sure that before the era of term limits-- and I've talked to the Clerk about this-- and I'm sure he'll correct me quickly if I'm wrong-- but I think the average amount of time that a lawmaker stayed in here before term limits was, like, nine years. And so-- yeah. Speaker Arch is nodding at me. So really, people come in here and they kind of self-select out, even when we didn't have any term limits at all. People weren't staying in here for 30 years doing two 12-year stints or whatever. Like, some people were, and they were legendary lawmakers. And I-- you know, I still appreciate hearing the lore about those people that came before us here. But most people would select out before that 12 years. And that's why I support the way we have it drafted.

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HANSEN: Senator Dorn.

DORN: Yeah. Thank you, Senator Han-- thank you for bi-- bringing this bill. On your, on your line 10, it says, service prior to January 1, 2001 will not be counted, or whatever. Is that when term limits came into effect?

HUNT: That's right.

DORN: That's right. OK. Thank you.

HANSEN: Any other questions?

HUNT: Is that right? Maybe that's not right. It was passed in 2001.

DORN: It was passed in 2001.

HUNT: Yeah.

DORN: OK. Thank you.

HANSEN: All right. Seeing no other questions. You'll be here for close, right?

HUNT: Yes, thank you.

HANSEN: All right. So Senator Dover-- we'll welcome him up to open on LR19CA.

DOVER: Thank you, Chairman Hansen. And good afternoon, committee members. For the record, my name is Robert Dover, R-o-b-e-r-t D-o-v-e-r. I represent District 19. I apologize if I'm redundant, but hopefully I'll say it in a little different way. I've introduced LR19CA to ensure citizens of Nebraska are effectively represented in the Legislature by adding one term to the current two-term limit. After I was appointed in July of 2022, I met with many current and former senators, Capitol staff, organizations, and lobbyists. In my conversations with them, a recurring theme is the damage to the institution that two terms have caused. By the time a senator finally feels somewhat comfortable, they are termed out. I'm in favor of term limits, but three terms provides a better and more effective representation for the people of Nebraska. A common argument against expa-- extending the term limits is-- excuse me-- to three is that if a senator can't get their job done in 8 years, why should we give them 12? What most people do not realize that it's not 12 years of continuous service. The 12 years is really 2.5 years served due to the

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fact that we serve 90 days the first, the first session and 60 days the second. This is far from being a career politician. And in fact, before term limits, talking to Senator Cavanaugh, the average-- the senators served on average 7.9 years. The concept of term limits, while, while intended to bring fresh perspectives and prevent entrenched power also carries several potential drawbacks. These drawbacks include but not limited to: loss of institutional knowledge. Experienced lawmakers accumulate valuable knowledge of legislative processes, policy intricacies, and historical context. Term limits lead to turnover, causing a loss of this expertise. This weakens the Legislature's ability to effectively maintain a balance between the executive, judiciary, and legislative branch and its ability to navigate complex issues. Weakening the legislative branch. With less experienced legislators, the balance of power can shift towards the executive branch and lobbyists, who often possess greater expertise and continuity. Lobbyists with their long-term presence could have a much higher impact on legislation when there is a regular turnover of legislators. In other state legislatures with term limits, representatives spend eight years in one House and they will often spend another eight years in another House. However, Nebraska is the nation's only Unicameral. Thus, a senator's not able to continue using their accumulated knowledge in another House. This makes the Nebraska Legislature very susceptible to institutional knowledge loss. Reduced voter choice. Term limits restrict voters' ability to reelect experienced and effective representatives they prefer. It takes away the voters' ability to decide who they want to represent them. Influence and-- increased influence of special interests. As experienced legislators depart, lobbyists and special interest groups may gain greater influence due to their consistent presence and expertise. In essence, while term limits aim to prevent career politicians and promote fresh perspectives, they can also lead to a less experienced Legislature, a shift in the balance of power, and a reduction in voter choice. Most of our current senators see the benefit of adding one term while maintaining term limits. Why-- this is why LR19CA was-- and 24 senators, including myself, signed on in support. In fact, I think most of you realize my first session after having six months of meeting with everyone, this was my bill in my first session. And actually, I had over-- and I just didn't get around as much. I had over 40 senators sign on this bill the first time around. I didn't, didn't have the time to get around like I did before. By adding one term to the current term limit, we can allow senators to represent their constituents in where they're most knowledgeable and effective. This can be beneficial to the good people of Nebraska. Thank

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you for your time. I'll be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

HANSEN: All right. Thank you. Any questions from the committee? Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Hansen. Thank you, Senator Dover, for your opening as well. Does your bill have any substantive differences of Senator Hunt's or are they essentially the same?

DOVER: I don't think they're, they're the same, yeah.

JACOBSON: OK. That was my, my question. Thank you.

HANSEN: Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: I'm going to ask you the same question. I mean, are you-- would you be open to amending this bill to make it three, three consecutive or three and you're done?

DOVER: I'll be quite honest, I'm open to any suggestion that would make this acceptable to the people of Nebraska. And I did have conversations with, I believe, Senator Brewer and a number of others. When I first said that, he said, I'd, I'd be OK with this, but I want three and done. So I think when we, when we first looked at it, I think, like, there was a 60/40-- there had been a poll done, 60/40, I think, that-- against it passing. I think-- I-- well, not only think-- I know that if everyone in Nebraska knew what we knew sitting here today that it would pass overwhelmingly. Luckily, it's trying to get out there. And of course, a ballot initiative. You know, I-- 1-- 1.5 million. If you're lucky, probably 5 or 6 or 7 million. I mean, it's just very challenging. And I think that term limits are so popular, but this really applies to the federal level. So my-- not really the state because we're so close, you know, where-- we live in our communities. I think it's very much different than the people representing us on the federal level. But, yeah-- yes, I would be-- I would be open to that. And another thing-- I mean, quite truthful-- I'll bring up one last thing. Then the other question says, is it best to [INAUDIBLE] people that aren't here. And, and, and on one hand, if you believe in it, than the answer would be, no, we don't want to include that because we're going to lose some good people as-- you good people in the room right here that have that expertise. Lou Ann Linehan-- Senator Linehan-- sorry-- said, you know, when I'm gone, no one will know what the truth is and know one will know what the lies are. And no one knows where to find all the buried bodies. And that's very true. I mean, the things

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that I was told when I first came down here, I usually found three people I truly trusted. And if those three people all repeated the, the same story, I've considered it a truth. Guess what? It wasn't always the truth. And so we really work at a disadvantage here, and we do the best we can because I, because I [INAUDIBLE] with all of you. But you only can do so much with so much experience. I mean, luckily, we have people like you with banking history, you know, they, they can guide us in those kind of issues and other, other strings that you all have. But it's tough.

JACOBSON: Just shared with Senator Linehan that I have written down-- most of that down, so I pretty much [INAUDIBLE].

DOVER: I'll tell her that next time I talk to her.

HANSEN: Senator Dorn.

DORN: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Hansen. Thank you for being here. I know maybe we should ask Senator Hunt too. Just as a point of clarification, this, this is an election of '26. But then anybody-- if they've been here two years, four years, or six years, they are then grandfathered into this? It's not just somebody that's newly elected after '26.

DOVER: Well it would, it would, it would take effect, right? And then anyone who wasn't termed out at that point then could run again.

DORN: Run-- OK.

DOVER: Yeah.

DORN: Thank you.

HANSEN: So it wouldn't apply to, like, my class, correct?

DOVER: No. Because you'd be termed out.

HANSEN: Which I am totally fine with. I say I've gonna be on parole soon, so. All right. Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Well, to that point then, that would mean that my class would be eligible to run if this passed. But then the question becomes, do they run for one more term or do they run-- or are they-- does-- or you start with-- in other words, where is that starting point for the three years?

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DOVER: I would consider [INAUDIBLE]. I mean, if we need-- probably we need clarification. But they-- we've all started it.

JACOBSON: Right.

DOVER: [INAUDIBLE] be reelected. So, so in my case, I will be 70, I believe, or 6-- almost turning 70 when I'm to-- well, I'll be 70 when I'm termed out. I don't think that I'll run again either, but I could if I wanted to.

JACOBSON: Right. Right. OK. Thank you.

HANSEN: So that means Eliot-- Senator Bostar could run again?

BOSTAR: You're welcome.

HANSEN: All right. Good. I like it. All right. Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much.

DOVER: Thank you.

HANSEN: All right. So we'll take our first testifier in support of LR19CA, LR20-- or-- and/or LR27CA.

BRYAN SLONE: To Chair Hansen and members of the Executive Board. My name is Bryan Slone, B-r-y-a-n S-l-o-n-e. And I'm President of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I'm testifying on behalf of the Nebraska Chamber and on behalf of both, both resolutions-- LR27CA and LR19CA-- that would extend the statutory term limit to three consecutive terms. Generally, our American democracy and the freedoms therein are a consequence of the ability of voters to vote in every election and choose the representatives they, they so choose. Any restraints on the power of voters or the right of our citizens to run for office should be accordingly very limited. While legislative term limits can potentially mitigate against stagnation and create greater turnover in our legislative bodies, they come at a cost that has to be considered: a limitation on candidate choice, arbitrary treatment of representatives regardless of merit, potential inefficiencies, and less expertise on very complicated issues before the Legislature, and a loss of historical perspective. All have been discussed by the proponents. Thus, in every case where-- in any state, I would argue, that has any kind of term limits, it's in the best interest of the voters that term limits be periodically considered to see if they're actually achieving the goals that were sought out in the beginning. In Nebraska, we have a very unique situation, as been identified before, with our nonpartisan, Unicameral Legislature. Senator Norris helped design a system that,

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that required a great deal of, of transparency that doesn't exist in other states. There's no partisan or majority leadership structure. The 49 senators are equal and independent. All bills receive a hearing. Most every function of this Legislature is open to the public. And unlike other states when a term limit is reached, our senators cannot run for a second chamber. With regard to our state senators and whether they can be potentially too far from their constituents, I think anybody who's been a state senator, I would guess, know that that can't be the case because you run by going door to door to each of your constituents. In terms of the notion that the polls suggest that, that term limits are widely supported, most of those are push polls. And generally, the question includes a line that says, are supporters just looking for their own financial or other benefit? But one thing I'm sure of as the Nebraska State Chamber president is none of you are doing it for your financial benefit or your personal benefit. Without exception, during my term as Nebraska State Chamber president, whether senators agreed with us or didn't agree with us, there's not a single one that I don't admire. Because they do it for one reason: they love their community and they love their state. I just don't think we have the same sort of risks in Nebraska around this. And this is not a big step to go to three terms instead of two terms. And it will increase the level of expertise on a myriad of complex issues that each of you are required to face and make decisions that affect 2 million people every day. With that, I'd be happy to take questions.

HANSEN: Thank you. Any questions from the committee? All right. Seeing none. Thank you very much. Take our next testifier in support.

JOHN CEDERBERG: Good afternoon. I'm John Cederberg, J-o-h-n C-e-d-e-r-b-e-r-g. Live here in Lincoln. I'm here today representing only myself. I think everybody kind of knows that I'm a member of both the State Chamber and the Lincoln Chamber. But I'm not representing either of them today. This is, interestingly enough, my first time ever in front of the Executive Board. And I've been-- this is my 42nd year of observing and working in some respects with an execu-- or, with a regular session of the Legislature. So this is a new experience. I'm here as a strong supporter of these amendments. But there will be plenty of people talking about the merits, which I agree with. I want to focus on how do we get the voters to, to approve this. Because this is going to-- Nebraska voters are devoted to term limits, and this is going to be-- need to be sold by the supporters. The first principle of salesmanship is you need to offer something that the voter or that the buyer either wants or needs or at least would like to have. And in viewing this from the perspective of how am I going to sell this-- if I'm on a radio talk show, if I'm on a TV interview, how am I going to

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sell this to the voters that they need to come aboard? And three consecutive terms really just asks the voters to concede their previous term limit vote on the basis of logic and a somewhat intangible promise of better leadership and better legislation. And-- so I'm coming to suggest that you consider the, the point that Senator Jacobson just raised with you: three and done. That still allows the three consecutive terms. It does the flexibility that we currently have to do two and one, one and two, one, one, and one. But it offers the voters something in the tradeoff. Yes, I understand it restricts more, more tightly the voters' choice of who represents them, but Nebraska voters have already bought into restricting other people's choices. And my, my personal judgment is in talking with voters-- I have a lot of connections, particularly in the 3rd District where I grew up-- that this would be an important change to being able to bring the voters on board and to be able to accomplish this very important-- this very important objective for the quality of our legislation and the functioning of our Legislature. I intend to be available to, to help make, make this pass if you get it on the ballot. I will do whatever I can. And with that, I-- oh. The letter is a technical question and are, are, are, are, are just some technical observations regarding the transition, which I-- if I have-- if you have any questions as you go through this, feel free to reach out to me. I don't have to answer all my questions today-- or, all your questions today. Thank you.

HANSEN: Thank you. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you very much. Take our next testifier in support.

REBECCA FIRESTONE: Good afternoon, Chairperson Hansen, members of the Executive Board. My name is Rebecca Firestone, R-e-b-e-c-c-a F-i-r-e-s-t-o-n-e. I am Executive Director of OpenSky Policy Institute. Here today to express our support for LR19CA and LR27CA. One of our primary reasons for supporting this change is the complexity of the issues that our state legislators must navigate. Tax policy, budgeting, local government finance, and fiscal decisions can be quite technical. These are not issues that are mastered quickly. It can take years of experience to fully understand the nuances and long-term consequences of the decisions being made in any one legislative session, as I'm sure many of you are very, very aware. When legislators are limited to only two terms, they often do not have enough time to develop the full grasp of these complex matters. For example, how all of the levers in the TEEOSA formula interact. By the time they have become proficient in understanding state revenues, tax code, and implications of different fiscal policies, they're close to leaving office, and this knowledge-- this loss of institutional knowledge can be disruptive to the continuity of policymaking. It can also lead to a greater reliance on

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lobbyiances-- lo-- excuse me-- lobbyists or unelected experts as new legislators are trying to get up to speed quickly. This isn't just inefficient. It can result in less informed decisions being made for Nebraska. A three-term limit would allow lawmakers to serve long enough to learn the ropes of state government, build relationships with their colleagues, and gain the expertise necessary to make sound, informed decisions. In addition, a longer potential term provides a stable environment for longer term planning. Some fiscal decisions, like large infrastructure projects or comprehensive tax or school finance reform, require a long lens. Eight years can simply be too short to adequately address these critical issues and properly gauge whether efforts that have passed previously are actually accomplishing their goals. Moreover, research has shown that longer term legislators are more likely to engage in bipartisan problem-solving and focus on long-term goals rather than short-term political gain. With more time in office, legislators can prioritize policy solutions that benefit Nebraskans for years to come instead of shifting the focus every time a new election cycle begins. In conclusion, we believe allowing state legislators to serve three four-- three four-year terms will improve the effectiveness of our state government and ensure that complex fiscal issues are handled by lawmakers who have the knowledge, experience, and stability to make informed decisions. As a policy research organization, we see the value of this proposal, and we support the Legislature in advancing this proposal to enable the people of Nebraska to be able to weigh in on this issue. Thank you. Happy to answer questions.

HANSEN: Thank you. Are there any questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you.

LYNN REX: Senator Hansen, members of the committee, my name is Lynn Rex, L-y-n-n R-e-x. Representing the League of Nebraska Municipalities. The league strongly opposed term limits. We think it was a bad idea then. It's a bad idea now. However, these are better. One is opposed to term limits for all the reasons that have been borne out that the folks that-- a long coal-- list of coalitions of members and organizations that pointed out what would happen with term limits, much of which has come to fruition, that basically this is better, so we support it. Anything that's going to be better than two, than two terms as good. A lot-- just to be-- not to-- redun-- be redundant with everything else that's been said. Obviously, the complexity of the work that you do, the fact that just the lack of institutional memory. There was a time when, as an Executive Board years ago, your predecessors considered doing away with legislative research, and we opposed that. And as a lobbying-- representing a lobbying organization, municipalities across the state of Nebraska, I can tell you that a number of us that are

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representing lobbying organizations understand that what term limits do is they empower the lobby-- many times more than you. That is unacceptable. And our mission as an organization is to make sure we have the best information, for example, in terms of how legislation impacts municipalities. And we do our very best to do that. That said, if you had the individuals that you've had before here, I think it's very important to understand the difference in terms of what one can learn. Think of everything you've learned over the period of time that you've been here. And Senator Ballard is a really fast learner. But compared to those who've been here longer-- and you will be there too-- the longer you're here, the more you learn, the more you understand the rules, the more you understand what the implications are of the policy changes. So I would just respectfully submit that it's also important to think about how this is done. With respect to what John Cederberg indicated, at the time that this passed in 2000, there were eight other proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot. I think six or seven of which passed. So all of this ties into it. The league also supports-- and I regret I was not able to be here yesterday-- on the increasing the senators' salaries. I regret I was unable to be here, but Senator Dorn, I, I hope that you were able to convey that the league supported those. And we put an online letter in support of those. The timing of how this is done is really important. Educating the public is important because I really trust an informed electorate. But it takes a lot of time and effort to have an informed electorate to make sure they understand what you do. There's a perception that, in fact, well, you know, it's just 90 days here, 60 days there. No big deal. It is a full-time job when you're doing it right. And I know everybody on this committee is doing it right. So with that, I'm happy to answer any questions that you have. But it is really important to do this just for the integrity of the institution itself and do it in a way that's going to be really important. I mean, we-- the league was involved, again, with a long list of statewide organizations working with Speaker Barrett back in the day, which is the last time that the pay raise occurred in 1988. And we had the face of that being coach Tom Osborne. There's a lot of ways to make it happen. I know my time is up. But again, appreciate all the great work you do. And happy to respond to any questions that you might have.

HANSEN: Thank you. Are there any questions? Seeing none.

LYNN REX: Thank you for your consideration.

HANSEN: Next testifier in support.

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JAY FERRIS: Well, good afternoon, Chairman Hansen and members of the Executive Board. My name is Jay Ferris. That's J-a-y F-e-r-r-i-s. And I am the Director of Political Engagement for the Nebraska Farm Bureau. And I'm here today testifying in support of both LR19CA and LR27CA on behalf of the membership of the Nebraska Ag Leaders Working Group. For those of you-- for your reference, the AG Leaders Working Group is the Nebraska Cattlemen, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, the Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Pork Producers Association, the Nebraska Sorghum Producers Association, Nebraska Soybean Association, Nebraska State Dairy Boar-- or, sta-- Dairy Association, Nebraska Wheat Growers Association, and Renewable Fuels Nebraska. Now that I got that out of the way. Increasing term limits for state senators from two to three consecutive terms would help stabilize the turnover of leadership, experience, and institutional knowledge in our Unicameral. It does take time to develop relationships and to trust to be an effective policymaker. And the question-- we did pass it in 2000, but it did take effect in 2006 with term limits. And since that time, we have eliminated some great people in this body just based on a time limit. And not, you know, what other business model would choose that-- to take your best employees and tell them it's time to be done just because of this-- your time is up. OK. So with that, one thing that I want to share is just a personal experience in, in my own-- in my own job at Farm Bureau is to go out and help-- work with candidates and recruit candidates to run for public office. Over the years, it has become more and more increasingly difficult to get people to want to serve. And part of that is the pay. Part of that is, you know, the term limits. There's a lot of reasons for that. But when-- you know, when this was first implemented, it was-- this will give more citizens an opportunity to serve. But we're not seeing that. We are seeing races that come with [INAUDIBLE] somebody want-- someone running unopposed or someone wa-- you know, candidates waiting till the last minute. So it really hasn't done some of the things that it was maybe intended to do. I also want to point out that this is-- does not re-- remove term limits. It only extends it. And I think, as was mentioned before, selling this to the voters, that would be one of the key points that I would think would need to be made, is we're not removing term limits. We're just extending that time. So I do want to thank Senator Dover and Senator Hunt for introducing this-- these resolutions. And I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

HANSEN: Thank you. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you.

JAY FERRIS: Thank you.

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HANSEN: Take our next testifier in support.

GEOFF LORENZ: Hi. I think because none of you know who I am, I'm going to take a little bit more time to introduce myself than I normally would. Chair Hansen and members of the Executive Board, thank you for allowing me to speak before you today. My name is Geoff Lorenz, G-e-o-f-f L-o-r-e-n-z. And I am an assistant professor of political science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In addition to serving on UNL's faculty, I am a faculty affiliate of the National Center for Effective Lawmaking, a nonpartisan research center that envisions American Legislatures comprised of effective lawmakers, strong institutional capacity, and the incentive structure needed to address America's greatest public policy challenges. My testimony today reflects my own views, not those of my institution. My scholarly expertise includes legislative capacity and political reform in American state and federal government. As you consider LR19CA and LR27CA-- which propose extending term limits from two to three consecutive terms-- I offer a scientific perspective on their likely effects. Currently, Nebraska is one of 17 states that have legislative term limits in effect. There are two that had term limits and then repealed them. As you know, term limits in Nebraska limits senators to two consecutive four-year terms, after which four years must elapse before you can begin another period of service. For context-- and I know we've had a few different figures of this. It depends a little bit on, like, who you count and who you compare to who. But before term limits were in place, the average senator served just over six years, less than two complete terms, with around 1/4 serving three or more terms. Most of those-- let's see. Most of those in turn who served more than two only served three. So this suggests that expanding term limits to three terms could bring legislative careers closer to their historical norm. The consensus among some scholars generally about term limits is that they weaken Legislatures. Term-limited Legislatures do, of course, ensure rapid legislative turnover. That is their whole point. However, in doing so, they prevent the most effective lawmakers from continuing to serve and thus prevent voters from reelecting strong representatives. Term-limited legislators also tend to introduce fewer bills, be less productive in committees, and miss more floor votes. I'm sure that's not true of anyone here, though. The reason for this is that they have fewer incentives to perform well. One political scientist offered a helpful analogy. If you told a CEO that no matter how well their company performed they would be fired at the end of the year, how much effort would you expect them to put in? Term limits also degrade the Legislature as an institution. Term-limited bodies tend to exert less influence on policy outcomes, are less innovative, and more

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polarized, as members have less time to develop policy expertise and long-term working relationships. There is even suggestive evidence that because of this, term limits-- states with term limits experience lower income growth for their citizens. Nebraska is among the states that have suffered most severely from these effects, though the research here is admittedly a little bit more focused on particular policy outcomes. Research has shown that beginning in 2006, when term limits went into effect, Nebraska has become one of the most rapidly polarizing state legislatures, with no sign of this trend slowing down. So now might be the best chance to address term limits if you would choose to do so. So thank you again for the opportunity to speak. And I'd welcome any questions as you consider these important proposals.

HANSEN: Thank you. Senator Fredrickson.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you, Chair Hansen. Thank you for your testimony and for being here today. Question. So, so you had sort of referenced a number of research on term limits and the impacts these have on different legislative bodies. So thi-- this would still be a term limit, right? It would, it would expand our term a little bit more. And I certainly appreciate-- I think my hypothesis is that the idea you're re-- referring to with this research is that it's the longevity, it's the relationship building, it's, it's that extended runway, so to speak. But does, does-- is there research on specific amounts of term limits? So, you know, 8 years versus 12 years versus 15 years. Like, is there any data on that that you're aware of?

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah, that's an interesting question, Senator. Thank you. I'm not aware of any research that has compared, like, if you do a 3-- a 12-year term limit versus a 20-year term limit, do you get differences? The mechanisms by which we believe term limits to operate, though, would be entirely consistent with an expectation that, that more-- allowing more terms would, at least to a certain point, permit more of these benefits to institutional knowledge and all the things that other folks who have testified have spoken very eloquently too, so.

FREDRICKSON: Thank you.

HANSEN: Speaker Arch.

ARCH: Thank you for coming. I, I've got a question about, about other states and, and their term limits. So in your research, are, are eight years short compared to other states or-- how, how do they compare-- if they have term limits--

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah.

ARCH: --how do they do term limits and, and-- help us understand a little bit.

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. So people-- folks who have testified before me have brought up the point that many states that have term limits-- or, actually every other state that has term limits, of course, is bicameral. And so usually when they institute term limits, it'll be maybe a fewer years in a chamber. But because you can run in both chambers, you can end up serving longer in the legislature. I don't have the exact figures off the top of my head. I'm happy to follow up with you to get you that information, but generally speaking eight years doesn't strike me as an exceptionally long, like, limit to service, and may be actually shorter than most other states because they have bicameral legislatures.

ARCH: Yeah. To that point, I, I have had conversations with South Dakota, Wyoming, other, other legislators surrounding us, and that's, that's exactly what happens. They, they tend to move from one house to the other house and stay in the Legislature, which, of course, could benefit from the subject matter that, that they have built over time.

GEOFF LORENZ: Yes. I mean, I don't envy anyone who is a new member of a Legislature trying to get up to speed on all of the many issues that you're asked to write law on.

HANSEN: And I think that might be one of the difficult things about being a Unicameral too with term limits is because I think a lot of states that have bicamerals might have seniority who typically are in a certain role to maybe help freshmen senators keep-- get them up to speed. And there's a lot of maybe internal procedures that kind of get the newer ones up to speed a little bit faster. And, like, that might be a disadvantage of kind of where we're at as well. One thing I want to ask you is, do you know about approval ratings? If-- what do the citizens think of the politicians in their state for those states that have term limits versus the ones that don't? I'm just curious because the ones that don't have term limits are-- they're like, you know, we have higher approval ratings of our state's-- of our state senators and representatives versus the states that have term limits and, like, we hate them. Know what I mean? Might make-- tell me-- I think if people like where their-- who is representing them more and-- without term limits, that might say something about what direction we need to go.

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GEOFF LORENZ: That's a great question. I don't have that information off the top of my head, but I'll look into it. I'm not-- most of the political scientists who have studied the effects of term limits have really focused internally on the effects of, like, legislative performance. But if there is research on it, I'll follow up with your office.

HANSEN: I think that might kind of tell us maybe what people actually think about who represents them in term-limited states versus non-term-limited states.

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. I, I will say-- this is a-- it's different than the question that you're asking. I don't want to be-- I don't want to connect them too closely. But there has been research generally on, on how voters respond to the adoption of political reforms. So if the potential concern is of-- ab-- about, like, do citizens sort of reject legislators who do things like invest more money-- like, raise legislators' salaries was another issue. The answer is typically no. Like, the evidence that they would is not very strong. So that's not exactly the question you're answering, so I'll go back and look into that and be in touch with you if I find anything.

HANSEN: I appreciate that.

GEOFF LORENZ: But, but-- yeah.

HANSEN: All right. Senator, Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: Going back to my original question on, on three and done, I'm, I'm just looking-- currently in the body, we have one state senator, I believe, that, that was term limited out and sat out and came back. We have one state senator that served four years, did not get reelected, then came back and was elected and is here. I think they're the only two that spent time in the Legislature before. And I'm just-- as I go back over the last eight or ten years, I'm just trying to count up how many senators were here, came back. I can think of one when I first was appointed who was here and then chose not to run again and had, had enough in four years and felt the the-- I think that the institution had changed a lot since he was here before. I'm just curious that-- I, I think it gets back to the comment it was made in-- earlier by Mr. Cederberg, that if, if this is important enough-- and I think it is-- we've got to make sure the voters are com-- are comfortable. And I think they, they imposed term limits. And I think if this feels like this is creating career politicians, that's probably going to bring some headwinds. At the same time, I'm not sure that

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we're protecting a lot beyond, if you serve 12 years, there's going to have to be a pretty finite number of people who really want to sit out four and, and come back again. I would see-- I mean, I-- I mean, this is a lot of fun, but it's not that much fun, you know?

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. Well, as a person who's personally very nerdy about legislative politics, I know precisely how fun it is and also the limits of how fun it is. But to your-- but to your question. So I don't have off the top of my head how many were here and came back. As I-- think I mentioned in my testimony about 22% of members whose entire careers were before term limits served more than two terms. So that should-- could give you-- you know, lots of things have changed in the intervening decades, but that might give you a sense of how many members are going to be inclined to have a longer career if they're given an opportunity to do so. But if there is-- and, and, and terms of the politics of this, like I said, the research that I'm aware of is limited. But-- and, and you would have much more-- like, you all would have much more poli-- like, judgment about the politics of convincing voters that-- about whether this is a good thing or not. So with that, I'll just leave it with the context of, like, this is roughly how many people it's-- depending on how you count it, between 1/5 and 1/4 of the body.

JACOBSON: Well, I'd also just be curious to know who were the longest serving even before term limits. I, I think Senator Hunt made the comment there were some, I don't know that you'd call them rock stars, but, but, you know, something like that. OK. I don't plan to be one of those, but, but I will tell you that I do think of those that are legendary from being in the Legislature and spent a lot of years here. And obviously, Senator Chambers was, was the longest serving. Jerry Warner over the years. There are a few other names out there. But there was a point where people said, you can only have so much fun and it's probably time to, to, to look at going back to the real world, you know. So I'd just be kind of curious to know what those numbers were. And-- would be nice to have an idea of them.

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. I'm, I'm happy to follow up with your office on that.

JACOBSON: Perfect. Thank you.

HANSEN: Senator Clements.

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CLEMENTS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, sir. I'm currently term limited December of 2026. And after two terms, would I be eligible to go one more term with this provision?

GEOFF LORENZ: I'm not-- Senator, I, I'm not a lawyer. I can't speak to the mechanics of this and I wouldn't want to speculate. So I would leave that question to, to, to others.

CLEMENTS: Yeah. Well, something for you to consider. There are people currently starting to advertise their candidacy for my position, but I could put my name on the ballot in 2026, and if the, you know, provision passes, then maybe I'd be possible to be elected. But what if it fails and I, and I get the most votes? I think that there's a consideration to think about. There is a complication there. Thank you.

HANSEN: Senator Bostar.

BOSTAR: Thank you, Chair Hansen. And, and thank you, sir, for being here. It's interesting information. My understanding in the reading of this is that because it would need to pass in the 2026 general election, anyone who is-- meets the threshold of being term limited at that point would be ineligible to place their name on the ballot alongside the measure. So there, there, there couldn't be an instance of someone seeking a third term while the ballot initiative was being considered by the people. So un-- unfortunately, Senator Clements, I, I believe you would, you would just have to sit out for four years. And, and if you wanted to come back, you would be able to. Is that your under-- sorry. I'll make it a question. Does that sound like something you agree with?

HANSEN: Senator Bostar, thank you for that question. Again, I'm not an attorney, so I can't speak to the mechanics of how that's--

BOSTAR: Fair enough. Thank you.

HANSEN: I think-- yeah, I think that-- I think Senator Bostar might be right, because you-- technically, you couldn't even be on the ballot then.

BOSTAR: Can't run.

HANSEN: So then even-- say it does pass-- yeah, you can't. Doesn't matter anyway, I guess. Speaker Arch.

ARCH: I, I probably have a unique perspective as, as Speaker, but I would, I would tell you that nobody, nobody has spoken to this, and I

guess I'm curious as to your opinion here. One of the things that challenges us is, is simply turnover. We've talked about the relationships and how necessary that is to build relationships and all of that. This year, 16 new senators, 1 returning-- 1/3 of our body turns over in one year. And that presents some unique challenges to orientation, getting up to speed, developing those relationships. I, I say I-- some would not choose to go more than eight years. But if some did choose to go more than eight years, my math would say that could perhaps smooth out the wholesale turnover. We wouldn't be at 1/3 of the body turning over. Perhaps we'd be at 25% of the body turning over, which in my mind would be helpful to the continuity. And particularly, again, because we're a Unicameral, when those senators turn over, they're gone. They're not in the system at all. I mean, they can be outside the, the glass in the Rotunda with everybody else, but they are, they are gone. And I-- your, your thought of slowing down the, the, the turnover, is there any-- is there any benefit to that from what you've seen in other states?

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. So generally what I would say is that a lot of legislative capacity comes from what has been termed institutional knowledge, but it's worth breaking that down into its component parts. So part of that is policy area expertise. Some people have different backgrounds. The research that's been done on term limits is that actually they don't really change the composition of backgrounds of people entering the Legislature. It's kind of an area of ongoing research. So, you know, there may be more someday. On the other hand is knowledge of how the institution works. So whether that's expertise in the many state-- and to the extent you're dealing with federal issues also-- federal programs and who the-- how and where they operate, who's in charge of them, who runs-- like, runs those in the state agencies? Those are all things that you have to learn. They're all difficult to learn, and they're difficult to learn how to conduct effective oversight or to otherwise consider important policy issues. Having rapid turnover, to me, means that you are giving up a fair amount of that policy and also sort of like legislative institutional expertise in favor of an idea that you will have greater turnover in-- and bring in, like, a different set of folks with fresh perspectives. And the research that I've seen on this doesn't have strong evidence that you-- the, the types of folks or that-- the reason that people from a different set of backgrounds aren't running for the Legislature is because of-- they-- like, there are term limits. It's mostly because-- especially in a citizen Legislature like ours, not everyone can afford to take, you know, whether-- a few months out every year in order to serve. And I would suggest my-- this is now professional judgment,

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not-- I've read the-- like, there's research literature on this, but I would say-- suspect that that was a much bigger barrier to, to that kind of-- sort of helpful churn than the existence of term limits or not.

HANSEN: Senator Ballard.

BALLARD: Oh, my. So you said your, your study was in legislative performance. Is that, is that-- did that-- correct?

GEOFF LORENZ: So, so I have-- so I want to be clear. I'm mostly today talking about research conducted by others that I have engaged in review. My-- some of my research is about legislative capacity and, and effectiveness, yes.

BALLARD: OK. So I, I have a question. So do you, do you see any harm in if we extend term-- term limits that legislators will slow-walk issues? So-- the-- one of the thing about eight years is senators have eight years. They say, I need to take big risks and trying to exert more connected. Like, we just got off the campaign trail [INAUDIBLE] we'll take the issue of property tax. So is there an-- is there a drawback in saying, hey, we need to take big swings at pro-- at correcting property taxes instead of if we extend to 12 years. But we'll wait 10, 12, 12 years before we actually take that big risk or big swing.

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. Thank you for that question, Senator. So I'm not aware of any research that has looked into exactly that question that you've asked. It's an interesting question. I could see how that could-- how one could set up a study to do that. I'm not-- I don't think it's been done. What-- and this is going back to some work that I've done. It's on a different topic, and it's in Congress, not state legislatures, but often-- like new members of the Unicameral, new members of Congress have had to take quite a long time in order to get their feet wet and to understand what they are doing. And the general demonstra-- so the evidence on this from a study that I conducted with some colleagues, other places-- I'm happy to forward it to you if you're interested-- suggests that new members of Congress benefit most in terms of their legislative productivity, their ability to advance legislation through the legislative process and into law if they have-- this study was about experienced staffers, but, but it serves a, a very similar role to having a lot of-- sort of-- it speaks to what happens when you have a lack of experience. I understand the logic of kind of having more enthusiasm because you have a deadline that you're-- that you know about. But that-- I guess what I would ask is that you all

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have deadlines either way, right? You may not get reelected. I'm sure everyone here, if they're not term limited, will be. But-- and so I would think that the-- I guess my, my speculation is that the reelection incentive covers most of what you're talking about.

BALLARD: Thank you.

HANSEN: Speaker Arch.

ARCH: Just one other, one other question. You know, as I hear you, as I hear your testimony-- and, and we, we discu-- we talked previously because we met, we met at a reception, actually. But, but that, that there is a upside-downside to term limits in general that there is-- that there is benefit and there is, there is a downside to it. We've been talking some about the downside. Upside being that term limits do allow new ideas to come in. And sometimes, sometimes we work ideas and we don't get anywhere with them and sometimes that's-- a fresh way of looking at it can, can, can do some of that. The other, the other side of that-- and I think this is what we're struggling with here-- is this balancing of the-- legislating is a skill. And I resonate to what Senator Hunt said in her, her-- in her opening testimony, and that is, honestly, in about your seventh and eighth year, you feel like you're hitting your stride. You, you feel like you've-- you have finally figured it out. Not only policy, but the process, how to be an effective legislator. Because it's not a matter of just bringing great, new ideas. And, oh, it's so good to have new ideas. It's then, how do you turn those into law? How can-- how do you effectively legislate? So on balance, you, you know, upside-downside on term limits, where do you-- where do you fall on that issue itself?

GEOFF LORENZ: You mean term limits generally?

ARCH: Term limits generally.

GEOFF LORENZ: My read of the academic literature is that the, the drawbacks outweigh the benefits, and it's not close.

ARCH: So extending what we're doing here-- I mean, you-- you're a proponent-- extending at least mitigates some of that downside.

GEOFF LORENZ: It would mitigate some of it, yes.

ARCH: Yes. Thank you.

HANSEN: Starting to learn through this process that we are the lowest paid legislators in the United States and we have the smallest amount

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of terms. Because I think Michigan is next to us, and they have 12 years total between both houses-- or, between the, between the-- as, as total, right? And they're the least next to us, and we're eight. So. And whether that's a good or bad thing-- you know, that's up to the voters, but it's kind of interesting to note.

GEOFF LORENZ: Yeah. I wasn't aware that there was a, a question about raising senators' salaries. I would have been at that hearing too. And--

HANSEN: Yup. [INAUDIBLE]-- that-- we discussed that earlier this week, so. All right. Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much for coming.

GEOFF LORENZ: Thank you.

HANSEN: Appreciate your insight. Anyone else wishing to testify in support? Welcome.

HEIDI UHING: Hello, Chairman Hansen and other members of the Executive Board. My name's Heidi Uhing, H-e-i-d-i U-h-i-n-g. I'm here as Public Policy Director for Civic Nebraska. In support of both proposals before you, to extend legislative term limits to a third term. I will spare you my testimony because all of this has been said multiple times. I do want to draw your attention to what I think the most important point is, which Senator Hansen just drew attention to before I sat down, which is, Nebraska is a uniquely vulnerable state to the effects of term limits because of our Unicameral structure. So as a continuation of the conversation we had earlier in the week, our low pay for state senators hits us hardest here because we're such a small body and because we have these term limits. So the resources that are available to senators to do a really good job in this body is to have the financial support to be able to do it and the other resource of time. And, you know, scooting them out after eight years is really abbreviating that expertise that people are just starting to develop at that point. The chart that's being handed out to you from NCSL details that, where you can see how all of the states that do have term limits are two-house legislatures, and how they have the capacity to trade term-limited lawmakers back and forth between the bodies. So while I think our Unicameral structure has a lot going for it, it's very well-designed in service to Nebraskans. The senator pay and that-- the, the term limits that we implemented-- passed in 2000, implemented in 2006-- have done damage to how that system was intended to function. I'm very glad that Dr. Len-- Lorenz was here to share his expertise. I have found his research at the congressional level to be really

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interesting related to the longevity of staff and how it does translate to better policy outcomes. I, I think you can probably extrapolate that the same would be true for, for senators themselves. And because I do have the benefit of having Dr. Charlyne Berens on speed dial, who is a local expert on Unicameralism, I clarified with her some of the questions that had been asked about, you know, how many people do end up serving those three terms? Because just-- just because it would be available doesn't mean everybody would stay. And she's saying that from the time of 1988 to 2005, only 16-- of 139 senators that served during 1980 to 2005, only 16 served more than three terms and that the average turnover from each two-year biennium was a 25% turnover rather than the 33%. And I think all of us can see how that would make a big difference in how traditions are carried on, norms are passed down, long-term understanding these more complex issues would really be carried with the body in a more efficient way with just that much difference being made. So thank you for your time.

HANSEN: So with what you're saying, technically, with a lack of-- or, with the term limits that we have and the pay that you were talking about, it actually kind of decreases our chance to pass meaningful legislation when it comes to property tax reform. Correct?

HEIDI UHING: That's a great example.

HANSEN: Yes.

HEIDI UHING: I think we heard the TEEOSA formula earlier in testimony that, you know, these kind of intractable problems that we have in our state that have just been-- they're just evergreen. They always need attention. You know, it's always going to be something that even if we make incremental progress on, it's something that senators are going to need to keep an eye on in perpetuity, that having a depth of understanding of those issues is a real head start. And as-- you know, as, as has been said here, just as people are really starting to get the complexity of those components under their belt, they leave. And there's not-- you know, it's not like they get to train the next person who replaces them. It's a clean break. So we really do send a lot of expertise out the door.

HANSEN: I think we noticed that, especially anybody who's coming in the Education Committee when it comes to TEEOSA, trying to understand that.

HEIDI UHING: Yes.

HANSEN: Takes at least eight years.

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HEIDI UHING: Right. And then we wave goodbye.

HANSEN: Speaker Arch and I were both in HHS. To understand even the complexities of that whole, you know, DHHS-- takes about eight years. And that's about when you leave. And there's nobody there to kind of coach you up a lot of times on stuff like that. Speaker Arch.

ARCH: It-- this is just a comment. I, I absolutely agree. And, and, and I think we all saw it very clearly after our special session this summer. We're right up to the line. We're right up understanding the issue of property taxes. We don't get it across the line in the special session. 16 senators gone.

HEIDI UHING: Yeah.

ARCH: That's very damaging.

HEIDI UHING: Yeah. And I think there was some urgency to have that special session because we knew that was happening that-- you know, take advantage of the expertise we have now. And that's, that's pressure that the body didn't need. These are very complex issues. So being able to do that in an extended period of time serves the body, serves the policy, serves the public.

HANSEN: Any other questions? Seeing none. Thank you for coming.

HEIDI UHING: Thanks.

HANSEN: Anybody else wishing to testify in support? Welcome.

CORRIE DAY: Good afternoon-- hello-- Chairman Hansen, rest of the Executive Committee. My name is Corrie Day, C-o-r-r-e D-a-y-- C-o-r-r-i-e D-a-y. Clearly I've been paying a little too much attention because my brain is completely fried. I will save you the redundancy of the majority of my testimony. It's very hard to compete with Heide and Doc Lorenz with their expertise. So I'll just poke a little bit on the focus of Nebraskan voters. One of the greatest benefits to expanding these term limits is increasing Nebraska's voters' trust in their elected officials. By having more time with these elected officials, they get to understand their values, what they work for, understand their expertise interests more, and just in general garner better trust for the legislative and political process. I think in a time, especially right now, there's a lot of ups and downs in the public's trust for the government and their elected officials, especially if there's higher turnover rates. So by increasing this ter-- or, by increasing the term limits here, it just gives them better time to know

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who you all are, the work that you do, and ideally appreciate the hard work you do in the time you spend here in the Legislature. So I will keep it short at that because all the great points have been hit. But thank you for your time.

HANSEN: Thank you. Any questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you for coming. Anybody else wishing to testify in support? All right. Seeing none. Is there anybody wishing to testify in opposition? Seeing none. Anybody in the neutral capacity wishing to testify? All right. Seeing none. We will welcome Senator Hunt back up here to close on LR27CA. And for the record, we did have-- I did have right here. For LR27CA, we had 25 written comments and-- as proponents, 15 opposition. For LR19CA, we had 17 proponents, and 18 in opposition, 0 neutral for both of them. Welcome back.

HUNT: Thank you, everyone. Kumbayah. I wish that I had asked former Clerk Patrick O'Donnell to come testify on this bill. I'm listening to some of the proponent testimony. It reminded me of a lot of conversations that I had with him over the years. And we were really lucky here in the Legislature to have some of the longest serving lawmakers with us in the body, but also we can't forget the staff and the longest serving Clerk of the Legislature in the entire country. We got to benefit from his expertise. And our current Clerk, of course, Brandon Metzler, who trained under Patrick O'Donnell, has been such a great advantage to us, especially with so much turnover in the body. It's good that we have someone at the helm who has benefited from that institutional experience. And then, of course, staff. I mean, my, my legislative aide, Hanna Murdoch-- who, you know, really runs the office, honestly-- she came to me from Senator Crawford, who was here for eight years. So we-- as term-limited lawmakers, my point in saying all this is that we benefit tangentially from the longevity of staff and lobby and, you know, people who are peripheral to our work in the Legislature. But I think it would be better if we were the ones with that longevity and that we didn't have to rely only on these peripheral people. And I think it would make the body as a whole much more strong. I, I definitely hear some of the criticisms and concerns that were raised you know, hypothetically, among some colleagues here about, well, we don't want career politicians. We don't want people coming back over and over and over. I think, you know, given the fact that we do make \$12,000 a year, this is-- in Education, you know, with the, with the bill that you guys heard yesterday about increasing senator pay, I think this is something that a lot of Nebraskans don't really understand. And reading some of the online comments in opposition to these LRs-- you know, people saying, oh, well, politicians just want to stay in office forever so they can line their pockets and get rich

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because they're fat cats and all this stuff. And-- I mean, I think that a disadvantage to having such low pay in the Legislature is, you know, if you are an independently wealthy person or if you're retired, if you don't need to make a living, you're more likely to serve in the Legislature because you really don't make a living once you get in here. So I think what people are talking about when they talk about these career politicians is Congress, which is a totally different ballgame. You know, the amount of money they earn, you know, and, and the things that they do with stocks and-- I have lots of criticisms about that kind of thing, but that's not what's going on in Nebraska, in our little Legislature, in our little Unicameral, where people are wearing jeans to work and we don't have any security at the door and-- you know, this is just the Nebraska Legislature. And there's a big difference from highly paid federal offices where someone could be a career politician and the citizen legislators that we have the privilege and honor of being and working with every day. I, I want to thank the people that came in support. I'm sure after I close I'll realize there was something else I wanted to mention, but I think that's about it. I-- you know, another thing-- to Senator Jacobson's remarks that he had made-- there are a couple senators who came back-- Senator Conrad, Senator Chambers, Aguilar, Lathrop-- and, you know, look how, you know, the, quote unquote, term limits worked for some of those senators. Senator Lathrop selected back out. He self-selected not to run again. He did four more years. Senator Aguilar, the voters selected him out. He did four more years. And now Senator Quick is in that position. You know, Senator Conrad may be in a similar position when her-- when she's up for reelection. We don't know if she'll be back or not. So regardless of what we do, the power will still be in the hands of the voters to decide who they want to return, whether that's for their 12th year or their 8th year or, you know, 5th year, I guess I should say, but. Thank you.

HANSEN: Any questions from the committee? Senator Jacobson.

JACOBSON: I, I'm, I'm going to try to try to phrase this as a question, but I think to your last point, it seems that serving three consecutive terms is going to be a lot easier for a senator than to serve two years, sit out for four, and then try to come back and get reengaged. Would, would you agreed with that?

HUNT: Do you mean two terms--

JACOBSON: Yeah. I-- excuse me. Two-- yeah. Two terms, sit out for a term, then come back--

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HUNT: I think so.

JACOBSON: --seemingly the three consecutive is you stay engaged. You, you kind of-- you, you keep the relationships. You're better able probably to effectively serve than that-- not saying you can't do it, but you've got-- there is some getting reengaged and getting the relationships built that you kind of gave up during that four-year hiatus.

HUNT: Yeah. I think the conversation between Speaker Arch and Ms. Uhing was demon-- demonstrative of that, talking about the special session we had and how the pressure was really on because we were losing so many members. And now it really does kind of feel like we're starting from square one again, getting people up to speed on work that many of us have been engaged in for seven years, for, for three years, for five years. And-- yeah. I mean, you look at Senator Lathrop, for example. You know, he, he was out for four years. He came back, and it was a completely different culture-- or eight years, I guess. And it-- he decided it wasn't for him. And that's something I totally understand. People-- I've received comments online, people saying, you know, oh, Senator Hunt's just introducing this because she wants to stay in power. She loves power. You know, whatever you can-- imagine whatever anybody would say. But I-- that-- A, that's not it. And B, you know, I do think about if I sat out for four years and ran again-- I'm, I'm term limited in 2026. What if I sat out and then ran again in 2030? Well, I don't really want to do that either because I want the person that comes after me to represent District 8 to get their shot. You know, I want them to have the full eight years-- which is the maximum possible right now-- to tackle those issues like property tax relief, to tackle the things like school funding and whatever other passion, issue that they will come in with, just as I had the opportunity from Senator Harr, who came before me. I don't think it's doing a favor to Nebraskans either when we have a revolving door every four years. And, you know, if I sit out for eight years and come back, I'm-- I mean, I'm going to be a completely different person. I can't imagine a world where I would want to come back, so. But I do think if a former senator wanted to, I think that's a good thing for Nebraska. You see that from-- before we had the era of term limits, the majority of senators did not want to stay here indefinitely, and I would count myself in that group. Sounds like you would too.

JACOBSON: Yeah. I agree.

HUNT: Yeah.

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HANSEN: I specifically asked Senator Lathrop that his last year here after he decided not to run again. He said, was it different this last four years compared to when you were here before?

HUNT: He talked about it all the time. All, all he said was how it was different.

HANSEN: Without using expletives, he said, no. It's not the same at all as it was when I was here before. And so it does change, I think, a lot, taking that four years off. Any other questions from the committee? Seeing none. Thank you very much.

HUNT: Thanks, everyone.

HANSEN: Senator Dover also did waive his closing. So that will close our hearings for both LR19CA and LR27CA.