

**JANUARY 5, 2005**

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SENATOR CHAMBERS PRESIDING

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Would the Legislature please come to order? Although I'm the new kid on the block, I would request that the Legislature please come to order. Thank you. Good morning. Good morning. Welcome to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for the first day of the Ninety-Ninth Legislature, First Session. We are going to have a minute or two of contemplation. Since this is strictly voluntary, a person may rise or sit, based on your preference or your circumstances. We will be led in this minute or two of contemplation by Senator Kruse. Senator Kruse.

SENATOR KRUSE: (Prayer offered.)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Kruse. We will now have the Presentation of the Colors from the Nebraska Army National Guard and the Nebraska Air National Guard.

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Section 10 of the Constitution of Nebraska, the Ninety-Ninth Legislature, First Session of the Legislature of Nebraska, assembled in the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber of the State Capitol at this hour of 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 5, 2005, is now called to order. Will the senators please record your presence. And I'm going to leave the board open a little longer due to the inclement weather. Mr. Clerk, will you please record and preserve the vote for posterity.

CLERK: (Roll read, Legislative Journal page 1.) I do have a quorum present, Mr. President. (See resignation letter and message from the Governor, Legislative Journal pages 2-3.)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We will now proceed to the appointment of temporary orders...of officers. I recognize Senator Cudaback for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. President, I move to appoint Mr. Patrick J. O'Donnell as temporary Clerk of the Legislature,

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

and Mr. Ron Witkowski as temporary Sergeant at Arms.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. The motion before you is the appointment of temporary officers. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair recognizes (microphone malfunction) Senator Mines. Chair recognizes Senator Mines for a motion regarding Committee on Credentials.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that we proceed to the election of five persons to serve as the Committee on Credentials, who will forthwith report to the Legislature on the credentials of those claiming to be elected to the Legislature in the general election of November 2004.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Mines. The question is the adoption of the motion to elect the Committee on Credentials. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair recognizes Senator Byars for a motion.

SENATOR BYARS: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to elect the following five members of the Legislature to serve on the Committee on Credentials, those being Senators Landis, Beutler, Wehrbein, Schimek, and Cudaback. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Byars. The motion before you is to elect the five named members. Are there any further nominations? All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The five senior members shall retire to the rear of the Chamber, to join with the Clerk and the Secretary of State, straightway and forthwith. (Laughter) Members, the Chair recognizes Senator Schimek for a motion.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President, and if I might, I would like to say how nice it is to see you presiding this morning. I move to approve the Committee on Credentials' report, as certified and presented by the Secretary of State. (Legislative Journal pages 3-5.)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Schimek. The motion

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

before you is to approve the report of the Committee on Credentials. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The report is adopted. Exercising my prerogative as presiding officer, I would invite your attention to items 7 and 11 on your agenda. Rather than a committee of five, that number will be six. In item 11, the committee number will also be changed from five to six. At this time, the Chair recognizes Senator Janssen for a motion.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Mr. President, I move that a committee of six be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislative Chamber for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the members of the Legislature.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Janssen. The motion before you is to select a committee of six to escort the Chief Justice. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair appoints the following senators: Senator Brown, Senator Cornett, Senator Fischer, Senator Howard, Senator Redfield, Senator Schimek. Will the named senators please retire to the Clerk of the Supreme Court's Office to escort the Chief Justice. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Hendry.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: (Gavel) The Chair recognizes the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

CHIEF JUSTICE HENDRY: Thank you. First, let me say that I am honored to be invited by the Legislature into its Chamber to administer the oath to the reelected and newly-elected members of this body. When I call your name, would you please come forward to the...in front of the podium, as I will administer the oath collectively. (Called names of senators to be administered oath of office. Oath of office administered, Legislative Journal page 5.) Congratulations. (Applause)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: The committee will now escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber. The Chair recognizes Senator Hudkins

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

for a motion.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Mr. President, I move that the rules, as now in our possession, be adopted for today only, Wednesday, January 5, 2005.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Hudkins. The motion before you is the adoption of temporary rules. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We now move to the election of permanent officers. The Chair recognizes Senator Engel.

SENATOR ENGEL: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that the following officers be elected to serve for the Ninety-Ninth Legislature: Clerk of the Legislature, Patrick J. O'Donnell; Assistant Clerk, Richard K. Brown; Sergeant at Arms, Ron Witkowski. Thank you.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Engel. The motion before you is the election of permanent officers. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. To the family members who are on the floor, we have enjoyed having you with us today. You are not being required to leave the Chamber, but since we're going to begin electing various positions for the Legislature and it will be necessary for those who pick up ballots to circulate, we're going to ask respectfully that the family members retire to either side of the Chamber, beneath the balconies. Thank you. Members, if my colleagues were as compliant as have been the family members, we would make much more efficient use of our time. So I want to thank the family members this morning for setting such a splendid example. And at this time, I will recognize Senator Don Pederson for a motion.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of the Speaker of the Legislature.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Pederson. The motion before you is the motion to proceed with the election of Speaker. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The floor is open for nominations.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

The Chair recognizes Senator Johnson.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Oh, you have your light on?

SENATOR JOHNSON: (Microphone malfunction)...I'm sorry, I have turned on the wrong light.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Now the family members will understand what I was alluding to. (Laughter) The Chair recognizes Senator Brashear, the distinguished member from the 4th Legislative District in Omaha, Nebraska.

SENATOR BRASHEAR: Mr. President, members of the body, in keeping with our traditions, I rise to nominate myself to be your Speaker. I want to pause and acknowledge my friendship with and affection for Jeanene and Roger Wehrbein, and I want to salute Senator Wehrbein's excellence of service and character, and thank him for the manner in which we have conducted the discussion heretofore. I will not belabor the point. I tried to think upon and summarize for you what I felt about the position of Speaker. I am sincere when I tell you that I believe it is a servant role. I believe that it is, like all of our individual positions, it is one in which we are serving the people but then, if you should elect me your Speaker, I am here to serve you. I believe I have some experience with that, as Chairman of your Judiciary Committee, a position that I have loved and cherished and learned much in and with which you have given me great help. That degree of help will be absolutely essential to service as Speaker. Beyond that, I simply pledge to do my best to preserve all of our best traditions and to promote any new efficiencies that will allow us to continue our service and, yes, our fun together. And with that, I ask for your vote. Thank you.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Brashear. And if I might say so, you looked and sounded very "Speaker-esque" this morning. Are there any further nominations? Seeing none, Senator Cudaback is recognized for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I move the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Brashear.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SENATOR CHAMBERS: All those in favor say aye. Anyone foolhardy enough to be opposed bray heehaw. Thank you very much. Thank you, members. The Chair recognizes Senator Dwite Pedersen for a motion.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: I move that a committee of six be appointed to escort the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to the Legislature Chamber for the purpose of administering the oath of office to the officers of the Legislature.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Pedersen. The motion before you is to select a committee of six to escort the Chief Justice to administer the oath of office to the officers selected. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted, and the Chair appoints the following committee: Senators Combs, Hudkins, McDonald, Price, Stuhr, Thompson. If you will proceed to the Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court to escort the Chief Justice to the Chamber. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the Sergeant at Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. President, your committee now escorting the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Hendry.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: (Gavel) The Chair recognizes the Chief Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

CHIEF JUSTICE HENDRY: Thank you. Would your newly-elected Speaker please come forward, Senator Kermit Brashear? (Oath of office administered to Speaker Brashear.) (Applause)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: The committee...will the committee please escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm getting ahead of myself.

CHIEF JUSTICE HENDRY: I believe there are two other. The Clerk of the Legislature first, Mr. Pat O'Donnell, would you come forward? (Oath of office administered to Clerk O'Donnell.) And now would the Chief Sergeant at Arms Ron Witkowski please come forward. (Oath of office administered to Sergeant at Arms Witkowski.) Now the Assistant Clerk of the Legislature please

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

come forward. (Oath of office administered to Assistant Clerk Brown, Legislative Journal pages 6-7.)

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Will the committee please escort the Chief Justice from the Chamber. The Chair would invite the new Speaker of the Legislature, Senator Kermit Brashear, to approach. Having faithfully discharged my duties as presiding officer of the Legislature, I hereby relinquish the Chair and the hammer to the "Silver Fox," Senator Brashear. I also would take note of the fact that I successfully executed my gentle, courtly revolution based on gender this morning, and I hope it may set a tone for the rest of the session. Your present presiding officer, to all intents and purposes, is dead. Long live and prosper the presiding officer, Senator Kermit Brashear.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR PRESIDING

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: The Chair recognizes Senator Louden.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and let me be one of the first to congratulate you on your assignment. I move to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Committees.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: The motion before you is to proceed with the election of the Chair of Committee on Committees. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The floor is open for nominations. The Chair recognizes Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature. I put my name in nomination for the Chairman of Committee on Committees. I have served on this committee as your Chairman for the last four years, and on the committee itself for ten years. It is a position that serves the Legislature more than it does the people. In that position I tell you I will do the best of my ability to be of service to you. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Dwite Pedersen. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair recognizes Senator

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

Cudaback for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Dwite Pedersen.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: The motion before you is to cease nominations and to declare Senator Dwite Pedersen Chair of the Committee on Committees by acclamation. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed. Congratulations, Senator Dwite Pedersen. The Chair recognizes Senator Dwite Pedersen to make the next motion.

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I move to proceed to the election of the remaining 12 members of the Committee on Committees, and that we authorize the members residing within each of the three districts, as enumerated in Rule 3, Section 2, to nominate 4 members to be elected by the legislative body to serve on the Committee on Committees.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: You have heard the motion. The question is the motion to elect the remaining members of the Committee on Committees. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Will each of the caucuses please submit their report to the Clerk of the Legislature. Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: Mr. President, I have received the reports of the various caucuses. From the 1st District Caucus, Senators Price, Kremer, Schimek, and Landis have been selected to serve on the Committee on Committees. The 2nd Caucus has selected Senators Preister, Bourne, Brashear, and Jensen to serve as members of the Committee on Committees. And the 3rd Caucus has selected Senators Cudaback, Engel, Pederson, and Schrock to serve as members of the Committee on Committees.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. The Chair recognizes Senator Aguilar.

SENATOR AGUILAR: Thank you, Mr. President. I move the approval of the nominees to the Committee on Committees.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator. The question is the motion to approve the nominees. All those in favor please say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The Chair recognizes Senator Bourne for a motion.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, I move to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Bourne. The question is the motion to proceed to the election of the Chairperson of the Executive Board. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. The floor is open for nominations. The Chair recognizes Senator Engel.

SENATOR ENGEL: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to place my name into nomination for the Chairperson of the Executive Board. I served on the board the last eight years, and the past two years as Chairman of it, and these last two years were very challenging for us, especially with the difficult decisions we had to make with the budget restraints and all. But the board's decisions were made with every effort to minimize the impact of these cuts and guarantee that the Legislature is able to conduct its constitutionally mandated duties. I believe we were very successful in those efforts. I also believe in the last two years I've been fair and impartial in my decisions, and will continue to do so if reelected. The next two years will require us to continue to carefully monitor the budget situation, but the greater upcoming challenge will be one that we all have been anticipating--term limits. I'd like to use my experience on the Executive Board to make certain the Legislature, as an institution, is ready for term limits. I believe it is imperative to have procedures in place to ensure that the Legislature is not weakened by term limits and that it stays a strong, equal branch of government. If I am Chairman of the Executive Board, I will put forth a great deal of effort to prepare the Unicameral for term limits and, with your help, move us forward into a new era. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Engel. Are there any

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair recognizes Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I move the nominations be closed; unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Engel.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. The motion before you is the motion to cease nominations and declare Senator Engel Chairperson of the Executive Board by acclamation. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Engel. The Chair recognizes Senator Synowiecki for a motion.

SENATOR SYNOWIECKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, I move to proceed to the election of the Vice Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Synowiecki. Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. President, members, I'd like to place my name in nomination for the Vice Chairman of Exec Board. I have served on the committee. I guess my only statement is that I strive to be fair. That's all I can do. I try to be fair. I appreciate the position of all of us. We all strive to be fair, as representatives of our districts. When you're on the Exec Board, you try to be fair as a whole for the state, and that's what my goal is and that's...I guess that's about as simple as I can put it. I enjoy walking into this building. I have two more years here and every morning, as I walk in to the Capitol, into the Chamber, I look up and see how blessed I am to be able to serve in this great capacity, and I just want to serve two more years in the best way that I see fit. And that's...that's my statement. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair recognizes Senator Johnson.

SENATOR JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, I move nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Cudaback.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Johnson. The motion before you is the motion to cease nominations and declare Senator Cudaback Vice Chairperson of the Executive Board by acclamation. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. Congratulations, Senator Cudaback. (Applause) The Chair recognizes Senator Connealy.

SENATOR CONNEALY: Thank you, Mr. President. I move we proceed to the election of the other six members of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Connealy. The question is the adoption of the motion to proceed to the election of the members of the Executive Board. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. Mr. Clerk, please.

CLERK: Mr. President, the caucuses have met. The 1st District has selected Senators Stuthman and Beutler to serve on the Executive Board. The 2nd Caucus has selected Senators Thompson and Chambers to serve. And 3rd Caucus has selected Senators McDonald and Erdman to serve as members of the Executive Board.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: The Chair recognizes Senator Stuthman.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Honorable Speaker and members of the body, I move the approval of the nominees of the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator. The question is the adoption of the caucus reports. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The caucus reports are adopted. We now move to the election of the standing committee Chairpersons. The Chair recognizes Senator McDonald.

SENATOR McDONALD: Mr. President, I move to proceed to the election of the standing committee Chairpersons by secret ballot, in accordance with Rule 3, Section 7(a).

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator. The question is the

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

adoption of the motion to proceed to the election of standing committee Chairpersons. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. We will start with the election of the Chair of the Agriculture Committee. The floor is now open for nominations. I recognize Senator Kremer.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, I'd like to congratulate you on your new duties. I would like to submit my name as consideration for the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee. I'd like to thank you for allowing me that privilege the last two years. It was about four years ago that there was consideration to consolidate the Agriculture Committee with some other committees and do away with that. Since that time, it seems like we've had many, many issues that have come before us. We've had a real full slate the last couple years, and again this year there's many issues that we've been working on over the interim, and we would like to continue in this capacity to address these. Our state is...agriculture is the number one industry in the state of Nebraska, a single industry. We provide much of the food for the nation and for even the world, so I think that agriculture is very important to us. We are ranked about the top one to three in almost every commodity production, so it's a very important issue, especially to rural Nebraska, but also to all Nebraska. Several issues that we've been working on this interim is on beginning farmer programs, commodity checkoffs, grain warehousing, and substitution, and many other things, so I would appreciate your consideration and allow me to serve in this capacity for the next two years. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Kremer. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the Chair recognizes Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: I move the nominations be closed and unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Kremer.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: You have heard the motion. The motion is to elect Senator Kremer by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. The ayes have it. Senator Kremer is elected. Congratulations, Senator Kremer. (Applause)

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

The floor is open for nominations for Chairman...Chair of the Appropriations Committee. The Chair recognizes Senator Don Pederson.

SENATOR D. PEDERSON: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, it's hard not to be in awe as you stand here in this Chamber, and I feel that, now I've been here, this is my ninth year in the Legislature, and when you consider the responsibility that we have, I think it's very awe-inspiring. And I'm...I've appreciated the opportunity to be in the Legislature and I'd like to tell you just a little bit about myself, because certainly some of the new members wouldn't know me very well. I'll give you a little bit of history. I was born in Hastings, Nebraska, and moved at an early age to Lincoln. I brought my parents with me. And I started school right across the street to the south here at what was called Capitol Grade School. It's no longer there as Capitol Grade School. But then we moved to Omaha and I lived through my grade school, middle school...they called it junior high then...and high school in Omaha, graduating from Omaha Benson. And then I went to UNO. So that's my experience in...background in that respect. After I...after I went to UNO for awhile, I then went to Nebraska University for Law College and I graduated from there and had a brief stint in the state of Oklahoma, which was enough. And I worked for...(laughter)...I worked for an oil company down there and when I realized I...the work, although I was a lawyer, I felt I could be replaced by a postage stamp, so I didn't think that I was doing what I was destined to do, so I moved to Gering, Nebraska, and was in the county attorney's office there and had the opportunity...thank you, Senator Smith. Have to mention Gering every once in awhile. But it was an opportunity to be in the county attorney's office, to engage in the trial of matters up there, and they have considerable amount of criminal prosecution in there, so I gained quite a bit of trial experience at that point. And then an opportunity arose to go to North Platte, and I've been there for a long time practicing law. And I've served in primarily banking and insurance law, and then estate planning, and I was an early president of the Nebraska Association of Bank Attorneys. And I did a lot of water litigation, but I think that probably my activities within the community impacted me greatly. I served on the school board

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

in North Platte for eight years, and that was a very enriching experience. So when I came down here to the Legislature eight years ago, I did like most of you did, the new members. You say, now what's my background; what committee should I try and be on? So I checked those off dutifully, thinking of my background, and shortly after that I was called by the Committee on Committees from our caucus and said, you know, we'd like you to be on the Appropriations Committee. Well, that wasn't even number four on my list at the time, but I said, if that's what you want me to do, I will do it. And it's been a great experience to be on the Appropriations Committee, obviously, or I wouldn't have served on it for eight years, and it's given me an opportunity to touch into the various areas that really constitute the operations of this state. We have a great state. We had so many problems in the last three years in connection with revenue that we had to drastically reduce some of the expenditures that we had, and that troubled us greatly because at times you felt like you were going to the committee seeing what you could do to least damage the state of Nebraska with the dollars that you had, and that's not too good a feeling that you know that what you're doing is going to impact people in many ways. We have been very fortunate to have a very good committee, and that committee has worked diligently to continue the forceful operation of state government in this state, and I feel that they are all entitled to your condolences...no, their credit for having served on the Appropriations Committee. It's a very difficult committee to serve on because, as you...we go through the legislative process and about halfway through we spend mornings in a committee and then...or mornings in the legislative session and then the afternoon in committees, and then after awhile we go all day on the floor, but then the Appropriations Committee has to continue to meet after the floor debate. So that's when things start to fall together. But none of what we have done in the past three years could have been done and accomplished without the help of the Legislature. You have been very supportive of the actions that we have taken. And it certainly isn't a one-person committee at all. It's a nine-person committee, everybody working very hard. And I think we're blessed with that committee. So I feel that it's...I've had the experience. I've served eight years on the Appropriations Committee, the last six of which were in the area

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

of Vice Chairman. And in Vice-Chairman position, I have had the opportunity to work with the Governor's Office, the other committee Chairs and so forth in helping to work our way through the various problems that we've had as far as revenue is concerned. Now I think we're moving into a little different stage. We're moving into a stage where it appears that our revenue is starting to come back, which would tell you that it's not good but it's not as bad as it was. But, unfortunately, when it's announced that we have additional money, then everybody thinks, well, we've been cut back so much, now is the time we better put our request in. And I think it's important, from our standpoint, to see what their needs are. So I've not discouraged anybody in their agencies from telling us what they really need, and then we have to sort through those needs and evaluate that in connection with the revenue that we have. I've appreciated working on the committee and I would like to continue in that respect. I think we have a...we have a bright future. I think we have to work with remembering that what we are distributing on the Appropriations Committee is the people's money, and we have to keep that in mind, but we have certain core things that we have to do and those are, number one, we have to provide for people who can't provide for themselves. We have to provide educational opportunities for all of our young people. In order to make that effective, we also have to have industrial development that takes place so there are jobs for people once they get out of school. So we're working on that. When I worked with the educational task force, which I told all of you about at the time we had the Platte River forum, I feel it's important that we...that we make as effective use of our higher education as we can because we have finite dollars and infinite needs, and so we have to use those needs as prudently as we can. When it appeared that there was a vacancy in the Chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee, I was encouraged by members of that committee to seek the position of Chair. It's a very important committee. I think it's...I think it's terribly important. And I thought that what we would need is somebody who had both experience and the capabilities. I know I have the experience and it's up to you as to whether you think I have the capabilities. But I would ask you...I wasn't running against anybody when I filed for this. I was running because I saw there was a need and, once I said that I was going to run

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

for that office, I'm running for that office. That's why I'm here. And I would urgently ask your support and hope that you can cast your vote for me as Chair of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Don Pederson. The Chair recognizes Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; congratulations, too. And, members of the body, I'd like to nominate myself once again for the position of Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. I want you to know that I have anguished over the decision to run for Speaker, and I was encouraged by many of you. However, the better choice, I concluded this past week, was to not run for Speaker but to ask instead for your vote to continue as Appropriations Chair. Sometimes we have to all make decisions that we have to change our minds. I realize that my late decision had perhaps caused anguish for others, and I apologize for that. However, though it would have been possible to run for this Chairmanship even after attempting and failing to win the Speakership, I am concerned the precedent set may not have been timely and possible. Perhaps it is better addressed by those of you that follow us and have to deal with that impact of term limits when it comes. I have always served on the Appropriations Committee. During my time we have endured two financial crises and, as Senator Pederson said, one which we have not yet fully recovered. I owe many thanks to the members of the Legislature, and particularly to the members of the Appropriations Committee the last several years that I've been on it, which, by the way, is 18. And I present...and I compliment those that have worked hard along with those of us in the leadership positions to find solutions to our many difficult problems. I would pledge to continue that. I recognize that my style of leadership is being challenged. Let me remind you of what I believe it is: consensus seeking and building; two, respect for various individual positions; three, a fair and honest evaluation before making a decision. I believe that this is a fair description of the way I've...of my record and the way I've run the committee. I have tried very hard to keep this process open and fair. In fact, I consider one of my accomplishments the last many years is that the process is more

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

open and fair than it has perhaps ever been. So I respectfully ask for your support and your vote.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Are there further nominations? Are there further nominations? Seeing none, the nominations are closed. Each member will find at their place a pad of plain white notepaper for the purpose of voting by written ballot for the Chair of the Appropriations Committee. Please do so at this time. The Clerk and the Assistant Clerk will pass among you and gather the ballots. Thank you. At this time, the Chair would designate Senators Cornett, Langemeier, and Flood as the Teller Committee for the purpose of tallying the ballots, and ask you to come forward and do so, please. The results are that Senator Don Pederson has received 27 votes; Senator Roger Wehrbein, 22 votes. Senator Don Pederson is elected. We now proceed to open the floor for nominations for Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. Senator Louden.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, I enter my name for the nomination of Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. When beginning a new endeavor, one must have a vision of what has to be accomplished. My vision for the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee is to preserve and build upon the foundation established by previous leaders. A healthy business environment and consumer protection for all Nebraskans should be reflected in the policies that the committee pursues. I offer you the statewide perspective and the experience to accomplish this vision. Nebraska is the home headquarters for a number of worldwide banking and insurance corporations, and we should continue to attract investment to Nebraska from global, as well as national, statewide, and hometown businesses. We must monitor and promote our assets to draw corporate headquarters in the insurance and banking industries. The past several years have seen many changes in the banking industry, and we can count on more changes in the future. Change brings challenges. Many bank mergers have taken place in Nebraska. Local ownership of banks is decreasing and locally-owned credit unions and savings and loan associations are expanding. In some rural areas, credit unions are the major lending institutions. Rules that govern

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

banks and credit unions will be an issue. Electronic banking is no longer a possibility; it's a reality. The technology that drives changes demands our vigilance so that we may be alert to its problems, as well as its benefits. We will be called upon to make informed decisions as to how the consumers' business will best be served. We have very capable public servants in the Departments of Insurance, and Banking. As Chair, I would pledge to work closely and effectively with those agencies to ensure that the Legislature's policies are implemented. The committee's subject matter also includes the Uniform Commercial Codes, partnerships, corporations, real estate, commercial development, public accountancy, trade and exports, as well as trusts, warranties, franchises, and mortgage financing. My service on the committee for the past two years has given me a good grasp of these issues. Through owning and operating a ranch business for 50 years, I have worked extensively with the banking, insurance, and real estate industries. Operating a successful agricultural business requires comprehensive knowledge of crop and livestock insurance, liability insurance, real estate and business trusts, operating loans, capital expansion loans, certificates of deposits, and checking services. If you're fortunate enough to enjoy success in ranching, you even get to know about estate planning. These are all tools of the trade that I'm familiar with. I'm also familiar with the importance of sound public service. I understand that the trust given to us by the public must be used with care and respect. In addition to my two years of service in the Legislature, I have served as a school board member and as a rural electric board member. These elected offices taught me the importance of protecting the public's trust and gave me a good background from which to serve the Legislature. As a member of the Legislature, I have seen the importance of credibility and positive public relations. A Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee can achieve both by guiding the committee in a constructive manner. I am in favor of committees having hearings statewide, such as Senator Schrock conducts with the Natural Resources Committees. These hearings allow a large number of citizens to be involved with state government and become acquainted with senators. This past summer, at my suggestion, the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee journeyed to Chadron and conducted a hearing on

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

liability insurance for "agritourism" businesses. This was the first hearing by the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee ever held in western Nebraska, and it was very well received. Working with diverse interests is essential to effective leadership. My record demonstrates my ability to listen to every viewpoint and to reach agreement among all interested parties. As Chair, I would seek to achieve consensus before advancing legislation to the floor so that the committee's work is done in committee, rather than during floor debate. Senators Landis and Quandahl did this effectively. As Chair, I would work to continue that legacy. Competent committee staff are of vital importance. I would ask the current legal counsel and clerk to continue their excellent service. I ask for your vote for Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Louden. The Chair recognizes Senator Mines.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My congratulations on your election. I look forward to serving with you. Distinguished members, let me just be brief. It's an extreme honor for me to submit my name as...in nomination of Chair of Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee, and to be considered by you, my colleagues, for the position. I have a very sincere desire to serve you and to serve the committee in this leadership role. As Chair of the committee, I promise to uphold the tradition of conciliator, and to facilitate full and fair debate within the committee and as well as on this floor. The banking and insurance industries are dynamic industries that are certainly changing. And with your support and the assistance of our outstanding committee counsel and committee clerk, I hope to represent you as Chair of this committee. Thank you for your consideration, and I would sincerely appreciate your vote.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Mines. Are there further nominations? Seeing none, nominations will cease. We will proceed to cast a written ballot for Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. We will use the ballot forms made available at your place, and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk will pass among you to gather them. The Chair would ask

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

Senators Heidemann, Pahls, and Howard to serve as the Teller Committee and to come forward at the appropriate time for that purpose. Thank you. Have all submitted ballots who want to submit ballots? Members, if we may have your attention, the result is Senator Mines, 34 votes; Senator Louden, 15. Senator Mines is elected Chair of the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee. Congratulations, Senator Mines. We will now proceed to the election of Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. Nominations for Chair. Senator Cunningham.

SENATOR CUNNINGHAM: Well, thank you, Senator Brashear and members of the body. And, Senator Brashear, I too would like to go on record as congratulating you, and look forward to working with you. I submit my name for Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. I think I have a good understanding of the issues facing this committee. I've spent the last 34 years of my adult life working in the grocery industry; the first 9 of those as an employee, the last 25 as a small business owner. In that 25 years, I've had the opportunity to work side by side with my employees. But I've also had the opportunity during that time to meet the payroll and try to meet the expenses and keep a small business operating. I've finished my fourth year in the Legislature, starting my fifth year today. I think I'm ready for this challenge. There's going to be two very large major issues facing this committee this year, amongst others--the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and the workmen's comp fund, or the insurance program. Both programs, as I stated, have major problems. And I was going to tell you a little bit more about some of those problems, but I'm going to skip it, because Senator Pedersen (phonetic) says we need to go home. And I'm going to kind of go on with that. But there are major problems in both programs. The costs are skyrocketing. We need to find a way to get those costs under control, while preserving the integrity of both programs, while at the same time protecting those individuals who are truly deserving of the benefits, either for unemployment or who are injured in the workplace. But, as you all remember, I had an unemployment bill last year that we spent a lot of time on. It was very...it got controversial. From that I've learned, I don't think we're going to have sustainable and long-term reform without working together. So my goal, if I'm Chair--and I've already been

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

working on this, hoping to be Chair--but I've been sitting down with members of the department, the business community. I've had meetings with some of the organized labor from Omaha. I've got another meeting scheduled next week with those same groups. We're going to schedule an afternoon and sit down across the table from each other for an afternoon, as I said, and try to hammer out a compromise and see if there isn't some common ground that we can come up with to help fix these programs. Actually, the meeting next week is on unemployment insurance. But my promise to you, even though I've gained my life experience in the grocery business on the business side of it, my promise to you is that I will be a fair Chairman. I am not the sort of person that will try to bury your legislation and not bring it up for discussion in an Executive Committee. I will not do that. That is my promise to you. I would tell you again, I feel I'm qualified because of my business experience, my four years in the Legislature. I'm looking forward to the challenge, if you give me the opportunity, and I humbly ask for your vote. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cunningham. The Chair recognizes Senator Combs.

SENATOR COMBS: Congratulations to you, Speaker Brashear. Mr. Speaker and members of the body, I place my name in consideration for Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. Very briefly, I just want to discuss what I believe is required of a senator who desires to serve as a committee Chair. It is not just a figurehead selected to oversee a meeting, nor is it a mere prize to be given out. It is a position of great importance to the development of sound, solid policy, and effective work being done on bills prior to coming to the floor for debate. First of all is a sense of fairness. We all know that, around here, about everybody are tuned in to the radio station "WIIFM"--What's In It For Me? And being cognizant of that fact, the effective committee Chair will ensure that all proposals are given a fair and complete hearing, and that all sides have been fairly represented. I do work for Farmland Foods in Crete, Nebraska, which is a union shop. And I work in the management sector of the company, managing our workers' compensation program. I know the importance of fairness, and I

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

make these decisions every day that I'm at work. Next is a full knowledge of the issues and their minutia. Why is this so important? An effective Chair must know the value of the chips that each player has in front of them when you're asking them to ante up and come together. Are they red chips or black chips? And for you nongamblers, those are either \$5 or \$100 chips. So I knew we weren't going to mention the "g" word again this session, but let's compare them to that. You must know the value of those chips. Both sides have some of each that the Chair is going to have to ask them to play. If you don't know the value of the chips, it's very difficult to ask them to be played by each side when you have to. Another is sound communication skills, sincerely acknowledging where both sides are coming from, listening very carefully with an open mind, and realizing that the important truth will exist beyond our individual opinions on the issues. Our committee is somewhat unusual in the fact that the two sides that we bring together are very polarized for the most part on most of our issues. Like polarized magnets, it's not opposite poles coming together, but the same ones. And if you remember when we were kids and tried to put the same poles of a magnet together, you just can't do it. So the best you can hope for as a Chair is to bring both of those sides as closely together as you possibly can, and make good policy, before they go flying back into their corners again. And a Chair that's been a really excellent role model for me in this area, and his...has been Senator Landis. And he's a Chair that has a really astute ability to bring all parties to the table, and I really admire that. Another essential is the ability to control the meeting and keep it on track, asking the right questions and controlling the meeting fairly, so that everyone is heard but the hearings don't become unfairly dragged out. We've all been in those, haven't we? Everyone's time is very valuable, and once an idea has been totally presented, asking for a limited testimony and capsulizing what has been heard is extremely important. A good role model for me in this area has been watching and working with Speaker Brashear. Valuing every committee member's input is also very important, even when their views are diametrically opposed to yours. When we look at good, sound policy development, many of you have heard me compare it to genetics. We must have a pool of diverse and varied genetic material to

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

gather ideas from, to avoid having just the negative traits magnified in our final end product. What we don't want is a mutant policy that derives from the same pool of genetic material. For this trait, I am reminded of what Senator Wehrbein has had to do in his hearings. Finally, the Chair must be a visionary. We must look beyond just the next two years and into the future beyond that, in an actuarial sort of way, so that our limited financial resources that Senator Cunningham referred to are being spent in the best possible way, are being distributed fairly, and are sustainable to meet our needs when balanced with the future demands projected on our funding. Particularly with the unemployment program, as he alluded to, we're going to have to walk toward the pain this year with that program. It's in desperate need of restructuring, and the Chair is going to have to have the courage to get that done, and done as fairly as possible for everyone involved. We must change the way that we have come to view this program. It is an insurance program intended for the replacement of lost wages through the catastrophic and unexpected loss of employment. It is not an entitlement program. It has to be treated, again, more like a true insurance program, when we look at how we are going to restructure it. The Chair will need to take the lead in educating both all committee members and the body, so we have a thorough understanding of what has to be done and can reach some agreement on it. For this trait, I have to be reminded of Senator Raikes, upon whom I have depended so many times to do just that. I don't promise to be exactly the same as any of the mentors that I've listed in these attributes. I can only assure you that I will take what I've learned from watching them as leaders and do the very best job that I can. So, in closing, I want to tell you all how grateful I am to have had the opportunity just to campaign for this office. It's like running for office two years ago. The joy is in the journey. So I've really enjoyed getting to know people better and become much closer to each one of you as we've discussed all the issues. And I think I have a greater understanding of what each of us believes about them, and what you believe about them. So again, I ask for your careful consideration, and for your vote for me as Chair of this committee. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Combs. Are there further

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

nominations? Seeing none, nominations will cease. We will now proceed to cast a written ballot for Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk will pass among you to gather the ballots. And the Chair would ask Senators Kopplin, Fischer, and Synowiecki to constitute the Teller Committee at the appropriate time. Thank you. The results of the balloting are that Senator Cunningham has 26 votes; Senator Combs, 22. Senator Cunningham is elected Chair of the Business and Labor Committee. Congratulations, Senator Cunningham. We will now proceed to the election of the Chair of the Education Committee. Nominations. Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. President. Congratulations, Mr. Speaker. I have to admit that in the short time since you have moved from here to the front of the Chamber, I've noticed a resurgence of hearing in my right ear. (Laughter) Members of the Legislature, I would like to continue serving as Chair of the Education Committee. Therefore, I wish to nominate myself for that position. The circumstance presented us during the past four years has been challenging. Looking back, I am honored to have served on the Education Committee and in the Legislature during this time. In my view, the Legislature addressed the challenge responsibly and with courage. None of us got everything we wanted, but I'm convinced that, in the main, the result was good state policy. Certainly, the main...the hurdles were fiscal. But we also began to address the need for structural change--mental health; and to directly address policy issues that certainly it would have been easier to ignore--water policy. In the main, the citizens of the state, both those in and outside the education community, were not only cooperative, but allies in our efforts. I hope this experience of responsibility, courage, and cooperation will provide precedent as we move forward. As we begin this session, we may be tempted to relax a little, but we can't afford that. We still face fiscal challenges. And in public education, we need to address, in my opinion, our current policy for distribution of state funds, and our current structure of school districts. Some of this will not be easy or comfortable for many of you. But if we are to keep pace in providing outstanding educational opportunities for Nebraska students, and do so within the means of our taxpayers, we must move forward.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

I invite your ideas and proposals on education issues. I have greatly appreciated your support, and ask for the opportunity to continue to serve you as Chair of the Education Committee. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, you're recognized for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Raikes.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. The motion is to declare Senator Raikes Chair of the Education Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion carries. Congratulations, Senator Raikes. We will next proceed to the election of the Chair of the General Affairs Committee. Nominations. Senator Janssen.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. And congratulations, Mr. Speaker. I would like to place my name in nomination for the Chair of the General Affairs Committee. I feel my experience chairing the committee for the last six years now makes me, I feel, very much qualified to continue leading the General Affairs Committee. We have been through some significant policy discussions over the years involving our issues, which are gaming, liquor, cemeteries, libraries, Nebraska Arts Council, and the State Electrical Board. The past few years have been very busy for the General Affairs Committee. I am proud of the diligence of the committee and the body to get the work done that we needed to do. We have some significant issues to take care of this year also. We have several issues to cover for the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission. Some of them are from allowing more discretion when deciding who should get the liquor license, to make sure the statutes correctly classify certain alcoholic beverages according to recent federal regulations. The committee will also be looking at creating better information on cemeteries throughout the state, and towards making our state cemetery statutes more clear and functional. And of course, there are

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

always a number of issues to address regarding all of the aforementioned entities that we handle. I worked hard for the committee and for the body, in a fair manner, I believe, and a straightforward and honest, open-minded and respectful when dealing with those who come before the committee and my fellow senators. I enjoyed working with the committee, and will continue to work hard towards finding the best answers to hard questions that come before us. And I ask for your vote for the Chair of the committee. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, you're recognized.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator...for Senator Janssen, excuse me. (Laughter)

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: You've heard the motion. The motion is to elect Senator Janssen as Chair of the General Affairs Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is so ordered. Senator Janssen, congratulations. Next, we will proceed to the election of the Chair of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. Nominations. Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations to you. I rise for the purpose of placing my name in nomination for Chair of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. And I have to tell you, for those of you who have not been here before, that I've been on this committee all but about, oh, four or five years, I think, since I've been in the Legislature, and have served as committee Chair for eight years, although those were nonconsecutive years, I might add, and Vice Chair for two years. I have a good working knowledge of the issues of the committee. Some of the issues that we worked on over the last several years--and I mention this because again, if you're unfamiliar with the committee workings, you wouldn't know that we have a rather broad range of issues--but one of the things that we've tried to do over the past couple of years is to strengthen the relationship between the committee and the National Guard. And in fact, many of the committee

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

members, or most of the committee members, I should say, have been included in ceremonies for send-offs for the troops, and for welcome-homes for the troops. We've also had a renewed focus on veterans' homes, and have done studies on the veterans' homes, to make certain that they are being well run. We have looked this past summer in an interim study at veterans' benefits, because there's been some question, since an Attorney General's Opinion, about whether veterans who have a general discharge under honorable conditions can receive benefits, since that opinion. And actually, we have done the interim study and we are introducing legislation this year to straighten that all out. Those veterans have been receiving benefits for the past 60 years, so to take them away at this point in time seemed to us to be not a very positive thing to do. We're also involved with a lot of state agencies, and oversee a lot of state government. And we have election law under our purview. So especially since the elections of 2000 and the passage of the federal HAVA Act, we've been very busy looking at the fine points of election law, and have introduced a number of pieces of legislation. And I think that's going to continue for a while, because it's not all straightened out yet. And even in Nebraska, where we have a very good election system, I must say, we still have some things that we need to iron out. And I do...have enjoyed my work with the Secretary of State, have served with him on the election task force and also on the Vote Nebraska Initiative. We've looked at personal service contracts. That's a continuing issue, and we've worked very closely, especially with Senator Preister, on those. And we are finally at the point with reviewing boards and commissions where I think we have an excellent catalog of all the boards and commissions in the state. And we're now reviewing those every two years. I think we'll be coming to you with a piece of legislation this year to make that every four years. Now that we're finally at the point where we know where all those boards and commissions are, we'd like to continue it, but to make it a four-year program. We have a lot of issues that we still need to look at. And I think Senator Raikes' comments triggered this thought in my head, about how we need to continue to look at the number of local subdivisions that we have in this state, and how we can fund all the services that are needed. Anyway, I would like...I would very much like your support for continuing in

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

this job. But I have to thank those members who have been on the committee the last two years. You've been very helpful, and we've worked well together. And I'd also like to thank an excellent staff who continues to do good work for the committee. So with that, thank you very much.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Schimek. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, members, I move that the nomination be closed and a unanimous vote be taken, by acclamation, for Senator Schimek.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: You have heard the motion. All those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. The ayes have it. Senator Schimek is elected Chair of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. Congratulations, Senator Schimek. We will now proceed to the election of the Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. Nominations are open. Senator Jensen.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations on being elected Speaker of this body. I've been on Health and Human Services Committee for the last ten years, serving as Chairman for the last six. It has been an honor and a privilege to head that particular department...or committee. As you know, Health and Human Services represents 37 percent of the state budget, 36 percent of the state employees. So it is the largest group that you have that we oversee. Also in that process, we do regulate and license everything from nurseries to nursing homes, and beyond. And the challenges that we have faced in the past have been great. And I would applaud this body for some of the things that have come about--LB 692, where we took our tobacco settlement dollars and were one of only four states that placed those dollars all into healthcare. Not only did we place it into healthcare, but we placed it into a trust fund which we can fund now \$50 million a year into healthcare into the next century, provided that the Legislatures in the future will follow up on that. We also have passed some mental health reform, long overdue, still in the process. And I appreciate all of you and your work on that issue. So the challenges ahead

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

of us also are great, in as we look at our demographics of this great state and we see that we have baby boomers who in a few years start to achieve the retirement age and the time when they will go into nursing homes, and we look at the Medicaid expenses, which are double-digit each year, one of the large elephants that we have before us, and how we address that issue. And we're going to have to look at that very carefully; carefully, because it will one of the largest expenditures that we as a state, with our revenues, will fund. So with those issues before us, and with a great committee that I've experienced in the past, and a great staff, I believe that we are up to that challenge, and looking forward to it. With that, I would just ask that I again would be allowed to chair this great committee for the next two years. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Jensen. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, members, I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Jensen.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard the motion to cast a unanimous ballot to elect Senator Jensen Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Congratulations, Senator Jensen. We will next proceed to the election of the Chair of the Judiciary Committee. Nominations are now open. Senator Bourne.

SENATOR BOURNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. I respectfully submit my name for your consideration to be Chair of your Judiciary Committee. As many of you may know, I served for three years on the committee, so I have a very strong working knowledge of the issues before the committee. The one thing I will promise you is continuity. I will do everything I can to bring the same efficiency, fairness, meticulous level of drafting and attention to detail that the previous Chair did. That's my commitment to you. I would very much appreciate your support. Thank you.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Bourne. Further nominations? Seeing no further nominations, Senator Cudaback, for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the nominations be closed and a vote by...unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Bourne.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. The motion is to declare Senator Bourne the Chair of the Judiciary Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. Congratulations, Senator Bourne. We will next proceed to the election of the Chair of the Natural Resources Committee. Nominations are open. Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. Congratulations, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues who have been elected to leadership positions, and congratulations to the new senators on your elections. It's been my observation in this body that there's 49 of us here, and our agenda is to do what's best for the state of Nebraska. And I will tell you, I can't think of anyplace else I'd rather be this morning than right here. I have been on the Natural Resources Committee eight years. I have been Chair of that committee for six. I would like to do that for two more years. We deal with issues such as water, such as the environment, such as public power, and such as Game and Parks. And these decisions we make will have long-lasting ramifications. So, I take my job seriously. I'll try to be fair. With your help, I think we've passed some excellent legislation in the past. With that, I ask for your consideration.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Further nominations for Chair of the Natural Resources Committee? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Schrock.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

the motion to elect Senator Schrock Chair of the Natural Resources Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is so done. Senator Schrock, congratulations. We will open nominations for Chair of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I too want to add my congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to place my name in nomination for Chairperson of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. I have served on the committee for the last eight years, and I have had the opportunity to serve as Vice Chair and also Chair. Serving in these capacities have provided me with experience and insight on the many complicated issues and subject matter that are addressed by this committee. The primary responsibility of the Retirement Committee and the Legislature is to ensure adequate and sound retirement systems for Nebraska's public employees. And there are basically five systems that we oversee--the State Patrol, the school employees, the judges, the state, and county employees. And we do have challenges to face this coming session. I believe efficiency and fairness are vital to the effectiveness of our committee system. I pledge to continue to listen, to be approachable, to work with committee members and the public, and to conduct hearings in a fair and impartial manner. I also believe that the committee has a fiscal responsibility to consider the state's budget. I am pleased that the Executive Board approved our request for an actuary, to ensure that we have accurate information provided to our committee. If elected, I will continue to work hard to carry out the responsibilities of this committee, and would be honored to serve as your Chair. And I do want to thank also the committee members that we've worked with in the past, and the staff, for their very good work. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Stuhr.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard the motion to elect Senator Stuhr Chair of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee by acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is unanimous. Congratulations, Senator Stuhr. Now we proceed to the election of the Chair of the Revenue Committee. Nominations are open. Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you, Speaker Brashear. These are the last 2 years of what will have been a 28-year span in the Nebraska Legislature. And of those 28 years, I will predict that the last 4 will be the most difficult--the 2 that we've just undergone, and the 2 that we're about to undergo. In all those 28 years, these will have been the hardest ones. The last two or three years have been essentially a partnership between the Appropriations Committee, strained to the ends of their abilities to get to the problem of sensible, hard, tough budgeting, and the Revenue Committee, searching for revenue alternatives. One day a couple of years ago, we were looking at the reinstating of a half-cent sales tax which we had earlier repealed when times were better. And we were looking at the problem of whether or not all of the money should go into the General Fund, or should we continue with the standard, which is that the sales tax on cars should go to the road fund? That day, the road lobby came in and said, we have never sent money from car sales to the General Fund; it has always gone to the road fund. And invoking the memory of Jerry Warner, said, Jerry Warner would never have agreed to sending money from the sales tax on cars to anything but the road fund. I said, well, in a question, were you here during the Kerrey administration? Because that's exactly what Senator Warner did. He agreed, under times not as difficult as these, to divert for six months the sales tax on cars to the General Fund to relieve the General Fund budget. It didn't surprise me that no member of my committee would remember back to the Kerrey administration. It did surprise me that there wasn't a single person in the room who remembered the Kerrey administration or what the real precedent was, as opposed to the precedent which was being offered to us mistakenly from, I think, a well-meaning lobbyist who in fact didn't go back to the history that was there. To

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

the extent that I can make available to this body that body of experience that I will bring for 28 years of service, it is my honor and pleasure to serve you, if you would allow me to do so, as Revenue Chair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Landis. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Landis.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard the motion to declare Senator Landis unanimously the Chair of the Revenue Committee. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Congratulations, Senator Landis. We will now proceed to the election of the Chair of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. Nominations are open. Senator Baker.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. And likewise, congratulations on your election to Speaker. I stand to place my name in nomination for Chair of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. I've served on the committee the past six years, the last two years as its Chair. I've learned a great deal these past six years. The committee addresses many, many issues affecting all Nebraskans, and I take my responsibilities very seriously. We've worked diligently over the interim, holding hearings on many different issues. From these hearings, we have identified much work that needs our attention. Some of these issues are the potential oversight of wireless communications within the state of Nebraska, providing for a recodification of the Department of Motor Vehicles' statutes, and the continuing development of a statewide communications system. We indeed have been very busy this interim, the past interim. I pledge to you that I will continue to work diligently with all of you if you have any issues that may come before our committee. And I ask for your support. Thank you.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Baker. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Baker.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard the motion. It is to cast a unanimous ballot for Senator Baker for Chair of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Congratulations, Senator Baker. And now we will proceed to the election of the Chair of the Urban Affairs Committee. Nominations are open. Senator Friend.

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Legislature, I stand to respectfully submit my name for your consideration as Chairperson of the Legislature's Urban Affairs Committee. A lot of people...why, why would you want to do this? Four kids, a lot of things to do, plenty of things outside of here to try to accomplish. I'll be brief. I know Senator Mines mentioned that that's virtually impossible for me, but I will be brief. A few reasons: I know this state. There's a misconception with a lot of folks...by a lot of folks around the state about folks in Omaha, that they may not know a lot of the things going on around the state. Well, my daughter was born in Grand Island, my oldest daughter. I lived there for four years. I lived in Nebraska City for three years. I worked at a small newspaper there. I made less money than I actually make doing this job. It's a great town. I lived in Kearney for two years. I actually studied and tried to pay bills there, went to school. I know this state. I like this state, and I've in a lot of the small towns around here, and I've worked in a lot of the communities. I have a comfort level with the issues that are associated with the Urban Affairs Committee. I don't have the comfort level that even some in this body may have, but I do have a comfort level with them. And I also find them interesting. And I would share some of those interesting issues with you, but they're so exciting and so vigorous that we'd be here for, I don't know. Everybody wants to eat. So I do find

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

them interesting, and I find that this could be a challenge that I really wanted to undertake for the body. I would say that if...finally, that if you deem me qualified, if you find, those of you that have worked with me, if you find that you can trust my judgment, if you find that you can trust me when I look at you and tell you something, I would ask you, and I would want to let you know that I would be honored to serve this body, my constituency and the state of Nebraska as the Urban Affairs Chairman. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Friend. Further nominations? Senator Smith.

SENATOR SMITH: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would move nominations cease.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: A moment of spontaneity. We have a motion by...can we interpret that as also to cast a unanimous ballot?

SENATOR SMITH: (Microphone malfunction)...Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Smith. The motion is to cast a unanimous ballot for the election of Senator Friend as Chair of the Urban Affairs Committee. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Senator Friend, congratulations. Senator Price, for a motion, please.

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome aboard. I move to proceed to the election of the special and select committee Chairpersons by secret ballot.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Price. The question is the motion to proceed to the election of the Chairpersons of the special and select committees. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion is adopted. The floor is open for nominations for Chair of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee. Senator Aguilar.

SENATOR AGUILAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. My congratulations as well to the Speaker and to all the

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

other Chairpersons at this point. I've served in this position now for four years, and would very much like to have your trust and faith and vote to do it again. Looking forward to continued travel for this body and members of the state of Nebraska. Thank you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, you're recognized for a motion, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a vote...unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Aguilar.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Cudaback. You've heard the motion. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Congratulations, Senator Aguilar. And now we will open nominations for Chair of the Rules Committee. Senator Hudkins, please.

SENATOR HUDKINS: Thank you, Mr. President and colleagues. I would like to place my name in nomination for Chair of the Rules Committee. After having elected all but two Chairs, it continues to amaze me at the number and variety of bills that come before this body. The Rules Committee, though not as busy as some of the others, is just as important. The rules are what we follow in our day-to-day deliberations. If we didn't have rules, our business could and most likely would be chaotic. Some years, we have many requests for a rules change, and other years not so many. But each request is dealt with thoughtfully. I have been on the committee for four years, and I have been Chair of the Rules Committee for four years. I would like to continue in that capacity, and I respectfully ask for your vote.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Hudkins. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Hudkins.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: You have heard the motion. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Senator Hudkins is elected Chair of the Rules Committee unanimously, by acclamation. Congratulations, Senator. Next, we will elect the Chair of the Enrollment and Review Committee. Senator Erdman.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, we have truly saved the best for last. Without this next individual's service to our body, we would literally be unable to continue on with any deliberations beyond General File. And so it is with great honor and privilege that I place Senator Mike Flood's name in nomination to be the Chairman of our Enrollment and Review Committee.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Erdman. You've heard the nomination. Further nominations, please. Senator Flood.

SENATOR FLOOD: I've always been a good speller, and I'm especially good with past participles. And I look forward to my new duties. And the folks in Norfolk are going to be very proud of me. (Laughter)

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Flood. Further nominations? Hearing none, Senator Cudaback, for a motion, please.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed and a unanimous vote, by acclamation, be cast for Senator Flood.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: You've heard the motion to elect Senator Flood by unanimous acclamation. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed, nay. It is done. Congratulations, Senator Flood. Senator Redfield, for a motion, please.

SENATOR REDFIELD: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I move that a committee of three be appointed to escort the Secretary of State to the Chamber to deliver the election returns of the general election of November 2004.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you, Senator Redfield. The question is the adoption of the motion to appoint a committee to escort the Secretary of State. All those in favor say aye. All those opposed say nay. The motion is adopted. And the Chair would appoint Senators Wehrbein, Combs, and Louden as the committee, and ask them to escort the Secretary of State to deliver the election returns. Would the three senators please retire to the rear of the Chamber. Thank you. Members, please. The Chair would recognize the Sergeant at Arms.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. Speaker, your committee now escorting the Secretary of State, John Gale.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: (Gavel)

SENATOR CUDABACK PRESIDING

SENATOR CUDABACK: The Chair recognizes Secretary Gale.

SECRETARY GALE: Mr. Clerk, I deliver to you the abstracts of the 2004 general election from the 93 counties in Nebraska for canvass by the members of the Ninety-Ninth Nebraska Legislature. (Legislative Journal pages 14-17.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Would the committee please escort the Secretary of State. Senator Kremer, you're recognized for a motion.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to approve the report of the Secretary of State, and the candidates stated therein be declared duly elected.

SENATOR CUDABACK: The question is adoption of the motion to accept the report from the Secretary of State. All those in favor say aye. Those opposed, nay. The motion was adopted. Senator Baker, you're recognized for a motion.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Mr. President. I move to arrange to hold the inaugural ceremonies for the newly-elected state officials on Thursday, January 6, 2005, at 1:45 p.m.

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

SENATOR CUDABACK: You've heard the motion. All in favor say aye. Opposed, nay. The motion was approved. Mr. Speaker, Senator Brashear, it's my privilege to recognize you.

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Thank you. Mr. President and members of the body, I asked for this time and I wanted to come back here. If you would...I'm not trying to tell you what to do, but if you'd like to sit down a minute, I'd like to talk to you a minute, if I could, please. (Laugh) I guess you can stand up, but I'm going to take a little time, if I can, to explain some things. We do in fact have our session calendar prepared and ready to distribute to you. I have it here, and when I'm done, the pages, if they would come get it and distribute it, I would appreciate it. And it's available and it will also be distributed to your offices. I'd like to give you a little explanation. And this will be how I'm going to do it. If I do too much of it, you'll tell me. But I'd like to explain things as we go along, and see if we can work together to make things as good for us as possible. The philosophy that I used...you know, the public doesn't understand why we're here these days. We come to the floor, we aren't doing anything in particular. They're not taking into account that you have constituent calls and mail to handle, that you're training staff, that we're organizing offices, that we're moving, that we are preparing to serve on committees, that the committees are organizing. There's a lot going on. We all know we're busy. But the fact of the matter is, we're not busy here on the floor. And so, in large part, what you'll see in this calendar is, we're using legislative days, and we have several five-day weeks in January, but five-day weeks in January are days we need to have. But we can...we're using them. They're largely about committee work. So then, as we get into the portion of the session where we are, as one person said to me, tired and cranky and worn out and not getting along so well, we'll go...we'll have more four-day weeks. So that was the philosophy--more five-day weeks in the beginning when we could handle them; more four-day weeks at the end when we needed them for the quality of our work. That's the philosophy of the calendar. I am reliably informed that tomorrow morning there will be a lot of bills to introduce and so, in reliance on that information, we'll start at 10:00. But here's a twist I want to put in, that I think makes some sense,

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

January 5, 2005

and you'll tell me whether it does. There's no reason to come here at 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning to put in a few bills. So on...and I'm reliably informed that this causes confusion. But you're all bright and take instruction well, and so I'm going to risk the confusion. On Friday and Monday, we will not convene until 11:00. And we will look for other days to convene at 11:00, because we can put in all the bills we need to put in from 11:00 to 12:00. And I will wait for Senator Hudkins and the Rules Committee to indicate that they are ready for the rules discussion. And then we might go back to a 9:00 in order to do rules, and then we might go again to an 11:00. So bear with me as we adjust the starting time. I'm trying to do that for your and our convenience. You'll let me know whether it's an assist or not. I would point out that the...we have announced that the inaugural tomorrow is 1:45. That's so we can come here, be organized, and do our roll call. The inaugural will actually begin at 2:00. I thank you for your time and attention. I'm open to your suggestions about the decisions we have to make as we organize our work. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you very much, Senator Brashear, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Clerk, do you have any announcements?

CLERK: Mr. President, the Committee on Committees will meet at...2:30, Senator Pedersen? Senator Pedersen? Still 2:30, Senator?

SENATOR Dw. PEDERSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that's right.

CLERK: Two-thirty, in Room 1507; Committee on Committees, 2:30, Room 1507. That's all that I had, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. All our work being completed, Senator Engel. Senator Engel moves to adjourn. All in favor of adjournment say aye. All opposed, nay. We are adjourned. Thank you very much for being attentive.

Proofed by: J. Hurlbut