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BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE
OF REVIEW

November 13, 2007
1:45 p.m.

PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Senator Roraback
Senator Looney

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SENATORS: DeFronzo, Guglielmo,
Nickerson, Stillman

REPRESENTATIVES:

SENATOR RORABACK: Good afternoon. Jeff, could I ask you to shut the door, please. Thank you. Good afternoon. I'd like to convene the meeting of the Bipartisan Committee of Review for Thursday, November 13th, 2007.

The first item on our agenda is approval of minutes from Tuesday, November 6th, 2007 meeting. Is there a motion?

SENATOR STILLMAN: So moved.

SENATOR RORABACK: Moved by Senator Stillman. Is there a second?

SENATOR LOONEY: Second.

SENATOR RORABACK: Seconded by Senator Looney. Any discussion? All in favor, please say aye.

ALL: Aye.

SEN. RORABACK: Any opposed? The ayes have it. The minutes are approved.

I don't know, at this time I'd like to recognize my Co-Chairman, Senator Looney, for any comments he may have.

SEN. LOONEY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, the Committee will be concluding its work today.

First of all, I would like to thank all of the Committee Members for working so closely on a bipartisan consensus basis throughout. It has been a very difficult process, but I think that the cooperation, I think, has been exactly what we hoped it would be when we began, and the end result, I think, has borne that out.

Would also like to thank all of our staff who did voluminous amount of research and so many other things as we were going down this path of a circumstance that was unique and unprecedented in the history of the Senate.

I want to thank everyone from the staff who worked so hard from the LCO and OLR in this whole process from the end of August until today.

Finally, today's outcome, obviously, I believe that Senator DeLuca's announced resignation is ultimately in the best interests of himself and his family and the Senate and the State of Connecticut.

Again, want to thank all of the colleagues for working so conscientiously with the difficult charge that we were given.

SEN. RORABACK: Thank you, Senator Looney. Are there any other comments? Senator Nickerson.

SEN. NICKERSON: Yes, I just want to add my comment that I think it's, not I think, I know it's very, very rare in the history of any Legislature, certainly this Legislature, that we have all votes unanimous. I think it speaks well for the ability of Republicans and Democrats to come together in difficult situations.

There may be differing opinions on what we did, but no one can doubt that there was a genuine effort and a successful effort to work in a collegial and bipartisan fashion. For that I thank my fellow Members.

SEN. RORABACK: Senator DeFronzo.

SEN. DEFRONZO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few comments as we conclude our work also. First, I think we all know it's never easy to sit and pass judgment on one of your peers and colleagues, especially in a case involving a senior and respected Member as Senator DeLuca has been.

And I think that has been a very challenging and difficult assignment for all of us, but this procedure has been a very rewarding one in the sense, as Senator Nickerson indicated, that

we have been able to work cooperatively in a bipartisan fashion.

We have not succumbed to a rush to judgment. We have not been pressured by public opinion. I think the procedures have been deliberative, thoughtful, and quite professional.

I too want to extend recognition to the work of the staff. We have got to have compiled the largest archive of information on disciplinary action in state legislatures, and hopefully, hopefully that will be retained for, not only for the Legislators' benefit, but perhaps for academic purposes as well.

And I want to recognize the Chairs of the Committee and say to both of you that you've conducted this Committee with great fairness, respect for all of its Members, I think great consideration for the rights of Senator DeLuca, and have been very judicious in your leadership of the Committee, and I think we all appreciate that, and I think the Legislature and the people of Connecticut appreciate it as well.

I do hope that the materials that we've assembled, the standards that we've discussed, the materials that we've assembled can be preserved in a secure way for future Legislatures in the event they're needed.

I think much of the work we've done, particularly in the area of standards, can be useful to future Legislatures. And much of the

historical documentation of this event could be very helpful as well.

I don't know exactly how we go about ensuring their preservation, but I, if we need a motion to do that, perhaps later in this meeting or perhaps as a part of your direction to staff that would be appropriate.

But again, thank you for your leadership, and it's been an honor to serve on this Committee.

SEN. RORABACK: Thank you very much, Senator DeFronzo. Does any other Member of the Committee, Senator Stillman.

SEN. STILLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to thank the staff for all that they've done in responding to our requests for information and helping us understand what it is they put in front of us. It has been most valuable.

But you know, this is a sad conclusion. I don't think the conclusion would have been anything other than that, even if we had gone forward, that's a personal opinion, because to sanction any Member of the Senate would have been a very sad, a sad day for the Senate.

I think this process, the thing about this process that really, really made a difference, I think, in people understanding what we were doing and having input was the fact that it was a very open process.

Our meetings were held for all, for everyone to see and analyze and can come to their own conclusions about. I think that speaks well for this process.

I certainly hope that the Senate doesn't have to convene a similar committee in the future, but I think that the work this Committee did will serve as a great example in terms of what, of not only working together, but also gives some framework in case there is a need in the future for a committee such as this to be convened again.

I do think that this Committee did work very well together. I think the fact that the resolution and recommendation that was supposed to be before the Senate today was unanimously adopted, I think, speaks well in terms of how we worked together.

That was very important in ensuring that we got as much information as we could and that we needed just some more to make any of us feel comfortable with what the final outcome may have been.

So I want to thank my fellow Committee Members as well and the two Co-Chairs for their leadership in helping us really move forward and move toward some kind of resolution.

I think that the Senate, the full Senate was served well by this Committee, and again, it was an honor to serve and to present, represent the people, not just of my district but of

Connecticut in such a difficult matter. Thank you.

SEN. RORABACK: Thank you, Senator Stillman.
Senator Guglielmo.

SEN. GUGLIELMO: I have nothing to add.

SEN. RORABACK: Thank you. Let me just say that I think that being asked to serve on this Committee was the least desirable assignment imaginable, for many reasons, and none of us asked to serve. Each of us would have preferred not to have served.

That have been said, all of us agreed to serve, and if there was anything about this process that made it less painful was the company of serving with, particularly Senator Looney, my Co-Chairman, and all of the Members of the Committee.

I think together we can collectively be proud of our faithfulness to the institution of the State Senate in Connecticut.

Elected officials come and elected officials go, but the State Senate is an institution which we hope will be here long after we're gone.

And I think this process established a standard which in the future will help provide guidance should, sadly, we find ourselves in a position where one of our colleagues admits to having broken the law.

Our staff has performed not just admirably, but professionally, competently, in a timely fashion, with a lot of pressures on them, always with a smile, never with a complaint, a can-do attitude, and your good work has made this process possible.

Quite frankly, without your abilities and your attitude, we never could have accomplished what we did in the time that we had allotted to us.

It's a very sad day for the institution of the State Senate, but I think all of us can be proud that this Committee's work will withstand the test of time. Thank you.

Chairman Looney.

SEN. LOONEY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to add, in addition to the good work of our, extraordinary work of our nonpartisan staff, I think that the work of both the Democratic and Republican legal staffs also in helping to supplement and advise as we went forward helped to contribute to the bipartisan, nonpartisan atmosphere, and I would like to thank you, particularly Senator Roraback, for your friendship and good judgment throughout this entire process as the six of us worked together in an atmosphere of great difficulty.

But as you said, we all love the institution of the State Senate, and it was in a sense of, in that context of working to enhance the institution that we have all devoted so much of

our lives to in a way that brought us into this difficult pass that we hope will stand the test of time. Thank you.

SEN. RORABACK: Thank you. Is there any new business to come before the Committee? I think it probably is appropriate just to state on the record that our Committee's responsibilities became moot, in my opinion, upon the announcement by Senator DeLuca this afternoon of his intent to resign his seat effective November 30th.

That being the case, I would not anticipate this Committee would meet again and that a motion, I do believe it would be appropriate that the records of the Committee be sent to the Legislative Library for storage and as an archive for people to look at in the future.

I don't know if any Members of the Committee have any additional thoughts that we might want to contemplate as we bring our work to closure. If not, maybe a motion to dissolve the Committee or adjourn the Committee or whatever is appropriate would be in order.

Okay, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. NICKERSON: I move that the records of this Committee be preserved, as the Chairman has suggested, that the Committee views its work as complete, and it adjourns today with the intention that it will not reconvene. I so move.

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SEN. RORABACK: Moved by Senator Nickerson.
Seconded by Senator DeFronzo. Any discussion
on the motion?

SEN. LOONEY: It's in the nature of a sine die.

SEN. RORABACK: It's non-debatable. All in favor,
please say aye.

ALL: Aye.

SEN. RORABACK: Any no's? The ayes have it. Thank
you very much.