

January 11, 1996

than spend them. Some have declared the income tax cut dead on arrival. Others may try to kill it before it's had a fair hearing. But listen to the call of Nebraskans. They want an efficient...more efficient and less costly government. The income tax cut is a step in the right direction. It's realistic and it can be done. We must continue to challenge government at all levels to be more efficient and effective, creating an opportunity for us to do a better job with the resources we have. A year ago, we embarked on an ambitious project to review the health and human services activities of our state agencies. The need for change was clear--our current system is outdated, rigid and lacking in coordination. This results in confusion and duplication. I asked Lieutenant Governor Kim Robak to look for more efficient and effective ways to deliver services to Nebraskans. The outcome is the Nebraska Partnership Project, a plan to create a unified health and human services system for our state. What began as a streamlining effort has become a blueprint for the most sweeping changes in the structure of state government in recent history. We have introduced legislation this session to create the new system. That legislation calls for the transferring...calls for transferring the functions of five existing state agencies--Social Services, Health, Aging, Public Institutions, and Juvenile Services--to three functionally-based agencies. Our goal is to create a system that emphasizes local control, accountability and quality service. To further design a common-sense Nebraska system, we will continue to seek participation over the next year from all sectors--state employees, communities, providers, clients, advocacy groups, business interests, and, of course, you, the lawmakers. We also created a public and private partnership to look at changing the way we do business in truck licensing and regulation. The result is our proposal for a One Stop Shop to consolidate the trucking activities of three agencies into the Department of Motor Vehicles. We all recognize the great opportunities that information technology presents for improving government efficiency and worker productivity. We propose the creation of an info tech fund to help us take better advantage of those opportunities. When it comes to unfunded and underfunded mandates, Nebraskans have successfully challenged the status quo. I am pleased that such mandates are becoming a past form of conducting government business. Nebraska's leadership in the fight against unfunded and underfunded mandates has paid off at the national level. Congress passed and the President signed unfunded mandates legislation. Just