

THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE'S
WEEKLY PUBLICATION

UPDATE

Tax reduction plans come before committee

The Revenue Committee held hearings Jan. 31 and Feb. 1 on a wide variety of proposals to reduce taxes in Nebraska.

The proposals cover a wide array of tax reduction options, including both state and local taxes.

The governor's package

Gov. David Heineman called for tax cuts during his State of the State address at the beginning of the legislative session. During his appearance before the Revenue Committee, the governor called the state's existing tax system "outdated, outmoded and fundamentally flawed."

"It is time to help the working families that pay income taxes in our state," Heineman said.

The governor cited estimates from the state Department of Revenue that 96 percent of Nebraska taxpayers would save under his tax plan.

The major piece of the governor's



Nickerson Sen. Ray Janssen, Revenue Committee chairperson, listens to Sen. Tom White of Omaha explain his property tax proposal, LB 453.

initiative is contained in **LB 331**, introduced by Nickerson Sen. Ray Janssen, the committee's chairperson.

LB 331 would make changes to the state's income tax system, repeal the state estate tax and repeal the sales tax on construction labor.

Specific changes to the income tax system would result in:

- reducing the number of tax brackets from four to three;
- broadening the tax brackets;
- eliminating the "marriage penalty"

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

Death penalty ban goes to Legislature

Abolishing the death penalty was the subject of a Judiciary Committee hearing Jan. 31, just as it has been every year since 1976. This time, the committee voted 7-0 to advance the issue to the full Legislature for debate.

Sponsored by Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers, **LB 476** would abolish the death penalty and substitute a life sentence without the possibility of parole.

"I don't believe there has been or ever will be a fair, equitable and just means to do an act as barbaric and beneath the dignity of any civilized society," Chambers said.

The goal of the justice system is to keep offenders from harming the public, he said. A life sentence accomplishes that. Killing someone is a heinous act that can never be justified, Chambers said.

The bill would change sentences for those currently on death row to life imprisonment without parole.

It also would require those sentenced to life to make restitution to the victim's estate for the pain and suffering inflicted upon the victim, the cost of medical expenses incurred by the victim prior to death and the cost of funeral

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

INSIDE:

• Committee Hearing Schedule • Committee considers statewide smoking ban • Meet Senator Nantkes • Weekly Review

ISSUES UPFRONT

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Agriculture

Senators advance hybrid vaccine proposal to select file

A bill that would require hybrid animals to be vaccinated against rabies advanced to final reading Jan. 30.

LB 25, introduced by Sen. Chris Langemeier of Schuyler, would define a hybrid animal as a domestic animal bred with a non-domestic animal.

Domestic animals are defined as household cats and dogs.

The bill would require a licensed vaccine to be administered to hybrid animals, although no proven rabies vaccine exists for hybrid animals. Without a licensed vaccine, the bill essentially bans having a hybrid animal as a pet. People who currently have hybrid animals would have up to one year before being subject to the ban.

Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas said she was concerned about the definition of hybrid animals.

"If the issue is wolf dogs, then let's address wolf dogs and their problems," she said.

Sen. Abbie Cornett of Bellevue agreed and offered an amendment that would exclude cats from the definition.

The amendment was adopted on a 34-0 vote and LB 25 was advanced on a 31-3 vote.



Sen. Chris Langemeier



Business and Labor

Labor unions, right to work clash in committee

The Business and Labor Committee heard testimony Jan. 30 on a bill that would permit labor organizations and employers to require represented employees to pay for representation.

LB 57, sponsored by Bellevue Sen. Don Preister, would allow labor organizations and employers to require employees who are not paying membership dues to the labor organization to contribute an amount that could not exceed the amount regularly paid for membership.

"I introduced LB 57 in the interest of fairness," Preister said. "It provides a tool which can be used if the union and the employer agree."

Preister said because non-union employees receive the benefits of union contract negotiations, they should be required to contribute to

the union.

Failure of an employee to pay his or her fair share representation contribution gives the labor organization the right to seek legal action against the employee.

Rick Mourad of the National Right to Work Committee opposed the bill.

"This bill does violate the Nebraska Constitution, at least arguably," Mourad said. "LB 57 repeals the state right to work law. Let's call things what they are. Right to work means that people cannot be forced to pay dues to unions."

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



Sen. Don Preister

Education

School aid adjustment gets final legislative approval

Lawmakers gave final approval Jan. 30 to a measure that would change the way early childhood education students are counted under the state's



Sen. Ron Raikes

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

formula for aid to schools.

LB 21, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Ron Raikes, would remove the number of early childhood education students from a cost growth factor used in calculating state aid to schools. The bill also would delay the 2007 deadline for state aid certification from Feb. 1 to Feb. 15 to allow for calculation changes in time for the 2007-08 school year.

The changes proposed in LB 21 are estimated to reduce state aid to schools by \$6.5 million in fiscal year 2007-08 and by \$10.5 million in FY2008-09.

Lawmakers passed LB 21 on a 47-0 vote.

Proposal would require public schools to offer driving course

The Education Committee heard testimony Jan. 30 on a bill that would require public schools to offer a driver's safety course.

LB 66, sponsored by Sen. Arnie Stuthman of Platte Center, would require a driver safety course to be offered as an elective in public schools. The course would be available to students in grades 10 through 12 who are between 16 and 18 years old.

James MacMillan of Wahoo testified in support of the bill. MacMillan's teenage son was killed in an automobile accident that he said could have been prevented through better drivers' education.

"In passing LB 66, you will be preventing further devastation for Nebraska families," MacMillan said.



Sen. Arnie Stuthman

However, Brian Hale of the Nebraska Association of School Boards said LB 66 would put a burden on public schools without providing the resources to accomplish the mandate. He said requiring schools to offer a driver's safety course might ultimately require the school to discontinue other classes.

"Mandating that this particular class gets offered demands that a choice be made," Hale said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Five bills propose changes to ESU operations

The Education Committee heard five bills Jan. 29 that would change the way in which educational service units (ESUs) operate.

ESUs are groups of local school districts within a geographical area that share and collaborate on various educational services, such as technology and professional development. There are currently 19 ESUs across the state. Omaha Public Schools and Lincoln Public Schools each operate their own ESU.

Last year, the committee conducted an interim study that examined various policy issues related to ESUs. Sen. Ron Raikes of Lincoln, the committee's chairperson, offered four bills to the committee resulting from the study.

LB 600 would require the State Board of Education to adjust ESU boundaries when the boundaries do not align with

the boundaries of member school districts.

The board would be required to make annual boundary adjustments to align the ESU boundaries with the boundaries of member school districts as they exist on July 1 each year. The adjustments would be referred to the appropriate county and ESU officials for implementation and necessary changes to maps and tax records.

LB 600 would also clarify the use of a hearing officer to conduct a public hearing on an ESU reorganization petition.

LB 601 would create the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council as of July 1, 2008, and would transfer the responsibilities, assets and liabilities of the Distance Education Council to the new coordinating council. The coordinating council would be composed of one administrator from each ESU and would be funded by 1 percent of the state aid to ESUs, appropriations for distance education and fees established for services provided to educational entities.

LB 602 would require ESU board members to be elected by district beginning in 2008.

Each ESU board would be required to divide its territory into equally populated districts by Dec. 31, 2007, and after each decennial census. All ESU board members serving after the first Thursday after the first Tuesday in January 2009 would be elected from the election districts in 2008. Terms of board members elected in 2008 to represent odd-numbered election districts would expire in 2011. Terms of members elected in 2008 to represent even-numbered



Sen. Ron Raikes

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

election districts would expire in 2013. Successor members would be elected for four-year terms.

LB 603 would combine core services and technology infrastructure funding for ESUs beginning in fiscal year 2008-09 and provide a new equalized distribution formula. The new aid formula would include a base amount for each ESU and take into account factors such as distance education and telecommunications costs, satellite offices, sparsity and the number of students served.

Raikes called the creation of a statewide coordinating council in LB 601 a modest form of reforming ESU operations. While there is currently an informal mechanism for ESUs to coordinate activities, there are services – such as technological services – that can be provided more efficiently on a statewide basis.

“It just makes good sense that we try to do this with a broad reach,” he said.

Randy Peck, the administrator for ESU 8, supported the proposed funding formula in LB 603. The current formula is based on student enrollment, he said. ESUs are required to provide certain services, even if enrollment and local property tax revenues drop, he said.

Virgil Horne, representing Lincoln Public Schools and ESU 18, said the concept of equalized funding for ESUs is a good one. However, he said, many ESUs have contracts for services and supplies in place that go beyond the one year timeframe for implementing the new funding formula.

Horne suggested a longer transition period or holding ESUs financially harmless as the new formula is implemented.

The committee also heard

testimony on an ESU-related bill introduced by Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett.

LB 590 would allow school districts with an enrollment exceeding 8,500 students to form their own ESU. Alternatively, the bill also would allow for those school districts to join either the Omaha or Lincoln ESUs with the approval of the state Department of Education.

According to Cornett, three school districts – Bellevue, Papillion-La Vista and Millard – are approaching the 8,500 student level.

The committee took no immediate action on any of the bills.



Sen. Abbie Cornett

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Senators amend, advance bill on petition circulators

Lawmakers amended and advanced a measure Feb. 1 that would put new restrictions on petition circulators.

LB 39, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek, would have required circulators to be eligible to register to vote in Nebraska and would require that circulators be paid per hour rather than per signature.

The Government, Military and



Sen. DiAnna Schimek

Veterans Affairs Committee offered an amendment that removed the provision that circulators be eligible to register to vote in Nebraska.

Grand Island Sen. Ray Aguilar said that prohibiting payment by signature would solve other problems, such as an influx of out-of-state interests.

“In doing that we accomplish everything else,” he said. “There’s no incentive for out-of-state people once that’s gone.”

However, Schimek said there would be ways to get around that provision. Petitioners could be paid an hourly wage plus a bonus for high numbers of signatures.

Requiring circulators to be eligible to register to vote, Schimek said, would ensure that circulators are residents of the state, can understand English and are at least 18 years old. It would also prohibit recent felons or individuals on probation or parole from working as circulators.

Ellsworth Sen. LeRoy Loudon said he thought the amendment would weaken the bill too much.

“I question whether we’re going to get anything done,” he said. “Are we doing an exercise in futility?”

But Sen. Mike Friend of Omaha said that without the amendment the bill went too far.

“I believe there’s infringement involved here,” he said, referring to the right of the people to petition their



Sen. Ray Aguilar



Sen. Mike Friend

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

government.

Bayard Sen. Philip Erdman agreed, pointing to the state constitution, which refers to the initiative process as the first power reserved for the people.

"This is about preserving the opportunity that the people cherish as their first right," Erdman said.

The committee amendment was adopted on a 26-3 vote.

Lawmakers advanced LB 39 by a vote of 31-11.

Bill would restrict contributions to Public Service Commissioners

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Jan. 31 on a bill that would prohibit businesses regulated by the Public Service Commission from contributing money or gifts to candidates or members of the commission.

LB 61, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Bill Avery, would apply only to businesses regulated by the commission. Those businesses include telecommunications, taxis and limousines, grain warehouse storage, railroad safety and private water companies.

Under the bill, the officials would not be allowed to accept contributions or gifts from regulated businesses or individuals identified as an officer, director, partner or limited liability company member of regulated businesses.



Sen. Philip Erdman



Sen. Bill Avery

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bills would make changes to public record, open meeting laws

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 1 on several bills relating to open meetings and public information.

LB 199, introduced by Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek, would allow separate municipal utilities with autonomous control of providing electricity to participate in a municipal cooperative financing agency. Under the bill, these agencies would be subject to the same requirements as other agencies under the Open Meetings Act.

LB 389, sponsored by Grand Island Sen. Ray Aguilar, would change the definition of a finalist in the application process of public agencies. Under the bill, finalists would include all applicants who interview with the public body. This would ensure that job application materials could not be withheld from the public.

LB 391, sponsored by Blair Sen. Mick Mines, deals with access to public records



Sen. DiAnna Schimek



Sen. Ray Aguilar



Sen. Mick Mines

and meetings. It would:

- allow public bodies to request specific subject matter before providing all public records created within a certain time frame;
- allow citizens to request access to public records relating to a specific subject matter;
- allow the public the right to speak at meetings of public bodies on agenda items as permitted by the person presiding; and
- require that each public body have a form on which citizens may recommend subjects for discussion as possible agenda items at future meetings.

LB 622

introduced by Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch, would require public officials to take a training course on the legal requirements relating to public record requests and open meeting laws.

The committee took no immediate action on any of the bills.



Sen. Pete Pirsch

Health and Human Services

Reorganization of Health and Human Services advances

Lawmakers advanced a proposal Jan. 29 that would reorganize the state's Health and Human Services System.

LB 296, introduced by Kearney Sen. Joel Johnson, would reorganize the current system under a chief executive officer who would oversee six separate departments. Those departments would be divided by services for public health, Medicaid, children and family services,

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

behavioral health, developmental disabilities and veterans' homes.

Appointees to the CEO and six department director positions would be made by the governor and would require confirmation by the Legislature.

Chris Peterson, the current HHS policy secretary, has been named the governor's appointee for the CEO position.

Johnson said the bill, introduced at the governor's request, was the final step of a 10-year process to reorganize the HHS system. Calling LB 296 a "massive bill of needed and required changes," Johnson said it was intended to make a large and complex system more effective, accessible and accountable for all Nebraskans.



Sen. Joel Johnson

The previous structural change for the agency, made in 1996, merged five existing departments into three: the state Department of Health and Human Services, the state Department of HHS Finance and Support, and the state Department of HHS Regulation and Licensure.

Omaha Sen. Gwen Howard said she appreciated the separate focus on children's services within the proposed departmental structure. But changing the structure alone without changing the philosophy of the system will not solve problems within the foster care system, she said.



Sen. Gwen Howard

"Accountability starts at the top. This structure will help us define who is at the top and where the accountability will begin," she said.

Scottsbluff Sen. John Harms also cautioned his fellow lawmakers that this bill is not the end of the process.



Sen. John Harms

"The real work is yet to come," he said, explaining that the Legislature must be able to evaluate whether the change is solving problems as intended.

Harms suggested that an external review process could help accomplish this.

Norfolk Sen. Mike Flood commended the work of the Health and Human Services Committee. He often has been contacted by constituents about problems within the HHS system, he said.



Sen. Mike Flood

"I've had a variety of questions brought to me and I never knew where to start," he said. "Having one person in charge of our largest state agency allows our state to go in a coordinated direction."

The bill advanced to select file on a 41-0 vote.

Bill updates health care credentialing

The Health and Human Services Committee heard testimony Jan. 31 on a bill that would update licensing and credentialing of health care professionals.

LB 463, introduced by Kearney

Sen. Joel Johnson, is a recodification of the Uniform Licensing Law and adopts the Uniform Credentialing Act. The bill pertains to all health care professions and occupations credentialed by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System.

The bill clarifies the requirements necessary to obtain, renew or reinstate a license or voluntarily surrender a license. It also outlines behavior that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action and the processes for filing a complaint for violation of the law, including investigations, confidentiality and the process for imposing disciplinary action.

Lastly, LB 463 would define the types of disciplinary action that can be imposed when a violation is found.

The bill would not change existing requirements for obtaining a license; nor would it change the scope of practice for any regulated profession, occupation or entity. The bill would go into effect on Dec. 1, 2008.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Judiciary

Homestead protection bill advanced

Lawmakers advanced a measure Jan. 31 aimed at providing greater protections for homes from certain financial judgments.

LB 237, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Rich Pahls, would increase to \$60,000 the amount of exemption for a homestead from



Sen. Rich Pahls

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

judgment liens and from execution or forced sale. The current exemption level is \$12,500.

The provision applies primarily when an individual has had a judgment against them for certain unsecured debt, such as credit card debt or large hospital bills.

Pahls said the original exemption adopted in 1879 was \$2,000, which was put in place with the intent of protecting homesteads. That amount was raised to \$4,000 in the 1970s, and eventually to today's level of \$12,500.

He expressed concern for elderly citizens on fixed incomes who may be particularly vulnerable to losing their homes.

"If we turn any of these people out, they're going to go where? They're going to look to us for help," Pahls said.

Blair Sen. Mick Mines offered an amendment that would have set the new exempted amount at \$25,000.



Sen. Mick Mines

Calling the proposed \$60,000 exemption extraordinary, Mines said his proposal would still double the current exemption. He added that creditors would not be affected as much as consumers by increasing the exempted amount because creditors could pass the costs along.

"All we're going to do is shift costs from the homestead exemption as it exists today to you and I," Mines said.

Sen. Vickie McDonald of St. Paul said



Sen. Vickie McDonald

changing the exemption amount in Nebraska would not affect credit card interest rates because those are generally uniform from state to state. But the state does have to pay to assist the homeless, she said.

"Protect them now, so we don't have to pay for them later," McDonald said.

Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop pointed out that the exemption does not absolve the debtors from what they owe. He said one consequence of increasing the exemption could be that Nebraska would become less of a marketing target for credit card companies.



Sen. Steve Lathrop

The Mines amendment failed on a 14-25 vote. LB 237 advanced to select file 27-9.

Expedited custody bill passes

A bill addressing child custody jurisdiction moved through the Legislature and passed unanimously Feb. 1.

Introduced by Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek, **LB 341** allows a Nebraska court to assume child custody jurisdiction in an international custody dispute under certain conditions. The bill also adopts the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act.



Sen. DiAnna Schimek

Under the bill, a Nebraska court is not required to recognize or enforce a foreign custody determination if the child is a habitual resident of

Nebraska and the foreign custody determination would put the child at significant and demonstrable risk of abuse or neglect.

If the court finds these circumstances, it would make a rebuttable presumption against enforcing the foreign order. The Nebraska court would then have the authority to exercise jurisdiction over the custody of the child.

LB 341 also contains the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act, which provides mechanisms to help courts deter domestic and international abductions during custody disputes and divorce proceedings.

In cases where the court, the prosecutor or one of the parties perceives that a child is at risk for abduction, an action for prevention measures may be brought. Risk factors include overt signs such as previous abductions, attempts to abduct, threats of abduction, signs of general abuse including domestic violence, negligence or refusal to obey child custody determinations.

If the court identifies a credible risk of abduction, it may enter an order to prevent abduction such as imposing travel restrictions, prohibiting the individual from removing the child from the state, placing the child's name in the U.S. Department of State's Child Passport Issuance Alert Program or requiring the individual to obtain an order from a foreign country containing identical terms to the custody determination.

If the court identifies an imminent threat of abduction, it may issue a warrant to take physical custody of the child, direct law enforcement officers to take steps to locate and return the child or exercise any appropriate powers under existing state law.

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

The bill applies to all pending custody cases in the state and will go into effect upon the governor's signature.

The Legislature expedited the measure to address a pending custody case in which an eight-year-old girl's father, a Canadian citizen, was granted visitation rights. A Lancaster County judge has issued emergency jurisdiction orders due to allegations that the father has abused the girl during these mandated visits since 2004.

"Nebraska has its hands tied and cannot stop the visits to Canada except on a temporary basis," Schimek explained. "What is happening is a foreign court is dictating to a Nebraska citizen what must be done."

Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop supported the bill saying its purpose goes far beyond this one child's case.

"We're making a positive change to Nebraska statute on child custody that will be there for all parties to use, regardless of what side of this they may find themselves on in the future," he said.

LB 341 passed on a 48-0 vote.

Bills would change concealed handgun law

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Feb. 2 on two bills that would change the law passed last year that allows the carrying of concealed handguns.

Because the law does not specifically restrict cities from independently prohibiting the carrying of concealed handguns, some cities have taken action to restrict concealed carry locally.

LB 695, introduced by Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial, would

remove the ability of cities to make their own ordinances prohibiting concealed handguns.

Christensen said local firearms ordinances are not consistent in all areas of Nebraska, creating a patchwork of laws and ordinances regarding firearms. This patchwork creates confusion as to what is lawful and unlawful when traveling through the state, he said.

The bill would nullify any existing local ordinances, permits or regulations regarding the ownership, possession or transportation of firearms. It would not apply, however, to local zoning issues, such as the discharge of a firearm within the corporate limits of a municipality.

Under the bill, private businesses would still retain the right to post signs prohibiting the carrying of concealed weapons in their establishments.

Jordan Austin, a lobbyist for the National Rifle Association, said current law results in a complex set of restrictions that vary for each area of the state. He said this can affect hunters on their way to hunting ranges and contests because they must be aware of each individual town's ordinance or risk violating local concealed carry laws.

Forty-seven states have enacted firearm preemption laws, he said.

Mark Bohaty, a retired Nebraska State Patrol officer, owns Great Plains Rifle Works, a company that certifies instructors under the new concealed carry laws. He said the inconsistency throughout the state



Sen. Mark Christensen

is frustrating to the law enforcement community who must arrest citizens who are unaware that they broke the law.

Jim Peschong, Lincoln's assistant chief of police, opposed the bill. He said LB 695 contains loopholes that would allow people to carry concealed handguns if they have committed violent or sex crimes.

Lancaster County grants 800 protection orders each year, and being able to keep those offenders from carrying weapons is important, Peschong said.

Bill Mizner, Norfolk's police chief, said each town should be able to make their own decisions about carrying concealed weapons.

"This is an issue that is best served by allowing those citizens and their elected officials to make a decision," he said.

LB 491, introduced by Scottsbluff

Sen. John Harms, would specifically exempt universities and colleges from current law permitting the carrying of a concealed handgun.



Sen. John Harms

LB 491 would make the law reflect the original intent of last year's bill, Harms said. The law is written to exempt school grounds, but the definition of schools in Nebraska includes only K-12 facilities.

Richard Wood, general counsel for the University of Nebraska, said the bill would allow the university to uphold its historical policy of not allowing guns on campus. Students who would like to have their shotguns available for hunting can leave them with campus police to be checked out when needed, he said.

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

Brad Sher of Bryan LGH Health Systems suggested the bill be amended to also cover hospitals. Currently, it covers only emergency care and trauma centers.

The committee took no immediate action on either bill.

Natural Resources

Bill would change Environmental Trust Board appointments

Senators advanced a bill Jan. 31 that would change geographic areas from which members of the Environmental Trust Board are appointed.

LB 291, sponsored by North Platte Sen. Tom Hansen, would model new districts after the Game and Parks Commission districts created in 2002. Currently, the board consists of nine citizen members representing the three congressional districts and five members of the executive branch. Executive branch members include the department directors of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, Agriculture and the secretary of the Game and Parks Commission.



Sen. Tom Hansen

LB 291 would allow the governor to appoint one citizen from each of the eight newly-created districts.

Hansen said all but one of the current citizen trust board members would be transitioned into representing the new geographic structure. The governor would designate which current board members would represent each

new district.

LB 291 advanced on a 37-0 vote.

Proposal would close loophole in water well restrictions

The Natural Resources Committee heard testimony Jan. 31 on a bill that would expand the definition of water wells.

LB 314, introduced by Ellsworth Sen. LeRoy Loudon, would change the definition of a water well to include those excavations in which a pump is installed for irrigation.



Sen. LeRoy Loudon

Ron Theis, a state Department of Natural Resources attorney, said the bill would fix a gap in current water well law.

The current definition of a water well is limited to those excavations made for the purpose of extracting water. However, pumps are sometimes installed in existing excavations that reach the aquifer, such as sand pits, and used to irrigate. Even though the water in those excavations is ground water, those systems do not technically have to be registered as wells under the current law because they were not dug for the purpose of extracting water.

Ron Bishop, director of the Central Platte Natural Resource District, testified in support of the bill.

"We think it closes a gap that is extremely important to help manage the uses of water," Bishop said.

David Cookson, special counsel to the attorney general, had a concern

about the legal impact of the bill. If a sand pit is newly registered it is unclear whether water management restrictions would apply retroactively to when it was dug or to when the pit was registered.

"We need to figure out how to deal with those wells before we move forward," Cookson said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Retirement

Retirement Systems proposals considered

The Retirement Systems Committee heard three bills Feb. 1.

LB 328, introduced by the committee, would provide for the immediate reenrollment of state and county employees who return to employment in the system within a five-year window. Current law requires a 60-day waiting period before such an employee can reenroll in the plan.

LB 329, introduced by the committee, would reduce the minimum qualifications for the director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System. Currently, the director must have five years of experience in the administration of a qualified public or private employee retirement plan. LB 329 would reduce that requirement to three years of experience.

LB 665, sponsored by Sen. Russ Karpisek of Wilber, would give state and county employees who participate in



Sen. Russ Karpisek

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

the defined contribution retirement plan a second opportunity to choose a cash balance benefit option. Initially, the option was given to state and county plan members in 2002, at which time they were required to make a permanent choice of retirement plan options. The cash balance benefit option is designed to provide a more stable rate of return on contributions.

The committee took no immediate action on any of the three bills.

Revenue

Merger of tax agencies offered

Revenue Committee members heard a bill Feb. 1 that would merge the state Department of Property Assessment and Taxation into the

state Department of Revenue.

DPAT was created in 1999 in response to concerns about the need for an independent agency to handle property assessment issues. Sen. Cap Dierks of Ewing, the sponsor of **LB 334**, said the merger would save money and make the tax system more efficient.

“Our citizens are demanding efficiency in government,” he said.

LB 334 is part of the governor’s tax legislative package for 2007.

State Property Tax Administrator Catherine Lang supported the bill, even though her position would be eliminated as part of the merger.



Sen. Cap Dierks

Lang said the plan is for her to become the Deputy State Tax Commissioner under the newly merged agency.

She testified that bringing the two agencies together will allow for greater efficiency in functions that each agency is currently performing independently, such as administration, technology, policy development and legal services.

Bob Wickersham, a member of the Tax Equalization and Review Commission, said he and his colleagues rely on Lang and her staff to provide objective testimony at commission hearings. Wickersham suggested that the property tax administrator position be retained in the legislation in order to preserve a degree of independence in the agency’s work.

The committee took no immediate action on LB 334.

STATE CAPITOL SNAPSHOT



Legislative pages observe debate in the Norris Legislative Chamber.

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Tax reduction plans come before committee

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

by changing bracket and standard deduction amounts;

- increasing standard deduction amounts to the federal level;
- indexing brackets for inflation beginning in tax year 2011; and
- reducing marginal tax rates and phasing in a top bracket tax rate reduction.

The repeal of the state estate tax would be retroactive to the beginning of 2007. The repeal of the construction labor sales tax would take effect on Oct. 1.

Fiscal estimates state that LB 331 would reduce state revenues by approximately \$241.5 million in fiscal year 2007-08 and by \$235 million in FY2008-09.

State Tax Commissioner Doug Ewald testified that LB 331 was a plan that would not only reduce taxes, but also reform the state's tax system.

Ewald said the system should be simple, keep the overall tax

burden low, be competitive with other surrounding states and be tax neutral. The governor's plan would accomplish this by reducing the number of tax brackets and implementing across-the-board tax reductions, he said.

According to the state's economic development director, Nebraska is at a competitive disadvantage in attracting businesses and jobs because of its high tax climate. Richard Baier cited examples of businesses that have declined to expand in the state, startup businesses that are considering moving and new workers who are experiencing "pay stub shock" over their tax withholdings.

"If we hope to retain a strong workforce, we must be willing to deal with our heavy tax burden head on," Baier said.

Some attention was paid to the proposed repeal of the state's estate tax. Two other standalone proposals to repeal the estate tax – **LB 10**,

introduced by Blair Sen. Mick Mines, and **LB 282**, introduced by Platte Center Sen. Arnie Stuthman – also were heard by the committee.

Omaha estate planning attorney William Lindsay told the committee he is concerned by the number of residents leaving the state for destinations with lower income taxes and no estate tax.

"Mobility is a fact of life. States are more competitive than ever before. We cannot assume our taxpayers will stay in Nebraska," Lindsay said.

Jennifer Carter, an attorney with the Nebraska Appleseed Center, argued that the governor's proposal would benefit wealthier Nebraskans, not the middle class.

Carter called the proposal regressive and was critical of the tax cuts in a time when funding for other programs, such as children's health insurance and public assistance, may be reduced. She said tax cuts would be more appropriate when the state has met all of its obligations.

"We are not there yet," Carter said.

John Hansen of the Nebraska Farmers Union said he supports the repeal of the construction labor sales tax and the elimination of the marriage penalty in the state income tax code, but that the focus should be on reducing property taxes.

"That is far and away the one that is most out of control," he said.

Other bills in the governor's package include **LB 325**, a bill introduced by Speaker Mike Flood at the governor's request to repeal a program of providing income tax incentives to qualifying businesses that provide child care programs for employees. **LB 338**, sponsored by Sen. Tim Gay of Papillion, would



Gov. Dave Heineman speaks to the Revenue Committee about his tax plan that would make changes to the state's income tax system and repeal the state estate tax and sales tax on construction labor.

A CLOSER LOOK.....

increase the amount Nebraska taxpayers could deduct from federal taxable income for contributions to the Nebraska educational savings plan. The allowable deduction would increase from \$500 to \$5,000 for married individuals filing separately, and from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for all other filers.

Property tax alternatives

Some proposals offered property tax relief as an alternative to the governor's package.

LB 366, introduced by Janssen, would eliminate the property taxing authority of community colleges effective Jan. 1, 2008. The bill also would reduce the taxable value of agricultural land from 75 percent to 70 percent of actual value. Finally, the bill would provide homeowners with a homestead exemption on the first \$12,000 of actual value.

The proposal would provide tax relief on the local level through increased state aid in the amount of approximately \$199.9 million beginning in FY2008-09.

Janssen said the proposal would give lawmakers three more options to consider as they put together a tax reduction package this session.

Steve Nelson of Axtell, representing the Nebraska Farm Bureau, testified that property taxes continue to frustrate not only farmers and ranchers, but all Nebraska taxpayers. According to Nelson, the average annual property tax bill for farmers in 2002 was \$7,535, considerably higher than the property tax burden in neighboring states.

He said that LB 366 would offer broad tax relief and provide for long term changes in the state's tax system.

But Dennis Baack, executive director of the Nebraska Community Colleges Association, questioned whether the state should take property tax levying authority away from community colleges.

Baack said that if the Legislature would provide more funding through the community college state aid formula, local levies could drop significantly.

"Our formula is built so there is automatic property tax relief built into it," he said.

Omaha Sen. Tom White offered another option involving property taxes in **LB 453**. That bill would provide Nebraskans who pay property taxes on their primary residences a refundable income tax credit of \$500. Fiscal estimates place the revenue impact of the measure at approximately \$214.8 million in FY2007-08 and \$209.1 million in FY2008-09.

White said the bill would give money back directly to citizens and fairly distribute tax relief.

"We do not have disparity from what is provided to a resident of Scottsbluff and what is provided to a resident of Omaha. We do not have disparity from what is provided to a farmer and what is provided to a factory worker. We do not have disparity from what is provided to a multimillionaire and what is provided to an hourly wage worker," he said.

White said rapid inflation of home values and less income have forced people to choose between day-to-day expenses and paying their property taxes.

Chuck Hassebrook, executive director for the Center for Rural Affairs said LB 453 would result in significant tax relief because it would focus on those taxpayers with

the greatest need.

"Five hundred dollars means a lot more to a modest homeowner than to someone who owns a mansion," he said.

Hassebrook suggested that an additional \$1,000 credit should be offered to those who own or operate farm or ranch land to offset their higher property tax burden.

Other options

Several other tax relief proposals were presented to the Revenue Committee.

LB 436, introduced by Sen. Ron Raikes of Lincoln, would make various changes to the state's income tax system by:

- eliminating the alternative minimum tax for purposes of the state income tax;
- eliminating itemized deductions for purposes of the state income tax;
- reducing the number of income tax brackets from four to two and setting the tax rates for the two remaining brackets at 4.8 percent and 7.1 percent respectively;
- establishing a \$300 personal exemption beginning in tax year 2007 and indexing that amount annually; and
- setting new, increased standard deduction amounts beginning in tax year 2007 and indexing those amounts annually.

LB 436 would reduce state revenues by approximately \$196.1 million in FY2007-08 and \$159.2 million in FY2008-09.

LB 430, introduced by Sen. Chris Langemeier of Schuyler, would reduce the maximum property tax levy from \$1.05 to \$1 for K-12 school districts and from \$1.02 to 97 cents for learning communities. The new limits would take effect beginning

A CLOSER LOOK.....

in FY2008-09. The bill would result in a reduced local effort rate in the state school aid formula, which in turn could have the effect of lowering property taxes.

An additional \$70.8 million in state aid would be generated for local districts.

LB 684, sponsored by Sen. Annette Dubas of Fullerton, would use a "circuit breaker" approach to providing property tax relief. Property tax payers would be entitled to a refundable income tax credit on

the amount of property taxes paid in excess of a certain percentage of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income.

The original draft of the bill does not specify the percentage threshold that would trigger the income tax credit.

LB 367, sponsored by Janssen, would reduce base tax rates for motor vehicles, reduce the state sales tax rate from 5.5 percent to 5 percent effective Oct. 1 and eliminate the sales tax on construction labor.

The bill would result in reduced state revenues of approximately \$83.9 million in FY2007-08 and \$129 million in FY2008-09.

LB 608, sponsored by Raikes, would reduce the state sales tax rate from 5.5 percent to 5 percent effective on July 1. The proposal would reduce state revenues by approximately \$108.6 million in FY2007-08 and \$120.3 million in FY2008-09.

The committee took no immediate action on any of the measures.

COMPARING 2007 TAX CUT PLANS

THE PLAN	ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX RELIEF
Governor's Package LBs 331, 325, 338 Sens. Janssen, Flood, Gay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of income tax brackets from four to three • Broaden income tax brackets • Eliminate the "marriage penalty" that results in higher taxes for taxpayers who are married • Increase standard deduction amounts for state income tax • Index income tax brackets for inflation beginning in 2011 • Reduce marginal income tax rates and phase in a top bracket tax rate reduction • Repeal the estate tax • Repeal the construction labor sales tax • Repeal business child care tax credits • Increase deductions for educational savings plans 	\$234.5 million
LB 366 Sen. Janssen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate the property taxing authority of community colleges • Reduce the taxable value of agricultural land from 75 percent to 70 percent of actual value • Provide homeowners with a homestead exemption on the first \$12,000 of actual value 	\$199.9 million
LB 453 Sen. White <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide property tax payers a refundable income tax credit of \$500 on their primary residences 	\$209.1 million
LB 436 Sen. Raikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate the alternative minimum tax • Eliminate itemized deductions for state income tax • Reduce the number of income tax brackets from four to two • Set the tax rates for the two income tax brackets at 4.8 and 7.1 percent respectively • Establish a \$300 personal income tax exemption, indexed annually • Increase standard deduction amounts, indexed annually 	\$159.2 million
LB 430 Sen. Langemeier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the maximum property tax levy from \$1.05 to \$1 for K-12 school districts and from \$1.02 to 97 cents for learning communities 	\$70.8 million
LB 684 Sen. Dubas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entitle property tax payers to a refundable income tax credit on the amount of property taxes paid in excess of a specified percentage of the taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income 	Unknown
LB 367 Sen. Janssen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce base tax rates for motor vehicles • Reduce the state sales tax rate from 5.5 percent to 5 percent • Eliminate the sales tax on construction labor 	\$129 million
LB 608 Sen. Raikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the state sales tax rate from 5.5 percent to 5 percent 	\$120.3 million

Estimated Annual Tax Relief based on FY2008-09 fiscal impact as identified by the Legislative Fiscal Office

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Death penalty ban goes to Legislature

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

and burial expenses.

The Legislature passed a repeal of the death penalty in 1979, but it was vetoed by then-Gov. Charles Thone. The bill has not made it out of the Judiciary Committee since 1988, when it failed to pass.

Larry Myers, an Omaha lawyer who defended Willie Otey 13 years ago, said death penalty cases are often fraught with procedural problems that affect the outcome of the case. Another problem, he said, is incompetent or inexperienced counsel.

"There is no question that experienced counsel makes a

difference," he said.

Myers said the randomness and unfairness found nationwide in death penalty cases has resulted in 10 states calling moratoriums on executions.

"Courts are made up of human beings, and they make mistakes," he said.

Michael Radelet, a professor from the University of Colorado who has authored six books on the subject, said the first execution after the death penalty was reinstated in 1976 was done in Utah by firing squad. Since then, 1,059 inmates have been executed in the United States, he said, with 123 being found

innocent and released.

Last year saw the least number of executions in the last decade, in part, he said, because of a shift in public opinion that now favors a life sentence over the death penalty.

Further, 90 percent of criminologists surveyed said death is a lesser deterrent of crime than a life sentence, Radelet said.

"In other words, if you want to deter a kid from leaning on a stove, medium heat does the job just as well as high heat," he said.

Coleen Nielsen, a lobbyist for the Nebraska Criminal Defense Attorneys Association, said death penalty cases require more



A CLOSER LOOK.....

investigation, more preparation, more expert witnesses and closer screening of jurors. They also require two trials: one to determine guilt, the other for sentencing. It is hard to measure the expense of these cases Nielsen said, but she cited a study done in California that found the cost to taxpayers for the death penalty system, beyond the cost of keeping convicts locked up for life, to be \$114 million per year.

Amy Miller, legal director for the ACLU, said Nebraska's death penalty violates two constitutional amendments: the Eighth Amendment, prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment, and the Fourteenth Amendment, requiring equal treatment under the law.

The electric chair, first used in 1920, is no longer used by any other state to kill inmates, which Miller said qualifies it as unusual punishment. Moreover, those who commit violent crimes are sentenced differently according to their economic status and the location of the crime, she said.

"If you're rich and you're killed,

your murderer is more likely to get death," she said.

Killing an urban person is more likely to result in a death sentence, while killing a rural person more often results in a life sentence, she said.

Also, race is a factor in Nebraska's death penalty system, with minorities being disproportionately executed, Miller said. Nebraska currently has 10 men on death row.

"Five are not white," she said, adding that minorities comprise only 9 percent of the state's population.

Leola Bullock of the NAACP said "killing to show killing is wrong defies common sense." Nor is it a deterrent to violent crime, because states that have the death penalty have the highest murder rates, she said.

Richard Hargesheimer of Amnesty International said the state's expense to have the death penalty does not pay off.

"Despite an investment of billions of dollars, it has shown no measurable benefit," he said.

He recounted that the Iowa

Supreme Court, while not taking a position on the issue, has said that the trials and appeals for those receiving the death penalty overwhelms the court system, requiring multiple trials over the years the inmate is on death row.

Rev. Del Roper, a retired United Methodist pastor from Grand Island, said the death sentence falls unfairly on poor people and minorities. Calling the death penalty "a false sense of effectiveness and security," he said the money spent on the trials for death row inmates could be better spent to eliminate the social conditions that cause crime.

Former Sen. Loran Schmit said he initially opposed eliminating the death penalty when he was a lawmaker.

After hearing Chambers' arguments, he said, his mind was changed, and Schmit now thinks that the death penalty does more harm for the state than good.

"Disparity in sentencing results in contempt for the law," he said.

There was no testimony in opposition to the bill.

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A CLOSER **LOOK**.....

Statewide smoking ban considered

The Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee heard a bill Feb. 1 that would restrict smoking in any place of employment or public place in Nebraska, including all bars and restaurants.

LB 395, introduced by Kearney Sen. Joel Johnson, would amend the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act to provide statewide consistency. The legislation is modeled after Lincoln's indoor smoking ban that was implemented in 2005.

The bill would allow three exemptions to the total ban:

- private residences, except when used for child care, adult day care or

as a health care facility;

- guestrooms and suites that are rented and designated as smoking; and

- areas used for research on the health effects of smoking.

Violators of the law would be charged with a Class V misdemeanor for the first offense and a Class IV misdemeanor for the second and subsequent offenses.

The Health and Human Services Department of Regulation and Licensure would be required to adopt rules and regulations and provide public information on the law.

Calling smoking "the greatest public health issue of our time," Johnson said the bill is designed to protect public health and implement a uniform law that all citizens will follow. A uniform law will improve the health of all Nebraskans and prevent competition between cities and businesses that have different smoking laws, he said.

"There is no doubt second-hand smoke is harmful," said Johnson, referring to a recent U.S. Surgeon General's report. "It says 'the scientific evidence that second-hand smoke causes serious diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease



Kearney Sen. Joel Johnson introduced a bill modeled after Lincoln's indoor smoking ban that was implemented in 2005.

A CLOSER LOOK.....

and respiratory illnesses, is massive and conclusive.”

Lincoln and Omaha have their own public indoor smoking ordinances, covering roughly half of the state’s residents. Johnson said this was causing a competitive disadvantage for those businesses that now prohibit smoking.

“We’re seeing town against town,” he said.

Lincoln’s ban prohibits smoking in all bars and restaurants, while Omaha’s ban has been more controversial because it prohibits smoking only in bars that serve food and do not offer keno. Others are required to become nonsmoking by 2011.

“Let’s have that level playing field, and let’s have it now,” Johnson said.

Grand Island Sen. Ray Aguilar is co-sponsoring the bill. He said it would save each community from having to draft its own smoking policy, adding that Grand Island and Hastings are already drafting their own ordinances.

“Public areas are not good places for us to exhibit behavior that is harmful to others’ health,” he said.

Ron Asher of North Platte, representing the Nebraska Medical Association, said health care costs for smoking-related illnesses in the state have grown to \$1.2 billion. Much of it is paid for by the nonsmoking majority of the population, he said.

Many families already have a rule that smoking is done outside, not inside the house, Asher said. “If we can do it at home, we can do it elsewhere,” he said.

Children who grow up in a smoke-filled environment experience delayed development of the lungs and are thus more susceptible to illnesses, Asher said.

Jim Partington, executive director of the Nebraska Restaurant Association, said his organization initially opposed the smoking ban. The implementation of community



Grand Island Sen. Ray Aguilar is a co-sponsor of LB 395.

bans, however, has caused them to reconsider to allow for economic fairness among the businesses.

He said LB 395 would dismantle a competitive imbalance and would ultimately benefit more people, since 80 percent of the population does not smoke.

Twenty-seven states are considering a similar ban on public smoking, he said.

While he supports the bill, Partington did suggest the removal of a provision that would prohibit smoking within 20 feet of entrances, windows and ventilation systems of enclosed areas where smoking is prohibited.

“It would be difficult to enforce and virtually impossible to comply with,” he said.

Brandi Goldapp, the owner of

Goldy’s bar in Omaha, said her bar went nonsmoking voluntarily one year ago in honor of a long-time customer who had died of lung cancer. Several dart and pool leagues have passed over her bar in favor of others in Omaha who still allow smoking, she said. Many of her regular clientele have said they’ll come back once the full smoking ban goes into effect, but until then they’ll go elsewhere to smoke, she said.

Goldapp and owners of other bars that serve food had originally supported Omaha’s ordinance because they were guaranteed it would not be a partial ban that still allowed smoking in some businesses, she said.

“We were told it would be all or nothing,” she said. “So we supported it.”

Christian Cardona is 13 years old and has asthma. He testified that he has difficulty breathing when he encounters smoke, even if his family is seated in a nonsmoking section of a restaurant that allows smoking. He has to go home and wash his clothes to remove the smoke smell and use his inhaler before feeling better, he said.

“I hate that by wanting to go out with my parents, I have to breathe smoke and damage my lungs,” Cardona said. “At a store, I couldn’t buy cigarettes, but I’m still exposed to the effects.”

Jim Moylan, representing the Nebraska Licensed Beverage Association, opposed the bill’s identical treatment of all bars and restaurants. Customers should have a choice, and their choices should drive the market, Moylan said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Wireless consumer, telecom measures heard

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee heard several telecommunications-related bills Jan. 30, including one aimed at giving wireless consumers a place to go with grievances.

LB 330, introduced by Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek, would provide the Public Service Commission limited authority to resolve disputes between wireless telephone companies and consumers regarding billing and service agreements.

There were 998,000 wireless customers in Nebraska as of June 30, 2006, Schimek said.

"It is logical to assume that the number of wireless customers will continue to increase," she said, in turn increasing the number of customers needing resolution of service and billing disputes.

"It's better to do it now than wait a few years," she said.

PSC Commissioner Anne Boyle said consumers who have problems with their cell phone service provider are often trapped in contracts requiring them to pay a large fee to end the contract.

"On a national level, wireless complaints are ranking at the top 10 of consumer problems," she said.

Boyle provided an example of a phone service customer who had called 21 different parties before finally being referred to the PSC to resolve a billing problem.

She said LB 330 is a "lightheaded way" to help consumers who do not know who to call and otherwise are left to file lawsuits against the provider or work with the attorney general to resolve the problem.

Mark Intermill, representing AARP, said a 2003 study they conducted found that half of respondents 55 to 64 years old and one-third of those older than 65 have cell phones.

About half of their members

reported not knowing where to turn if they have a problem with their wireless services, he said.

Beth Canuteson, representing Cingular, said the bill was unnecessary. The number of Cingular subscribers has increased 48 percent in the last four years, but their number of complaints has dropped 23 percent, she said.

According to Canuteson, all of their 281 complaints from last year were resolved, and the company requires a response to complaints within 30 days. Also, Cingular offers a 30-day return policy if customers are dissatisfied with the service, she said.

"We have seen competition working to improve customer service," Canuteson said, adding that only 11 states currently regulate the wireless industry.

Schimek compared the possible role of the PSC to that of the state ombudsman, whose office helps resolve public complaints against state agencies.

"This is about the principle," said Schimek. "We need to provide some mechanism for making complaints."

LB 297, introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Dwite Pedersen, would remove limitations on which PSC funds can be spent on telecommunications equipment.

Currently, a fee of no more than 20 cents per month is charged on each telephone line in the state to fund the statewide telecommunications relay system and a specialized telecommunications equipment program for residents who are deaf or have hearing loss.

Current law limits the amount appropriated for the equipment program to the amount of revenue generated by 1 cent of the surcharge per month. Due to the increased cost of the equipment program, the 1 cent limitation no longer provides

adequate funding.

LB 297 would remove these limits, allowing the PSC to spend the funds as needed.

LB 560, introduced by Valentine Sen. Deb Fischer, would amend the current wireless telecommunications registry to require that all communications providers not certified by the PSC file limited contact information with the commission and pay a one-time \$50 registration fee.

This requirement will ensure that the PSC has sufficient contact information for purposes of the universal service fund, E-911, relay services, consumer complaints and gathering data regarding broadband deployment in the state.

LB 660, introduced by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, would amend state law to ensure it is consistent with federal law in light of recent rulings requiring Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, providers to contribute to the federal universal service fund.

LB 661, also introduced by the committee, would require VoIP providers to collect and remit the landline 911 surcharge and the relay system surcharge. The bill also would remove the 1 cent cap on the amount of relay fund proceeds available, which provides telecommunications equipment to the deaf.

Further, the bill would require prepaid carriers to collect the wireless surcharge from the reseller of the prepaid service and remit the surcharge to the PSC. It also would mandate that the cost of an audit be paid by the audited wireless carrier.

Lastly, LB 661 would modify the makeup of the Enhanced Wireless 911 Advisory Board by replacing one representative from the telecommunications industry with a member of the public.

MEET THE SENATORS

Nantkes hooked on politics at early age

Danielle Nantkes traces her interest in politics back to her youth.

As a nine-year-old, she became enthralled in the Nebraska gubernatorial race. Kay Orr was running against Helen Boosalis in a historic campaign that captured the imagination of the little girl living in rural Seward County.

"I just scoured the papers and tried to read and learn as much as I could about them," Nantkes said of the candidates.

She even traveled to Boosalis' campaign office in Lincoln to gather yard signs, which she quickly distributed along the country roads near her home.

"From that first campaign, I've been in love with politics," she said.

Nantkes said her disappointment with the outcome of that race did nothing to quell her interest in politics. In fact, after the election, Nantkes was shopping with her mother at Miller and Payne department store in Lincoln when she saw Boosalis a few aisles over.

"I was so star struck and probably speechless for the first and last time in my life," Nantkes said, laughing.

Her mother visited with Boosalis who soon agreed to come to Nantkes' country school in Staplehurst and talk about politics and current events with the children.

That began a lifelong friendship between Boosalis and Nantkes.

Recently, Nantkes received a package of old correspondences between the two women. One letter from Nantkes to Boosalis included a friendship bracelet and this note: "P.S. What do you think about crime?"

Nantkes went on to graduate from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 2003 and for the past five years has been working for the Nebraska Appleseed Center as a public policy attorney.

She has a strong interest in issues that affect working families.

"The law is really the great equalizer," she said.

She attributes her strong sense of service to her parents, who have always been involved in the community. Her mother is a teacher and her father has been the deputy county sheriff for 25 years. Nantkes particularly remembers her mother taking cereal boxes to school for children who hadn't eaten breakfast.

Another thing she learned from her family is an affinity for outdoor activities, especially fishing.

"You get away from the cell phones and the Blackberries and everything

and just enjoy the inherent beauty of our Nebraska landscape," she said.

Although being a senator may cut down on her fishing trips, Nantkes said it's a tradeoff she's very willing to make.

"I get up each day and I love my job," she said.



Sen. Danielle Nantkes shows off her catch with her parents, Stephanie and Dan Nantkes.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2007

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 129 (*Pahls, et al.*) Change the Mortgage Bankers Registration and Licensing Act

LB 380 (*Pahls, 31*) Change a license application requirement under the Mortgage Bankers Registration and Licensing Act

LB 346 (*Pahls, 31*) Change provisions relating to farm product security interests

LB 381 (*Pahls, 31*) Eliminate oral requests for information regarding farm product liens

Business and Labor

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 255 (*Rogert, 16*) Change the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act

LB 271 (*Friend, 10*) Change fringe benefit provisions under the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act

LB 505 (*Mines, 18*) Change provisions of the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Larry Teahon - Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

LB 440 (*Preister, 5*) Change and eliminate provisions relating to learning communities

LB 547 (*Kopplin, 3*) Adopt the Nebraska Student Advantage Act

LB 641 (*Raikes, 25*) Provide for the division of a learning community into separate education centers and establish procedures

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

David E. Gardels - Nebraska Arts Council

LB 637 (*General Affairs Committee*) Change procurement provisions under the State Lottery Act

LB 638 (*General Affairs Committee*) Change and eliminate provisions relating to bingo, lotteries, and raffles

LB 301 (*Janssen, 15*) Extend the current distribution of state lottery proceeds until 2013

LB 546 (*Synowiecki, 7*) Provide for parimutuel wagering on historic horseraces

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1510 - 12:15 p.m.

LB 370 (*Erdman, 47*) Adopt the Law Enforcement Officers Retirement Survey Act

LB 371 (*Erdman, 47*) Adopt the Nebraska Peace Officer Retirement Act

LB 372 (*Erdman, 47*) Adopt the Law Enforcement Officer Retirement Act

Transportation and Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 466 (*Chambers, 11*) Provide for private party In Transit stickers

LB 349 (*Stuthman, 22*) Change provisions relating to motor vehicles and trailers

LB 358 (*Hudkins, 21*) Change provisions relating to interstate motor carriers

LB 279 (*Stuthman, 22*) Change provisions relating to driver training schools

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007

Agriculture

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 516 (*Agriculture Committee*) Adopt the Corporate Farming Policy Advisory Act

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 136 (*Flood, 19*) Adopt the Nebraska Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act

LB 114 (*Pahls, 31*) Change the Nebraska Uniform Trust Code

LB 189 (*Mines, 18*) Change the Nebraska Uniform Trust Code

LB 116 (*Pahls, 31*) Change provisions relating to priority of purchase-money security interests

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 91 (*Cornett, 45*) Change boundary provisions relating to learning communities

LB 473 (*Chambers, 11*) Change provisions relating to learning communities and Class V school district elections

LB 558 (*Ashford, 20*) Add housing pattern information to the integration plan for a learning community

LB 642 (*Raikes, 25*) Change educational service units' role and mission provisions

Transportation and Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 489 (*Harms, 48*) Change provisions relating to and require buses to have occupant protection systems

LB 147 (*McDonald, 41*) Change penalty provisions for vehicle loads

LB 561 (*Fischer, 43*) Change provisions relating to removal of disabled or immobilized vehicles

LB 621 (*Pirsch, 4*) Change provisions relating to points and fines for speeding

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 302 (*Friend, 10*) Change provisions relating to buildings, structures, and outdoor advertising signs, displays, and devices

LR 2CA (*Rogert, 16*) Constitutional amendment changing provisions related to substandard and blighted property

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2007

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

Keith Deiml - State Emergency Response Commission

LB 268 (*McGill, et al.*) Change election provisions for county board members

LB 284 (*Karpisek, et al.*) Require election recounts to be done manually

LB 289 (*Louden, et al.*) Change procedure relating to elections to

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

exceed the tax levy limit

LB 310 (*Aguilar, 35*) Change provisions relating to early voting
LB 312 (*Aguilar, 35*) Change provisions relating to resignations, vacancy appointments, and recall elections

Health and Human Services Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 400 (*Johnson, 37*) Require an audit of medicaid drug rebate payments
LB 426 (*Pankonin, 2*) Adopt the Pharmacy Technician Act
LB 451 (*Nantkes, 46*) Change provisions relating to release of patient information by a pharmacist
LB 550 (*Johnson, 37*) Provide for sale of prescription drugs to animal owners
LB 577 (*Kruse, 13*) Provide for reimbursement for generic prescriptions
LB 675 (*Lathrop, 12*) Require disclosures by pharmaceutical manufacturing companies

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 78 (*Nantkes, 46*) Change amounts recoverable under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act
LB 197 (*Schimek, 27*) Change the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act
LB 373 (*Schimek, et al.*) Provide for inadmissibility of apologies regarding medical care as evidence
LB 274 (*McDonald, et al.*) Require a warning label on liquefied petroleum gas tanks and provide a limitation on liability
LB 228 (*Synowiecki, 7*) Repeals statutes limiting liability of owners or operators of motor vehicles and aircraft for damages to guests or invitees
LB 448 (*Ashford, 20*) Change limitation of action provisions under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 652 (*White, 8*) Require the state and political subdivisions to do energy audits
LB 705 (*Dierks, 40*) Change

provisions governing power district special generation applications
LB 636 (*Natural Resources Committee*) Exempt certain public power district contracts from sealed bidding requirements

Revenue

Room 1524 - 2:30 p.m.

LB 442 (*Stuthman, 22*) Redefine animal life for sales tax purposes
LB 159 (*Heidemann, 1*) Exempt repair or replacement parts for agricultural equipment from sales tax
LB 423 (*Burling, 33*) Change sales and use tax collection fees

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2007

Executive Board

Room 2102 - 12:00 p.m.

LR 1CA (*Preister, 5*) Constitutional amendment to change legislative salaries
LR 7CA (*Kruse, 13*) Constitutional amendment to change legislative salaries based on inflation as determined by the Legislature
LR 3CA (*Friend, 10*) Constitutional amendment to change from a unicameral legislature to a bicameral legislature

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 133 (*Schimek, 27*) Provide for the transfer of development rights as prescribed
LB 135 (*Fulton, 29*) Provide for confidentiality of certain public entity records
LB 464 (*Chambers, 11*) Change enforcement provisions relating to the Campaign Finance Limitation Act and Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act
LB 471 (*Chambers, 11*) Authorize regulation of mixed martial arts by the State Athletic Commissioner

Health and Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 398 (*Johnson, 37*) Change provisions relating to credentialing optometrists
LB 399 (*Johnson, 37*) Adopt the Perfusion Practice Act

LB 479 (*Johnson, 37*) Change provisions relating to audiologists and speech-language pathologists
LB 247 (*Johnson, 37*) Change provisions relating to pharmaceuticals

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 242 (*Flood, 19*) Change provisions relating to assault by a confined person and create an offense of assault on an officer using bodily fluids
LB 428 (*Synowiecki, et al.*) Adopt the Peace Officer Employer - Employee Relations Act
LB 525 (*Aguilar, 35*) Modify provisions relating to liability involved in vehicular pursuits
LB 532 (*Nantkes, 46*) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Police Standards Council
LB 179 (*Lathrop, 12*) Require electronic recording of custodial interrogations
LB 474 (*Chambers, 11*) Provide for certain misconduct by school teachers, school nurses, and police officers to be a public record

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 530 (*Nantkes, 46*) Change Storm Water Management Plan Program provisions
LB 534 (*Schimek, 27*) Change provisions relating to urban storm water drainage

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 488 (*Wallman, 30*) Authorize an income tax credit for perpetual conservation easement donations
LB 648 (*Preister, et al.*) Provide tax credits relating to wind energy projects
LB 512 (*Fulton, et al.*) Provide income tax credits
LB 514 (*Fulton, et al.*) Provide an income tax credit for employer contributions to employee long-term care insurance
LB 531 (*Nantkes, 46*) Provide tax credits for employers providing health insurance
LB 343 (*Langemeier, 23*) Provide an income tax credit for investments in biodiesel facilities

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2007

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 123 (*Banking, Commerce and Insurance*) Adopt the Nebraska Foreclosure Protection Act and change provisions relating to deceptive trade practices

LB 386 (*Langemeier, 23*) Adopt the Nebraska Security Instrument Satisfaction Act

LB 190 (*Mines, 18*) Provide for consumers to put a security freeze on their credit reports

Business and Labor

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 77 (*Nantkes, 46*) Change workers' compensation disability compensation provisions

LB 222 (*McGill, 26*) Provide workers' compensation benefits for permanent disfigurement or scarring

LB 462 (*Dubas, et al.*) Change workers' compensation provisions covering disability payments during vocational rehabilitation

LB 588 (*Business and Labor Committee*) Change the workers' compensation hospital fee schedule and payment of providers

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 153 (*Aguilar, et al.*) Change provisions relating to legal actions over school districts in annexed territory

LB 219 (*Dierks, 40*) Change requirements for freeholder petitions

LB 230 (*Raikes, 25*) Change provisions relating to resident students for purposes of certain reorganizations

LB 524 (*Aguilar, 35*) Change provisions relating to school districts in annexed territory

LB 630 (*Dierks, 40*) Change provisions relating to freeholder petitions

LB 678 (*Dubas, 34*) Change school district boundary provisions relating to annexed territory

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 404 (*Janssen, et al.*) Change Nebraska Liquor Control Commission members' salaries

LB 689 (*Karpisek, 32*) Provide for a limited winery license

LB 578 (*McDonald, 41*) Change provisions relating to liquor licenses

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1525 - 9:00 a.m.

LB 612 (*Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee*) Redefine compensation for school employees retirement systems

LB 613 (*Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee*) Change deposit provisions of school employees retirement systems

Transportation and Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 266 (*Aguilar, 35*) Provide for driving privilege cards

LB 401 (*Schimek, 27*) Provide for notations on drivers' licenses and state identification cards regarding advance medical directives

LB 663 (*Hudkins, 21*) Change distribution and allocation of motor vehicle registration fees

LB 681 (*Pedersen, 39*) Increase motor vehicle dealer licensing fees and a bond

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007

Agriculture

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

Presentations by Vision 2015, City of Lincoln and State Fair Board on planning activities affecting State Fairgrounds

Room 1524 - 2:30 p.m.

Sallie Atkins - Nebraska State Fair Board

Linda Lovgren - Nebraska State

Fair Board

LB 131 (*Raikes, et al.*) Provides for the University Research and Development Corridor Master Plan
LB 435 (*Raikes, et al.*) Provide for a Nebraska State Fairgrounds Master Plan

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 379 (*Pahls, 31*) Change certain corporate reporting, notice, and filing provisions and eliminate references to professional limited liability companies

LB 383 (*Pahls, 31*) Change filing requirements involving the address of a partnership's agent

LB 188 (*Mines, 18*) Eliminate a notice requirement relating to motor vehicle service contracts

LB 378 (*Pahls, 31*) Change the Small Employer Health Insurance Availability Act

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Tom Baker - Board of Educational Lands and Funds

Richard B. Uhing - Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

LB 139 (*Flood, 19*) Change reimbursement provisions under the Special Education Act

LB 316 (*Friend, 10*) Create the Special Education Services Task Force

LB 506 (*Friend, 10*) Provide an alternative method of reimbursement for special education and related services

LB 702 (*White, 8*) Change reimbursement provisions under the Special Education Act

Transportation and Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 598 (*Karpisek, et al.*) Provide for Shriners license plates

LB 360 (*Pedersen, 39*) Change limitations on the issuance of Purple Heart license plates

LB 570 (*Louden, et al.*) Provide for Gold Star license plates

LB 419 (*Erdman, et al.*) Authorize

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

issuance of Nebraska Agriculture specialty and personalized message license plates

LB 421 (*Erdman, 47*) Permit issuance of multiple Purple Heart specialty plates

LB 93 (*Cornett, 45*) Authorize a new firefighter license plate and fund emergency training

LB 437 (*Cornett, 45*) Change provisions relating to issuance of specialty and personalized license plates

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 160 (*Cornett, et al.*) Change fire and rescue department provisions relating to clothing, equipment, and donations

LB 607 (*Ashford, et al.*) Provide a requirement for full-time fire personnel in certain cities of the first class

LR 13 (*White, 8*) Provide the Legislature encourages public fire departments to implement national fire safety guidelines

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 225 (*Friend, 10*) Provide for acknowledgment of satisfaction of judgment and unsworn certification

LB 564 (*Friend, et al.*) Change the Recreational Liability Act

LB 566 (*Louden, et al.*) Adopt the Public Recreational Liability Act

LB 567 (*Louden, et al.*) Change the Recreational Liability Act

LB 20 (*Mines, 18*) Change provisions related to public recreational access to water projects

LB 221 (*Lathrop, 12*) Change legal procedure complaint and notice provisions

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 412 (*McGill, 26*) Provide duties for the Nebraska Power Review Board relating to renewable energy

LB 629 (*Dierks, et al.*) Adopt the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1525 - 12:15 p.m.

LB 303 (*Synowiecki, 7*) Adopt a deferred retirement option plan (DROP) retirement program for the Nebraska State Patrol

LB 324 (*Speaker Flood, req. of Gov.*) Change provisions relating to state patrol retirement system contributions

LB 611 (*Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee*) Change Nebraska State Patrol retirement contribution and payment provisions

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 356 (*Cornett, et al.*) Change provisions relating to greenbelted agricultural land

LB 484 (*McDonald, 41*) Change provisions relating to payment of tax proceeds to certain political subdivisions

LB 519 (*Howard, 9*) Require a review of property valuations

LB 294 (*Mines, 18*) Change a standard of review for appeals to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission

LB 332 (*Janssen, 15*) Change procedures for appeals to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 690 (*Fischer, et al.*) Provide for apprentice hunter education exemptions under the Game Law

LB 504 (*Mines, 18*) Prohibit hunting through the Internet

LB 418 (*Erdman, 47*) Change Game and Parks Commission membership provisions

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 278 (*Stuthman, 22*) Change permitted uses of county sales tax revenue

LB 443 (*Stuthman, et al.*) Authorize transportation development districts and authorize a local sales tax

LB 565 (*Avery, et al.*) Adopt the Entertainment and Tourism Development Act

LB 697 (*Nelson, et al.*) Adopt the Entertainment and Tourism Development Act

LB 551 (*Flood, 19*) Provide for sales tax revenue appropriations under the Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act

LB 235 (*Nantkes, et al.*) Provide business incentives for film and music production

Hearings are open to public

Public hearings offer people the opportunity to make their views known on proposed legislation and have them incorporated into the official legislative record. In Nebraska, most bills, with the exception of a few technical bills, receive a public hearing before a legislative committee.

A weekly schedule of committee hearings is available in the Clerk's Office, the Legislative Bill Room and the Legislature's web site (www.nebraskalegislature.gov).

The schedule also can be found in the Unicameral Update, the

Sunday Lincoln Journal-Star and the Sunday Omaha World-Herald.

To testify before a committee, attend and fill out the sign-in sheet at the witness table, orally identify yourself and spell your last name for the record and state who, if anyone, you represent as you begin your testimony. Be prepared to answer questions.

Please note that addressing committee members or witnesses from the audience, public demonstrations and applause are prohibited.

WEEKLY REVIEW

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION TAKEN MONDAY, JAN. 29, 2007, THROUGH FRIDAY, FEB. 2, 2007

Agriculture

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
25	LANGEMEIER	Change rabies control provisions to include hybrid animals	Placed on Final Reading
74	ERDMAN	Change the Nebraska Pure Food Act	Placed on Select File
108	AGRICULTURE	Change provisions relating to fence disputes	Placed on General File
110	ERDMAN	Adopt the Bovine Tuberculosis Act	Placed on Select File
111	ERDMAN	Change provisions relating to milk	Placed on Select File
422	ERDMAN	Change membership of the Nebraska Brand Committee	Advanced to Select File

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
24	PAHLS	Change provisions relating to a reciprocal certificate as a certified public accountant	Signed by Governor
26	LANGEMEIER	Redefine real estate broker under the Nebraska Real Estate License Act	Signed by Governor
63	SCHIMEK	Change insurance coverage provisions relating to childhood immunizations	Placed on Select File
115	PAHLS	Redefine automobile liability policy	Placed on Final Reading
117	BANKING	Change provisions relating to insurance	Advanced to Select File
119	BANKING	Change the Insurers Investment Act	Placed on General File
120	BANKING	Rename and change the applicability of the Nebraska Senior Protection in Annuity Transactions Act	Placed on General File
121	BANKING	Adopt the Captive Insurers Act	Placed on General File
186	LANGEMEIER	Change provisions relating to the credentialing of real property appraisers	Placed on Select File
191	MINES	Change provisions relating to directors of certain corporations	Placed on Select File

Business and Labor

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
204	SNOWIECKI	Change provisions relating to the Contractor Registration Act	Advanced to Select File
211	BUSINESS AND LABOR	Change Commission of Industrial Relations judges' compensation	Placed on General File
472	CHAMBERS	Change statutory references to members of the Commission of Industrial Relations	Advanced to Select File

Education

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
21	RAIKES	Change school finance provisions relating to the cost growth factor	Signed by Governor
95	FLOOD	Clarify reference to expense reimbursement for the Professional Practices Commission	Placed on Select File
101	ERDMAN	Clarify that only one parent need sign the statement regarding private schools that elect not to meet accreditation or approval	Indefinitely postponed
150	ADAMS	Change provisions relating to certificate fees paid to the State Department of Education	Placed on Select File
231	RAIKES	Change provisions relating to the Early Childhood Training Center	Placed on General File
238	FISCHER	Create the Board of Trustees of the Nebraska Community Colleges	Indefinitely postponed
241	HUDKINS	Require the state to pay teachers' salaries as prescribed	Indefinitely postponed

General Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
64	SCHIMEK	Eliminate a gaming fee and tax adopted by initiative	Placed on Select File
441	MCDONALD	Change provisions relating to distribution of shippers' license fees	Placed on General File
549	SNOWIECKI	Provide for microdistilleries	Placed on General File

Government, Military, Veterans Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
39	SCHIMEK	Provide restrictions relating to petition circulation and change campaign reporting provisions	Placed on Select File
40	SCHIMEK	Require an initiative and referendum petition circulator to wear an identification badge	Indefinitely postponed
44	GAY	Change provisions relating to precinct lists of registered voters and sign-in registers	Placed on Final Reading
50	HUDKINS	Prohibit the state from seeking reimbursement from employees for use of vacation leave	Indefinitely postponed
87	HOWARD	Require that all state service contracts be awarded and performed in the United States	Indefinitely postponed
248	NANTKES	Provide for road improvement district elections to be conducted by mail	Placed on Select File
298	BURLING	Change the number of signatures required on nominating petitions	Placed on Select File
311	AGUILAR	Change provisions relating to petition signature verification	Placed on Select File
434	AVERY	Change late filing fees under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act	Placed on General File
527	AGUILAR	Provide registration fees for political committees and allow waiver of interest on late filing fees and penalties	Placed on General File
LR8CA	AVERY	Constitutional amendment to change signature requirements for initiative petitions	Placed on General File

Health & Human Services

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
185	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	Change provisions relating to health and human services	Placed on Select File
283A	STUTHMAN	Appropriation bill	Placed on Select File
283	STUTHMAN	Provide for biennial renewal of medication aide registrations	Placed on Select File
296	JOHNSON	Reorganize the Health and Human Services System	Placed on Select File

Judiciary

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
19	MINES	Authorize disposition of an abandoned mobile home as personal property	Indefinitely postponed
67	STUTHMAN	Permit service of summons of proposed jurors by first-class mail	Advanced to Select File
83	SNOWIECKI	Provide for Board of Parole recommendations relating to incarceration work camps	Placed on General File
97	FLOOD	Repeal terminated provisions relating to settlement escrow funds	Advanced to Select File
99	WIGHTMAN	Change provisions relating to the appointment of receivers by the district court	Placed on Select File
102	ERDMAN	Provide for notice of appointment of a personal representative under the Nebraska Probate Code	Indefinitely postponed
146	MCDONALD	Change the administrative fee for income withholding for child support	Withdrawn
154	BURLING	Eliminate certain exemptions from jury service	Indefinitely postponed
213	ASHFORD	Change provisions relating to preserving testimony	Placed on Select File
237	PAHLS	Change the homestead exemption amount for judgments and execution	Placed on Select File
290	PIRSCH	Change judicial nominating commission provisions	Advanced to Select File
341	SCHIMEK	Change Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act provisions and adopt the Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act	Signed by Governor
470	CHAMBERS	Change provisions relating to dissemination of records of arrest	Placed on General File
476	CHAMBERS	Change penalty from death to life imprisonment without possibility of parole and provide for restitution	Placed on General File

Natural Resources

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
79	NATURAL RESOURCES	Change provisions related to reporting under the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Act	Placed on Final Reading. ST9003 change
80A	LOUDEN	Appropriation bill	Placed on Final Reading
80	NATURAL RESOURCES	Authorize additional assistance for projects under the Safe Drinking Water Act	Placed on Final Reading
161	NATURAL RESOURCES	Raise the range for permissible application fees for certification as wastewater treatment operators	Placed on Final Reading

Natural Resources

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
263	HUDKINS	Change permit provisions under the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act	Placed on Select File
291	HANSEN	Change the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board membership	Placed on Select File
313	NATURAL RESOURCES	Amend the Livestock Waste Management Act with respect to certain engineering requirements	Placed on Select File
333	JOHNSON	Change the Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Contractors Certification and System Registration Act	Placed on Select File

Retirement

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
468	CHAMBERS	Provide duties to the Nebraska Investment Council regarding Sudan-related investments	Withdrawn

Revenue

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
94	CORNETT	Authorize municipalities to receive certain sales and use tax information	Placed on Final Reading
145	MCDONALD	Require annual notices to property tax homestead exemption claimants	Placed on General File
155	LANGEMEIER	Change provisions relating to tax liens on personal property and collection of certain taxes	Indefinitely postponed
158	HEIDEMANN	Exempt depreciable repair or replacement parts for agricultural equipment from sales tax	Withdrawn
166	REVENUE	Change provisions relating to property taxation and assessment	Placed on Select File
167	REVENUE	Change property tax provisions relating to appeals, equalization, and assessor certification	Placed on Final Reading
168	REVENUE	Change property and motor vehicle tax protest and appeal procedures	Indefinitely postponed
223	REVENUE COMMITTEE	Change tax laws	Placed on General File
305	FISCHER	Change distribution of certain sales tax revenue	Placed on Select File
315	JANSSSEN	Update references to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986	Placed on Select File
485	LOUDEN	Change tax levy provisions relating to fire protection districts	Withdrawn

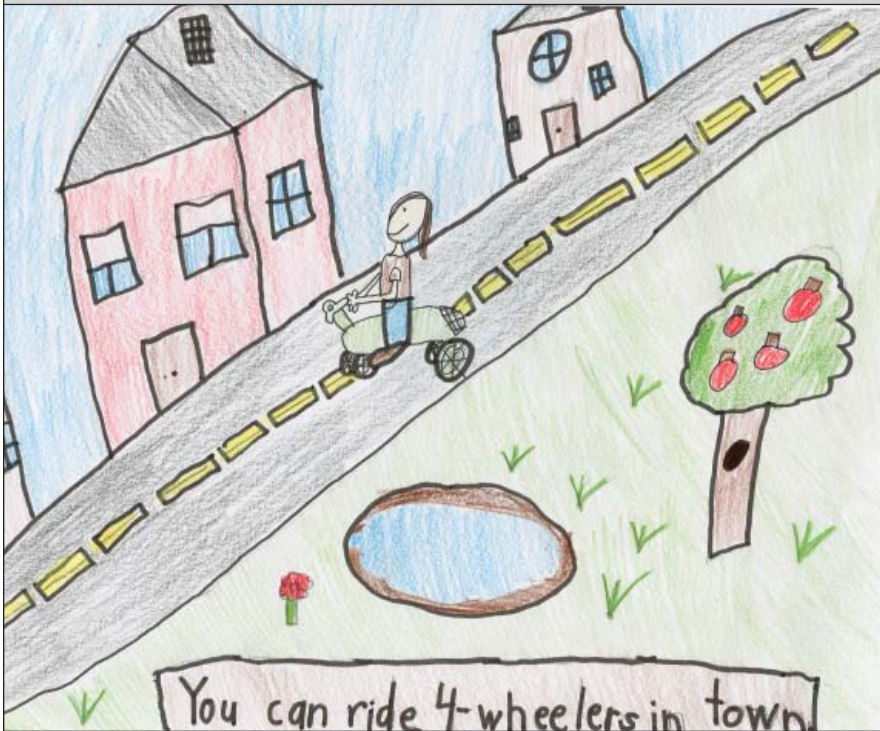
Transportation and Telecommunications

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
35	JANSSSEN	Set maximum speed limit for non-Interstate freeways	Placed on Select File
43	HEIDEMANN	Provide for mowing and hay-harvesting permits for right-of-ways of highways	Placed on Select File
70	FISCHER	Permit operation of ATV's within municipalities by municipal employees	Indefinitely postponed
148	HEIDEMANN	Provide an exception to weight and load limits for trucks	Placed on Select File
165	FISCHER	Eliminate authorization to participate in the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact	Indefinitely postponed
307	STUTHMAN	Restrict operation of all-terrain vehicles within municipalities	Advanced to Select File

Urban Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
11	MINES	Change provisions relating to annexation by cities of the first class	Placed on Final Reading
28	ADAMS	Change provisions relating to conveyance of personal property by cities of the second class and villages	Placed on Final Reading
206	FRIEND	Change provisions regarding the city treasurer and the county treasurer serving as ex officio city treasurer in cities of the metropolitan class	Placed on Select File
207	FRIEND	Provide a power for the board of directors of a metropolitan utilities district	Placed on Select File
347	MINES	Change provisions relating to the giving of bonds by city or village officials	Advanced to Select File

IF I COULD MAKE A LAW



Kaitlyn A. Quiring, age 9, Heartland Community Schools, Henderson/Bradshaw. "You can ride four-wheelers in town."

STUDENT ART SERIES

To commemorate the 100th Nebraska Legislature, fourth- through sixth-grade students throughout the state were invited to submit artwork depicting a law they would propose if they were a senator.

Selected entries will be published in each edition of this session's *Unicameral Update* and also will be posted on the Legislature's website at nebraskalegislature.gov/web/public/learning/makealaw.

Published entries were selected by Larry Starr, director of social science education at the state Department of Education, Karen Janovy, curator of education for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Heidi Uhing, civic learning coordinator for the Nebraska Legislature. The top three entries will be published in the last three issues this session.

UNICAMERAL UPDATE

The *Unicameral Update* is a free, weekly newsletter offered during the legislative session covering actions taken in committees and on the floor of the Legislature.

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