

THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE'S
WEEKLY PUBLICATION

UPDATE

Senators advance smoking ban compromise

Lawmakers advanced a statewide smoking ban March 6 that, as amended, would restrict smoking in any place of employment or public place in Nebraska while allowing cities and counties to opt out of all or part of the ban.

LB 395, known as the

Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act, is intended to “encourage smoke-free places of employment and public places to reduce the health and safety risks posed by smoking in such places, protect the public health and welfare and to recognize that the need to breathe smoke-free air has

priority over the desire to smoke.”

The bill as amended would allow for city or county governing bodies to opt out of part or all of the ban. Cities and counties also could opt out of some or all of the act by a vote of the people.

However, the bill would

grandfather in any existing municipality’s smoking ban, meaning Lincoln and Omaha’s current bans would remain in effect. Lincoln’s ban prohibits smoking in all bars and restaurants, while Omaha’s ban prohibits smoking in restaurants and only those

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CAPITOL SNAPSHOT



The Loomis High School concert choir performs in the Rotunda March 7 as part of Music Education Week at the Capitol.

Hearing focuses on assessment

The Education Committee heard testimony March 5 on three bills regulating the tracking and assessment of student achievement.

LB 653, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Ron Raikes, would require the state Department of Education to implement a statewide system for the assessment of student learning and for reporting the performance of school districts and learning communities.

Under the bill, the department would identify criteria for rating assessment instruments and contract with assessment experts to review and rate locally developed assessment instruments. An assessment instrument is a test aligned with state and local standards.

The experts would identify model assessment instruments and select up to four instruments for the five subject areas of reading, math, science,

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ISSUES UPFRONT



Agriculture

Hybrid animal vaccine bill amended

Lawmakers amended a bill March 8 that would someday require hybrid animals to be vaccinated against rabies.

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.

Originally, the bill would have required a licensed vaccine to be administered to hybrid animals, although no proven rabies vaccine exists for hybrid animals.



Sen. Chris Langemeier

Lawmakers, however, voted 39-0 to adopt an amendment to the bill that would delay its implementation until a rabies vaccine for hybrid animals exists. Once that happens, owners of hybrid animals would have one year to get their animals properly vaccinated.

LB 25 was readvanced to final reading by voice vote.

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Operational assistance for businesses proposed

Lawmakers gave first-round approval March 9 to a bill that would



continue funding for a venture capital economic development program.

LB 425, introduced by Louisville Sen. Dave Pankonin, would

reestablish a program within the state Department of Economic Development intended to provide operational assistance to potential high-growth businesses in an effort to attract private venture capital equity financing. As amended by a Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee amendment, the program would receive \$250,000 in each of the next two fiscal years.

Pankonin explained that the new program was a continuation of venture capital efforts first enacted in 2001.

"Nebraska needs to improve its capacity for business development," he said.

The program could help expand the state's tax base, create jobs and import new money into Nebraska, Pankonin said.

LB 425 was advanced to select file by a 28-0 vote.



Sen. Dave Pankonin

Business and Labor

Minimum wage increase proposed

The Business and Labor Committee heard a measure March 5 that would increase Nebraska's minimum wage for workers.

LB 31, introduced by Lincoln Sen.

Danielle Nantkes, would gradually increase the minimum wage for employees 17 or older from \$5.15 to \$6.26 per hour over a three-year period beginning Oct. 1.

After 2010, the state Department of Labor would set the minimum wage based on inflation.

The bill also would increase the minimum "tipping wage" for employees 17 or older from \$2.13 per hour to 50 percent of the main minimum wage. An existing student-learners wage would apply to those employees 17 and older. The training wage for employees between 17 and 20 years of age would be gradually increased from \$4.25 to \$5.15 per hour over a three-year period, with the department adjusting the wage for inflation annually after 2010.



Sen. Danielle Nantkes

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

Ken Maas, representing the AFL-CIO, cited a study indicating that wages are higher and unemployment rates lower in states with a higher minimum wage. He also noted that six states voted in last fall's election to increase the minimum wage.

Oponents, however, said Nebraska should wait for Congress to act on the minimum wage nationally. Jim Otto, representing the Nebraska Retail Federation, testified that employers generally do not want to have government forcing wage increases.

"They want the market to dictate it," Otto said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB 31.

Union fair share bill bracketed

Senators bracketed a bill March 8 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 their labor organization to contribute an amount that could not exceed the amount regularly paid for membership.



Sen. Don Preister

The fair share contributions would be required only when such an arrangement has been agreed to by both the employer and the labor organization. Similarly, the bill would not apply to workplaces that are not represented by labor organizations.

The bill was bracketed, or delayed,

until April 13, meaning the bill will not be debated further before that time without further action by the Legislature. Preister said the delay would allow time to "clear up misinformation" and permit both sides to talk about the issue before debating it again.

Earlier in the debate, which spanned three mornings, Preister said the bill would apply only to approximately 8 percent of the state's employers. The bill would cover the costs of contract negotiations, not legal representation related to employee grievances, he said.

"This is made as business friendly as it could be, while trying to maintain some equity and fairness," Preister said.

Omaha Sen. Tom White called LB 57 "a matter of simple justice."

For example, unions often have access to experts who help workplaces reduce workers compensation injuries, he said.

"These are expensive things to do," White said.

Sen. Pat Engel of South Sioux City said if someone voluntarily seeks representation, then they should pay for it. But labor organizations negotiate exclusive contracts to represent employees at workplaces, he said.

"These people don't have any choice of who they want to represent them," Engel said.

Sen. Tom Carlson of Holdrege likened the issue of union

representation to professional associations who support legislation for their members, such as the one he said he joined for his occupation.

"If we as a professional association can't convince members of our profession by showing them the results of our work, we don't deserve their dollars and we don't deserve their support," he said.

Omaha Sen. Brad Ashford said the collective bargaining process is critical in Nebraska,

particularly because public employees are constitutionally prohibited from striking. The bill's requirement that fair share representation be bargained collectively makes the bill workable, he said.

"This is a fundamental avenue of employer-employee relations in this country," Ashford said.

Papillion Sen. Tim Gay expressed concern that LB 57 would diminish Nebraska's status as a right-to-work state. Nebraska is one of seven states that guarantee the right to work in its state constitution, he said.

According to Gay, the state's right-to-work status is an issue that comes up frequently in conversations with businesses the state is attempting to recruit.

Lincoln Sen. Danielle Nantkes, who prioritized LB 57, said



Sen. Tom Carlson



Sen. Tom White



Sen. Brad Ashford



Sen. Pat Engel



Sen. Tim Gay

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

many lawmakers value economic development.

“The best anti-poverty tool we have is a good job,” she said.

Nantkes said the fair share issue is not likely among those factors considered by a company when it chooses to locate in an area. She cited rankings from Forbes magazine indicating that 10 of the top 25 places to do business – including six of the top 10 metropolitan areas – are not in right-to-work states.

Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop said the bill would not impact economic development, as business groups have suggested.

“They don’t have a dog in this fight,” he said.



Sen. Steve Lathrop

Rather, he said, the issue is one between nonunion employees and labor organizations.

Senators voted 25-14 to adopt an amendment offered by Bayard Sen. Philip Erdman that removed language from the bill that mirrors constitutional language intended to protect the employment status of workers based on their willingness to pay a fee, directly or indirectly, to a labor organization.

Erdman argued that if LB 57 is constitutional as the bill’s proponents argued, removing that protection in statute would be unnecessary.



Sen. Philip Erdman

White offered an amendment that would make the bill effective on Jan. 1, 2008. That amendment was pending when LB 57 was bracketed. The bill remains on general file.

General Affairs

Lottery updates advanced to second round

Lawmakers debated a bill March 9 that would change laws relating to bingo, lotteries and raffles.

LB 638, introduced by the General Affairs Committee, would make technical changes to the state’s charitable gaming statutes and allow for expanded use of bingo locations.

The bill also would allow state Department of Revenue investigators to enforce laws on illegal gambling devices and authorize bingo more than twice in one week at a certain location. This would allow more efficiency for organizations that sponsor bingo and want to use the same location.

A committee amendment, adopted 27-6, added provisions from LB 637 and LB 301 to the bill.

LB 637, also brought by the committee, would increase the procurement threshold for competitive bidding on lottery contracts from \$15,000 to \$25,000. The \$25,000 amount would put the department in line with most other state agencies.

LB 301, sponsored by Nickerson Sen. Ray Janssen, would extend the current distribution of lottery proceeds until Jan. 1, 2013. However, senators voted 30-0 to adopt an amendment that would extend the current distribution method only until 2009.



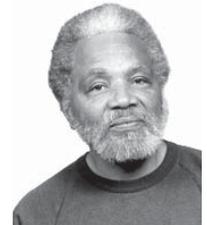
Sen. Ray Janssen

In 2003, the Legislature required

that the amount of funds transferred from the State Lottery Operation Trust Fund to the Education Innovation Fund, the Nebraska Scholarship Fund, the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund, the Nebraska State Fair Board and the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund be at least the same amount transferred to the funds in fiscal year 2002-03. That provision expires on Jan. 1, 2008.

Janssen said extending the current lottery distribution is necessary to keep the current payment structure in place for some state programs that rely on lottery proceeds for their funding.

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers said if these programs are indeed worthy, they should not be funded by gambling. He also objected to extending the current lottery distribution five more years.



Sen. Ernie Chambers

“A deal is a deal. And the deal was it would last until January of 2008,” he said. “When will it stop?”

After the bill was amended, it advanced to select file on a 30-2 vote.

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Unpaid family military leave clears first-round

Families of deployed military personnel could be entitled to unpaid leave from work under a measure given first-round approval by lawmakers March 5.

As modified by a Government,

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment, **LB 497** would allow spouses and parents of military personnel deployed for 179 days or more the ability to take unpaid family military leave while the deployment is in effect.

For employers with between 15 and 50 employees, up to 15 days of unpaid family military leave would be allowed. For employers of more than 50 employees, up to 30 days of unpaid family military leave would be allowed.

Any employee who takes family military leave would be entitled to regain the position they held when the leave period began. An employer could not discharge, fine or discriminate against any employee who takes unpaid family military leave. During the leave period, employees could maintain their benefits at their own expense.

Sen. Tom White of Omaha, the bill's sponsor, said with the nation at war, more National Guard and reserve personnel are being called to duty.

"Increasingly, our families have been separated by the needs of that war," he said.

White said families with deployed military personnel are finding themselves running out of vacation and sick leave despite obligations to take care of sick children and tend to other family matters.

LB 497 was advanced to select file by a 42-0 vote.



Sen. Tom White

Judiciary

Bill would prohibit polygraphing alleged rape victims

Lawmakers advanced a bill March 8 that would prohibit law enforcement officers, prosecutors or other government officials from requiring the victim of a sex offense to submit to a polygraph examination as a condition for proceeding with the investigation of the offense.

St. Paul Sen. Vickie McDonald said **LB 143** would help ensure that victims feel free to come forward to report the crimes committed against them. She said



Sen. Vickie McDonald

Nebraska is fortunate to have law enforcement who do not polygraph rape victims on a regular basis, but that current law allows the opportunity to do so.

The bill would allow continued grant funding from the federal Office on Violence Against Women to implement statewide domestic violence programs. The grant funds are distributed among the Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition, the Nebraska State Patrol and the state attorney general's office.

The grants totaled \$487,372 in 2006, which provided training for more than 500 public servants to better respond to incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault.

McDonald said while 566 forcible rapes were reported in Nebraska in 2005, studies show that the majority of rapes go unreported.

Some victims feel too much shame to come forward and make a report, she said, and polygraphing these victims before proceeding with an investigation contributes to that shame.

Grand Island Sen. Ray Aguilar agreed that the use of a polygraph test should be reserved for people accused of committing a crime to prove their innocence.

"To treat women who are victims in this as though they are criminals is absolutely ludicrous," he said.

The bill advanced to select file on a 35-0 vote.



Sen. Ray Aguilar

Obesity liability claims would be limited under bill

The Judiciary Committee heard a bill March 7 that would restrict lawsuits based on obesity.

LB 625, introduced by Sen. Pat Engel of South Sioux City, would limit civil liability actions brought against food manufacturers, packers, distributors and advertisers for claims resulting from an individual's weight gain or obesity.

The bill would not limit liability if the claim was based on a violation of a misbranding regulation or if a knowing and willful violation of federal or state law relating to the manufacturing, marketing, distributing, advertising, labeling or sale of food were committed. The bill would apply to claims filed



Sen. Pat Engel

ISSUES UPFRONT.....

beginning in 2008.

The committee took no immediate action on LB 625.

Revenue

ESU property tax authority proposals presented

The Revenue Committee heard three bills March 7 that would change the property tax levying authority of educational service units.

ESUs are groups of school districts that share certain services, such as technology, professional development and student nurses.

LB 170, introduced by Sen. Gail Kopplin of Gretna, would change the maximum levy for ESUs from 1.5 cents per \$100 of taxable property valuation to 2.5 cents per \$100 of taxable valuation. According to the Legislative Fiscal Office, the bill would generate an additional \$13.1 million in property tax revenues for ESUs in fiscal year 2007-08 and \$13.8 million in FY2008-09.



Sen. Gail Kopplin

LB 604, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Ron Raikes, would eliminate property tax levying authority for ESUs beginning in FY2008-09. The state would increase appropriations to ESUs for core services funding and technology infrastructure by the



Sen. Ron Raikes

amount that would have been raised statewide by a 1.5-cent property tax levy in FY2008-09. The state offset of the property tax levy would total \$20.6 million in FY2008-09.

LB 605, also sponsored by Raikes, would eliminate property tax levying authority and state funding for core services and technology infrastructure for ESUs with fewer than two member school districts beginning in FY2010-11. Only two ESUs – ESU 18 in Lincoln and ESU 19 in Omaha – currently have only one member school district.

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

Transportation and Telecommunications

REAL ID Act compliance authorized by proposal

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee heard testimony March 5 on a bill dealing with the REAL ID Act.

The act, passed by Congress in 2005, requires certain state standards and procedures for issuing driver's licenses and identification cards in order for them to be accepted by the federal government as official identity documents.

LB 285, introduced by the committee, would authorize the state Director of Motor Vehicles to do whatever is necessary to comply with the section of the federal law relating to improved security for driver's licenses and personal identification cards.

The REAL ID Act is scheduled to go into effect on May 11, 2008.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Telecommunications bill advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval March 8 to a measure that would make changes to state telecommunications laws.

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee introduced **LB 661** which, as amended by a committee amendment, would make the following changes:

Providers of voice over Internet protocol services (VoIP) would be required to collect and remit surcharges for landline 911 and telecommunications relay services.

A cap on the amount of money available from a fund to provide telecommunications relay equipment to the deaf would be eliminated.

Whenever possible, wireless E-911 surcharges would be collected from the users of prepaid wireless services. The PSC would establish surcharges comparable to the surcharge assessed to other users of wireless services and would develop the methods for collection and remittance. The duty to remit the surcharge would be the wireless carrier's responsibility.

Wireless carriers would be required to pay audit costs and to take legal action to collect the enhanced wireless 911 and relay surcharges.

The membership of the Enhanced Wireless 911 Advisory Board would be changed by replacing one representative from the telecommunications industry with a member of the public.

LB 661 also would include provisions originally introduced by Valentine Sen. Deb Fischer as **LB 560**.

All telecommunications providers

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who are not certified by the PSC would be required to file limited contact information with the PSC and pay a one-time \$50 registration fee. New providers offering services after Aug. 1 would have to register before they can offer services. Existing providers would have to register by Jan. 1, 2008.

Telecommunications providers

would be required to provide the PSC with contact persons regarding the Nebraska Universal Service Fund, the telecommunications relay system, wireless E-911 and consumer complaints. Providers offering broadband services, other than landline telephone companies, would be required to provide a contact person with managerial

responsibility for Nebraska operations.

Finally, LB 661 would include provisions from **LB 660**, a bill introduced by the committee. Under the bill, VoIP providers would be required to contribute to the Nebraska Universal Service Fund.

LB 661 was advanced to select file by a 33-0 vote.

Committee kills bill that would stop new wells

The Natural Resources Committee voted unanimously March 9 to indefinitely postpone a bill that would have stopped new well drilling.

The vote came the day after the committee heard testimony on **LB 594**, introduced by Gretna Sen. Gail Kopplin.

The bill would have placed a two-year moratorium on water well permits and surface water appropriations for irrigation purposes. Under the bill, the issuance of water well permits and surface water appropriations would have been prohibited from Jan. 1, 2007, to Dec. 31, 2008.

Kopplin said a "timeout" from drilling was needed while the state decided how best to deal with water issues.

"This is not a permanent end to well drilling," he said. "It's a timeout. It's a slow-down. It's an opportunity to do what's needed."

Proponents of the bill described the state's water issues as a crisis.

Len Schropfer, a Fillmore County farmer, said immediate and drastic

action by the Legislature was needed.

"It's necessary to deal with our water crisis and the Legislature has a moral and ethical duty to pass LB 594," he said.

However, opponents said the bill would undermine local control.

"The management of the groundwater has to be under local control with people who understand the needs of the local area," said Duane Filsinger of the Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District.

Jay Rempe of the Nebraska Farm Bureau said the legislation was unnecessary because NRDs are already regulating water use appropriately.

The committee also heard testimony on another bill relating to water policy.

LB 493, introduced by Sen. Chris Langemeier of Schuyler, would change the state's Water Policy Task Force's procedures.

Under the bill, the task force would conduct a review of research done by the University of Nebraska relating to the implementation of past water

legislation. Specifically, the bill would call for a review of LB 962, passed in 2004. LB 962 required the state Department of Natural Resources to evaluate river basins annually and determine whether basin water is being overused. If the department determines that a basin has reached full usage or overusage, it would halt new water usage until the department and the local NRDs develop a water management plan. The bill also would reduce the number of task force meetings to one per year and remove obsolete law relating to the task force.

Although the bill does not contain provisions regarding a new make-up of the task force, Langemeier said he would be open to an amendment that would change the membership of the task force, either by reducing the number of members or changing the representation.

"I'm open to any ideas that would make the task force better," he said.

Steve Smith of WaterClaim, a non-profit irrigator group, testified in support of the bill and urged committee members to study the membership of the task force.

"There are a number of voices that desperately want to be heard and cannot be," he said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB 493.



Sen. Gail Kopplin



Sen. Chris Langemeier

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Senators advance smoking ban compromise

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

bars that serve food and do not offer keno. Other Omaha bars are currently required to become nonsmoking by 2011.

LB 395 would go into effect June 1, 2008. All municipalities would be required to have bans at least as stringent as the statewide ban by June 1, 2009.

As amended, the bill would allow the following exemptions to the total ban:

- private residences;
- guestrooms and suites that are rented and designated as smoking;
- retail stores selling only tobacco and related products; and
- areas used for research on the health effects of smoking.

Proprietors would be required to post no smoking signs at each entrance to their buildings.

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. A person charged with such a violation could voluntarily enroll, at his or her own expense, in a smoking cessation program approved by the state Health and Human Services System. Upon successful completion of

the program, the charge would be dismissed.

HHS would be required to adopt rules and regulations and provide public information on the law.

Omaha Sen. Tom White said laws that try to change human behaviors based on addiction don't work. What is needed is a gradual, educational approach, especially when

statewide ban, but that it is important to give them the right.

"If we think cities are being irresponsible with it—and I don't think they will—then we can come back and deal with it," White said.

Sen. Russ Karpisek of Wilber praised the amendment for allowing for local decision-making and for businesses to

banned in the way the original bill dictates, he said, but sometimes strategy compromises what is right.

Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop said the contacts his office has received have been largely in support of a ban, at a ratio of 20 to 1. He supported the original ban that provided no opportunity for municipalities to opt out, but was willing to compromise.

"If we don't support this, we'll end up with no ban," he said.

Lathrop predicted that once communities experience the ban for themselves, there would be less resistance to it.

"The smoking ban is something people get used to," he said. "The bars don't close, the restaurants stay open, and it ends up being a good thing."

Kearney Sen. Joel Johnson, the bill's sponsor, called the compromise a tool to exercise local control while still working to reduce smoke in public places.

"We are all in agreement that smoking is bad and that second-hand smoke is also bad for our neighbors' health," he said.

A technical amendment was adopted, and the compromise amendment was adopted 28-4. The bill advanced to select file 32-6.

“
 What works for some communities will not work for other communities.
 Sen. Russ Karpisek
 ”

dealing with one's right to decide what happens within their own business, he said.

"When we're dealing with an addictive behavior and controlling one's property and business, we should step carefully," White said.

The bill as amended would give the message that smoking is a health hazard that should not be allowed except under specially considered circumstances, he said.

He predicted that very few places would adopt exceptions to the

be considered on an individual basis.

"This is a very diverse state," he said. "What works for some communities will not work for other communities."

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers said he did not count smoking among citizens' unalienable rights.

"You do not have the right to have an addiction and impose your weakness upon other people," he said. "You don't have the right to impose your stupidity on others."

Smoking needs to be

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Education hearing focuses on assessment

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

social studies and history for each of three selected grade levels based on such ratings.

"I suspect teachers aren't all writing their own assessments anyway; it takes too much time," Raikes said.

Each school district would adopt one assessment instrument in each subject area for each of three grade levels and include national assessment instruments. School districts would be required to report assessment instrument results on a building basis by district to the public and the department.

Raikes said the state currently has an assessment and reporting system called STAR. School districts use locally developed assessments to measure performance based on content standards for six subject areas of reading, writing, math, science, social studies and history, he said.

The bill's estimated fiscal impact would be an increase of between \$1.9 million and 4.7 million in each of the next two fiscal years. The lower estimate assumes STAR grants will be retained by the state, while the higher estimate assumes STAR grants will continue to flow to local school districts. Both estimates are based on the assumption that federal funds will continue to be available in the amounts projected by the department.

LB 353, sponsored by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, would reduce the number of model assessments required in the existing Quality Education Accountability Act from four to three.

LB 615, sponsored by Raikes, would require the state Board of

Education to implement a statewide system for tracking individual student achievement using the state Department of Education's student identifier system.

Raikes said LB 653 resulted from a performance audit that showed existing requirements for the use of four model writing assessments are not being met.

"They are using model guidelines, not model tests," he said, adding that this was not the intent of the law.

The bill would end the confusion by defining what an assessment is, Raikes said.

Andrew Rikli, director of assessments for Omaha Westside, said the current model does not provide comparability. School districts can set different passing scores, he said, which affects the end result.

He said opponents of the bill have concerns about school ranking, but Omaha already does that with the school report card being published in the newspaper.

"Only now the data is skewed because we set our own passing grades," he said.

Rikli supported the bill because he said teachers' time could be better spent evaluating their students, not designing tests.

Opponents of LB 653 included several teachers and school administrators, who said a teacher's ability to be creative and responsive to their students would be compromised if they were required to use regulated assessments.

Omaha teacher Maddie Fennel said there is much more to assessment than simply testing. The current STAR assessment guidelines value the teacher as the authority in the classroom, she said, while

standardized assessments would only create a "generation of bubble-fillers."

"To say that assessment is testing is to say that mathematics is addition and subtraction," she said.

Fennel said her assessments have made her a better teacher. While they do take more time, she said she has the results faster than if she used norm reference tests, which are sent out for scoring and can take months to get the results back. That scenario would prevent her from being able to incorporate her students' needs into her teaching, she said.

Valerie Foy, curriculum director for Crete Public Schools, said teachers initially resisted the current STAR standards because it took a lot of work to implement them, but after seven years, teachers now see their value. Teachers have just hit their stride with the new system, and schools are starting to see the results, she said.

"Would the state best be an interrupter of this process?" she asked.

Teachers in other states are envious of Nebraska's STAR standards, so the state shouldn't mess with a good thing, she said.

State Board of Education President Fred Meyer praised the STAR standards for their focus on increasing professional development among teachers statewide. Giving teachers the ownership of their own assessments has made for better teachers, he said.

"The STAR program has brought a level of professionalism to this state," he said. "This bill would bring that to a screeching halt."

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

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Committee hears testimony on human cloning

The Judiciary Committee heard a bill March 7 that would prohibit the cloning of humans by somatic cell nuclear transfer throughout Nebraska.

LB 700, sponsored by Imperial Sen. Mark Christensen, also would prohibit the delivering or receiving of any embryo or fetus produced via human cloning for the purpose of research. The bill would not prohibit the cloning of plants and animals, or cells other than human embryos.



Sen. Mark Christensen

Violation of the law would be a Class IV felony.

Christensen said the somatic cell nuclear transfer process creates clones resulting in human embryos, the earliest stage of human life.

"This is not an anti-research bill," Christensen said. "It is intended to set boundaries that would affirm the value of human life instead of devaluing it."

Supporters of the bill questioned whether this type of research was ethical or promising.

Greg Schleppenbach, director of pro-life activities for the Nebraska Catholic Conference, said he draws no distinction between cloning for research and reproductive cloning.

"It's still an embryo at its earliest stage of development," he said.

Some people in the scientific community are dismissing the efficiency of creating stem cell lines from nuclear transfer, he said, calling it expensive and inefficient. The state should put its resources toward more promising types of

research, he said.

Rita Hejkal of Omaha has multiple sclerosis. Unless a cure for MS is found, her life is certain to include a wheelchair and nursing home, she said.

Calling cloning research unpromising, immoral and unethical, Hejkal said she supports adult stem cell research instead, because it holds the most promise for curing disease.

"I would really like a cure in my lifetime," she said. "But is research that involves human clones a compassionate response to the needs of others? A clone is a clone is a clone. There is no difference."

Kay Parlor of Elkhorn said she has a daughter with diabetes. She said she hopes a cure from ethical means of research can be developed soon.

"We cannot support any medical breakthrough that relies on the cloning of human beings," she said. "We cannot devalue any human life for the sake of human advancement."

John Lillis of Omaha, who testified on behalf of Nebraskans United for Life, referred to somatic cell nuclear transfer research as "scientific voodoo—the ultimate denial of reality."

"Big money" is driving embryonic stem cell research, which has garnered support because it boosts the economy, he said. He cited California as an example, which he said has committed \$1 billion to embryonic stem cell research.

"Save the embryonic Americans," he urged the committee.

Dwight Williams, a pastor from Elkhorn, said it would be a mistake to automatically criminalize therapeutic cloning. Many people's

pain can be eased by breakthroughs in this kind of research, he said.

"There are many of us who believe that this research is life affirming," he said.

Ron Withem, representing the University of Nebraska, said the bill was unnecessary legislation because current policy set by the university's Board of Regents would not allow that activity to be conducted there anyway.

Withem said the bill would only send a message that the state was criminalizing research allowed in other states, which would negatively impact the research climate in Nebraska by hurting the university's recruiting process.

James Turpen, a genetics professor at the University of Nebraska, said the bill would prohibit one of most promising new areas of medical research.

Somatic cell nuclear transfer, or therapeutic cloning, holds promise for the development of life-saving therapeutic interventions. He said its importance is akin to the splitting of the atom or mapping the human genome.

It is scientifically inaccurate to suggest that this type of research is done to clone humans, which is unethical, scientifically miniscule and which no respectable researcher supports, Turpen said.

"This is an asexual process and does not produce an embryo," he said. "Sponges, fungi and some worms reproduce asexually—humans do not."

A similar ban was recently overturned in Iowa, Turpen said.

"Now a scientist in Iowa could produce a stem cell line, but our scientists would not be able to use it

A CLOSER LOOK.....

under this bill,” he said.

James Dake, a Dodge County lawyer, testified that he has multiple sclerosis. In 1999 he received a stem cell transplant that halted the progression of the disease by destroying and rebuilding his immune system. The stem cells used were harvested from his own body, he said, but his positive experience has shown him how much people can benefit from this kind of research.

He shared concern that the terms ‘embryo’ and ‘fetus’ are not defined in the bill, which he said

could cause confusion if a case were to be prosecuted. Moreover, he said, the bill appears to allow the prosecution of a patient who would receive treatments from stem cell procedures in other states that allow it.

“If the cure for my MS is found through stem cell research in another state, will I have to go there for a cure?” he asked. “And then do I become a felon here for obtaining it?”

Sanford Goodman of Nebraskans for Research, said the bill won’t

prevent this type of research from being done elsewhere. There was a time when our society had moral objections to other procedures like organ transplants and in vitro fertilization, he said. As we learn the overwhelming benefits of these procedures, that line continues to move.

“When this research brings cures that will benefit your constituents, it will be difficult to oppose it,” he said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

PRIORITY BILLS.....

Committee Priority Bills

Agriculture	LB 516 Adopt the Corporate Farming Policy Advisory Act LB 435 Provide for a Nebraska State Fairgrounds Master Plan
Banking, Commerce & Insurance	LB 124 Revise powers of state-chartered banks, building and loan associations, and credit unions LB 190 Provide for consumers to put a security freeze on their credit reports
Business & Labor	LB 588 Change the workers' compensation hospital fee schedule and payment of providers LB 265 Change various provisions of the Employment Security Law
Education	LB 641 Provide for the division of a learning community into separate education centers and establish procedures LB 651 Change and eliminate education provisions
General Affairs	LB 638 Change and eliminate provisions relating to bingo, lotteries, and raffles LB 578 Change provisions relating to liquor licenses
Government, Military & Veterans Affairs	LB 464 Change enforcement provisions relating to the Campaign Finance Limitation Act and Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act LB 497 Adopt the Family Military Leave Act
Health & Human Services	LB 463 Adopt the Uniform Credentialing Act LB 247 Change provisions relating to pharmaceuticals
Judiciary	LB 377 Reallocate district court judgeships LB 475 Prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation or marital status
Legislative Performance Audit	LB 653 Require implementation of a statewide system for assessment of student learning and for reporting LB 610 Provide documentation and recordkeeping requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services regarding sex offenders
Natural Resources	LB 579 Allow alternative energy production through customer-generators LB 295 Change provisions relating to irrigation and regulation of water and water wells
Retirement Systems	LB 328 Change provisions relating to county and state retirement plans LB 324 Change provisions relating to state patrol retirement system contributions
Revenue	LB 334 Merge the Department of Property Assessment and Taxation with the Department of Revenue LB 106 Change the tax on snuff
Transportation & Telecommunications	LB 661 Change provisions relating to telecommunications LB 681 Increase motor vehicle dealer licensing fees and a bond
Urban Affairs	LB 597 Change provisions relating to zoning and jurisdiction designations for cities of the first class LB 160 Change fire and rescue department provisions relating to clothing, equipment, and donations

MEET THE SENATORS

Sen. Dubas juggles farming and public office

When Sen. Annette Dubas responded to the Unicameral Update's request for a phone interview from her farm near Fullerton, she was out of breath.

"The lights are flickering—I think we're about to lose power," she warned.

The January snow storm that wreaked havoc for farmers and left parts of central Nebraska without electricity for, in some cases, weeks, was in full force.

Dubas had just finished carrying buckets of water out to her cattle in freezing temperatures because their normal drinking supply had frozen solid. Still, she made time to return her phone calls.

Being a farmer and a senator can be a juggling act.

"Holy smokes! Life has definitely changed," she said. "I have a feeling this is just the tip of the iceberg."

Dubas said her time has been spent preparing for the positions she'll take on upcoming bills and arranging for the farm to be able to run without her.

"I've run my own schedule for 30 years—farming is very flexible. Now I'm on a much more structured schedule," she said.

She's grateful that her son and his wife, who also work on the family's farm, can take up the slack.

Both helped carry the load while she was campaigning, she said.

Though born in Omaha, Dubas is a long-time Fullerton resident. Her father was originally from Fullerton, and when Dubas was 16, he noticed a local business for sale

while visiting family there. The family bought the local tavern and movie theater, and the city kids moved back to the country.

Dubas married her high school sweetheart, a fourth-generation farmer. She and her husband, Ronald, have four grown children and two granddaughters.

She has worked on the family farm ever since, where they raise 275 head of cattle. While she enjoys farming, it doesn't leave time for hobbies, she said.

"When you're a farmer, the farm is pretty much your life," she said.

When her children were young, she had been involved in their school sports, so she still roots for the local football, basketball and track teams.

"I also like to read anything, especially historical biographies," she added.

In fact, reading about political figures contributed to her interest in government.

"I always had a keen interest in the Kennedy family, as did most people," she said. "While they had their dark side, they also had strong belief in giving back through

public service, and I believe that, too."

Dubas knows her time as a senator will be incredibly busy. It might be a nice change, but it will take some getting used to, she said. And being away from home is hard.

"My husband and I have never been apart," she said, but the experience will be worth it. "Stepping foot on the legislative floor was definitely a spine-tingling moment."



Sen. Dubas prepares samples of her family farm's sausage and bratwurst at the farmers' market in Lincoln.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2007

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 420 (Erdman) Change cigarette tax distribution and create funds

AGENCY 29 Department of Natural Resources

AGENCY 52 State Fair Board

AGENCY 84 Department of Environmental Quality

AGENCY 72 Department of Economic Development

Business and Labor

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 88 (Business and Labor) Provide for payment of claims against the state

LB 89 (Business and Labor) Disapprove certain claims against the state

LB 495 (White) Prohibit employers from requiring use of compensated leave as prescribed

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Gary Bieganski - Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges

Floyd Vrtiska - Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges
LB 375 (Raikes) Rename and change the Minority Scholarship Program Act

LB 393 (Mines) Redefine award and eligible student for purposes of the Nebraska Scholarship Act

LB 509 (Avery) Create the Scholarship Trust Fund

LB 656 (Raikes) Provide for temporary funding related to distance education

LB 657 (Raikes) Change provisions relating to distance education

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

AGENCY 13 Department of Education

AGENCY 34 Library Commission

AGENCY 47 Educational Telecommunications Commission

AGENCY 58 Board of Engineers and Architects

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2007

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 574 (Kruse) Appropriate funds for capitol parking

AGENCY 19 Department of Banking and Finance

AGENCY 22 Department of Insurance

AGENCY 23 Department of Labor

AGENCY 67 Equal Opportunity Commission

AGENCY 87 Accountability and Disclosure Commission

AGENCY 65 Department of Administrative Services

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

John E. Falgione - State Fire Marshal

LB 694 (Christensen) Authorize planning for a parking facility near the capitol (*rescheduled*)

LB 686 (Karpisek) Provide for partisan ballots for unaffiliated voters at primary elections (*rescheduled*)

LB 646 (Nelson) Change provisions relating to counting ballots (*rescheduled*)

LB 528 (Aguilar) Change provisions relating to elections (*rescheduled*)

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 522 (Aguilar) Change civil procedure costs and attorney's fees

LB 526 (Aguilar) Change civil procedure plaintiff's costs

LB 243 (Flood) Change provisions relating to jurors

LB 693 (Hudkins) Require use of driver's license numbers for preparation of juror lists

LB 382 (Pahls) Change provisions relating to notaries public

LB 449 (Ashford) Change provisions on how judicial records are proved

LB 45 (Gay) Change provisions relating to district court fees

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 169 (Cornett) Exclude military retirement benefits from income taxation (*rescheduled*)

LB 183 (Carlson) Exclude military retirement benefits from income taxation (*rescheduled*)

LB 354 (Cornett) Exclude military retirement benefits from income tax (*rescheduled*)

THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2007

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

AGENCY 7 Governor

AGENCY 8 Lieutenant Governor

AGENCY 9 Secretary of State

AGENCY 10 Auditor of Public Accounts

AGENCY 12 State Treasurer

AGENCY 14 Public Service Commission

AGENCY 3 Legislative Council

Health and Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

Christine Peterson - Health and Human Services System

Scot Adams - Health and Human Services System

Michael Sitorius - Rural Health Advisory Commission

Joel E. Cerny - Board of Emergency Medical Services

Rebecca Schroeder - Rural Health Advisory Commission

Crystal Johnson - Rural Health Advisory Commission

Sarah Ann Lewis - Foster Care Review Board

Robert K. Olson - Board of Emergency Medical Services

Scott C. Wiebe - Board of Emergency Medical Services

Jeffrey Strawn - Board of Emergency Medical Services

James E. Smith - Board of Emergency Medical Services

Roger Wells - Rural Health Advisory Commission

Melisa (Lisa) M. Borchardt - Foster Care Review Board

LR 39 (Johnson) Urge the members of Nebraska's congressional delegation to ensure that Congress fully fund mental health and substance abuse treatment

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 540 (*Synowiecki*) Adopt the Probation and Parole Services Merger Act

LB 541 (*Synowiecki*) Provide a duty for the Community Corrections Council

LB 669 (*Hudkins*) Adopt the Nebraska Behavioral Health Jail Diversion Planning and Coordination Advisory Council Act

LB 406 (*Pedersen*) Provide for presumptive parole release dates

LB 671 (*Pedersen*) Adopt the Office of Probation and Parole Administration

LB 680 (*Pedersen*) Authorize contracts for keeping prisoners for cities of the metropolitan class

AGENCY 81 Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

AGENCY 38 Commission on the Status of Women

AGENCY 68 Mexican-American Commission

AGENCY 70 State Foster Care Review Board

AGENCY 76 Commission on Indian Affairs

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2007

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 685 (*Karpisek*) Change provisions relating to the possession of alcohol by minors

LB 336 (*Kruse*) Change penalties for violation of certain liquor laws relating to minors

LB 337 (*Kruse*) Provide for confiscation of identification of minors attempting to purchase alcohol

LB 261 (*Kruse*) Eliminate provisions relating to religious uses of alcoholic liquor and minors' activities at permanent place of residence

LB 580 (*Preister*) Change provisions relating to tobacco product manufacturers

LB 585 (*Preister*) Change provisions relating to the dispensing of cigarettes or other tobacco products

LB 258 (*Lathrop*) Change provisions relating to minors' violations under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2007

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB 536 (*Schimek*) Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support

LB 542 (*Synowiecki*) Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services

LB 545 (*Synowiecki*) Appropriate funds to carry out the Nebraska Prostitution Intervention and Treatment Act

LB 548 (*Synowiecki*) Appropriate funds relating to behavioral health services

LB 559 (*Ashford*) Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support

LB 576 (*Kruse*) Provide for rate increases for behavioral health services providers

TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2007

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

AGENCY 82 Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

COMMITTEE HEARINGS 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 and the Sunday Lincoln Journal-Star.

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, MARCH 5, 2007, THROUGH FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007

Agriculture

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
25	LANGEMEIER	Change rabies control provisions to include hybrid animals	Readvanced to Final Reading
46	HUDKINS	Require payments by grape producers	Placed on General File
69	HUDKINS	Change the Agricultural Opportunities and Value-Added Partnerships Act	Placed on General File
108	AGRICULTURE	Change provisions relating to fence disputes	Signed by Governor
422	ERDMAN	Change membership of the Nebraska Brand Committee	Signed by Governor
515	STUTHMAN	Change county planning commission provisions relating to livestock operations	Indefinitely postponed

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
124	BANKING	Change provisions relating to banking and finance	Placed on Final Reading
134	SCHIMEK	Require insurance coverage of colorectal cancer screenings	Placed on General File
136	FLOOD	Adopt the Nebraska Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act	Placed on Select File
188	MINES	Eliminate a notice requirement relating to motor vehicle service contracts	Placed on General File
191	MINES	Change provisions relating to directors of certain corporations	Signed by Governor
386	LANGEMEIER	Adopt the Nebraska Security Instrument Satisfaction Act	Placed on General File
425	PANKONIN	Create the Nebraska Operational Assistance Act	Advanced to Select File

Business and Labor

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
57	PREISTER	Provide for fair share representation contributions for certain labor representation by labor organizations	Bracketed
255	ROGERT	Change the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act	Placed on Select File
472	CHAMBERS	Change statutory references to members of the Commission of Industrial Relations	Signed by Governor

Education

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
73	MCGILL	Change school breakfast reimbursement provisions	Placed on General File
192	HARMS	Adopt the Access College Early Scholarship Program Act and eliminate the Community Scholarship Foundation Program Act	Placed on Select File
231	RAIKES	Change provisions relating to the Early Childhood Training Center	Placed on Final Reading

General Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
181	KRUSE	Eliminate a fee and tax on gaming activity adopted by initiative	Indefinitely postponed
549	SYNOWIECKI	Provide for microdistilleries	Signed by Governor
578	MCDONALD	Change provisions relating to liquor licenses	Placed on General File
638	GENERAL AFFAIRS	Change and eliminate provisions relating to bingo, lotteries, and raffles	Advanced to Select File

WEEKLY REVIEW

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION TAKEN MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2007, THROUGH FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007

Government, Military, Veterans Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
248	NANTKES	Provide for road improvement district elections to be conducted by mail	Placed on Final Reading
252	AVERY	Change land surveyor application and registration fees	Placed on General File
298	BURLING	Change the number of signatures required on nominating petitions	Signed by Governor
311	AGUILAR	Change provisions relating to petition signature verification	Signed by Governor
434	AVERY	Change late filing fees under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act	Signed by Governor
477	WIGHTMAN	Change contribution levels for state and political subdivision employee health plans	Indefinitely postponed
497	WHITE	Adopt the Family Military Leave Act	Placed on Select File
527	AGUILAR	Provide registration fees for political committees and allow waiver of interest on late filing fees and penalties	Signed by Governor

Health & Human Services

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
82	SYNOWIECKI	Change Welfare Reform Act provisions relating to family size	Placed on General File
185	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	Change provisions relating to health and human services	Passed by the Legislature
245	JOHNSON	Change provisions relating to fluoridation of drinking water	Placed on General File
296	JOHNSON	Reorganize the Health and Human Services System	Placed on Final Reading
395	JOHNSON	Adopt a new Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act	Placed on Select File
400	JOHNSON	Require an audit of medicaid drug rebate payments	Placed on General File
426	PANKONIN	Adopt the Pharmacy Technician Act	Placed on General File
480	JOHNSON	Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act	Placed on General File
523	AGUILAR	Adopt the Quality Home Care Act	Indefinitely postponed

Judiciary

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
67	STUTHMAN	Permit service of summons of proposed jurors by first-class mail	Readvanced to Final Reading
83	SYNOWIECKI	Provide for Board of Parole recommendations relating to incarceration work camps	Placed on Final Reading
99	WIGHTMAN	Change provisions relating to the appointment of receivers by the district court	Signed by Governor
143	MCDONALD	Prohibit government officials from requiring a polygraph examination of a victim of a sex offense	Placed on Select File
213	ASHFORD	Change provisions relating to preserving testimony	Signed by Governor
290	PIRSCH	Change judicial nominating commission provisions	Signed by Governor

WEEKLY REVIEW

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION TAKEN MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2007, THROUGH FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 2007

Natural Resources

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
263	HUDKINS	Change permit provisions under the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act	Signed by Governor
295	NATURAL RESOURCES	Change provisions relating to irrigation and regulation of water and water wells	Placed on Select File
313	NATURAL RESOURCES	Amend the Livestock Waste Management Act with respect to certain engineering requirements	Signed by Governor
333	JOHNSON	Change the Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Contractors Certification and System Registration Act	Signed by Governor
390	AGUILAR	Require certain rules and regulations related to underground storage tanks and tank operators	Placed on Final Reading
594	KOPPLIN	Limit the granting of water well permits as prescribed	Indefinitely postponed
677	DUBAS	Change late fees under the Livestock Waste Management Act	Placed on General File
704	PREISTER	Adopt the Fishable and Swimmable Waters Act	Indefinitely postponed

Retirement

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
303	SYNOWIECKI	Adopt a deferred retirement option plan (DROP) retirement program for the Nebraska State Patrol	Placed on General File
324	SPEAKER FLOOD	Change provisions relating to state patrol retirement system contributions	Placed on General File
596	KOPPLIN	Change retirement benefits and annuity payments for school employees	Placed on General File

Revenue

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
145	MCDONALD	Require annual notices to property tax homestead exemption claimants	Placed on Final Reading
166	REVENUE	Change provisions relating to property taxation and assessment	Signed by Governor
537	SCHIMEK	Authorize the collection and dissemination of motor fuel tax on land held in trust for Indian tribes	Placed on Select File

Transportation and Telecommunications

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
162	FISCHER	Provide for an electronic lien system for certificates of title	Placed on General File
239	FISCHER	Update references to federal law in certain state motor vehicle statutes	Placed on Final Reading
277	MINES	Change provisions relating to a metropolitan transportation improvement program in lieu of a Department of Roads plan	Placed on General File
286	TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Change the Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title Act and the Motor Vehicle Registration Act	Placed on Select File
307	STUTHMAN	Change provisions relating to operation of all-terrain vehicles	Signed by Governor
349	STUTHMAN	Change provisions relating to motor vehicles and trailers	Placed on Select File
661	TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS	Change provisions relating to telecommunications	Placed on Select File
667	PEDERSEN	Permit municipalities to allow pedestrians to solicit contributions on roadways	Placed on General File

Urban Affairs

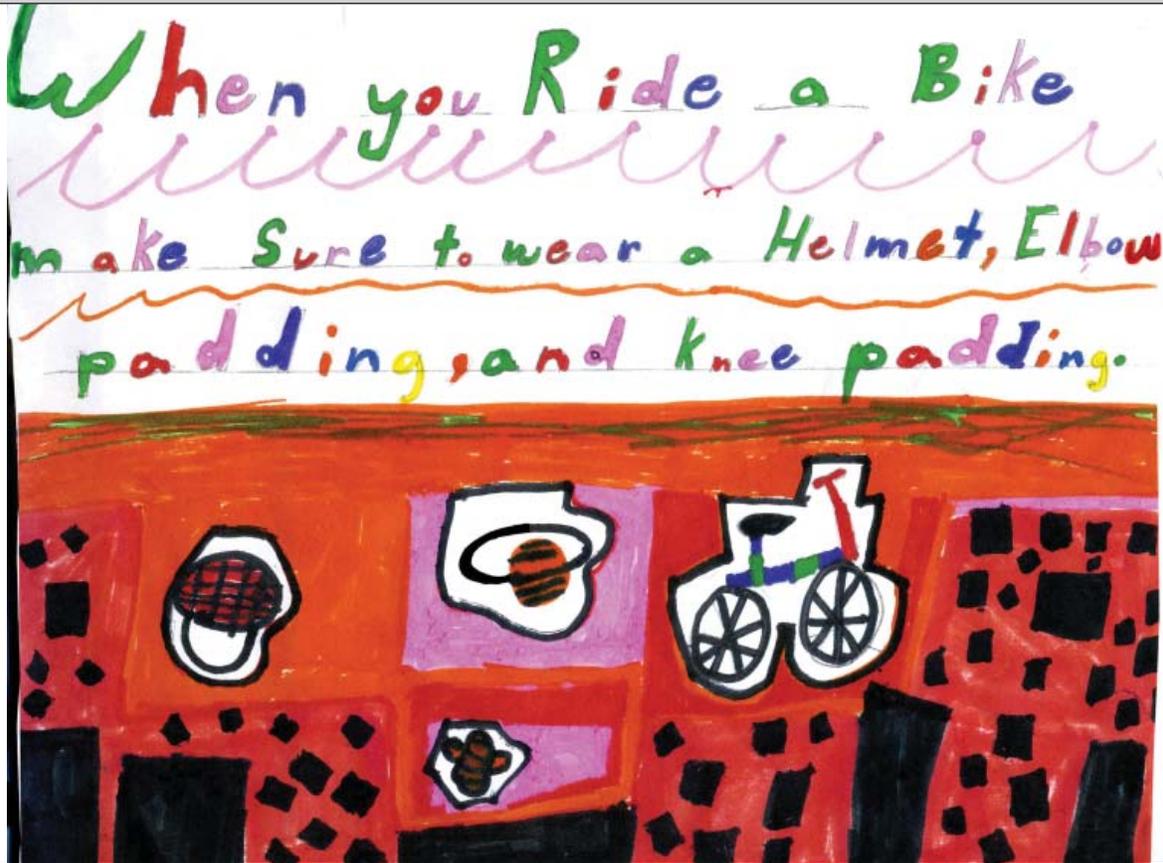
BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
347	MINES	Change provisions relating to the giving of bonds by city or village officials	Placed on Final Reading
597	KOPPLIN	Change provisions relating to zoning and jurisdiction designations for cities of the first class	Placed on General File

PRIORITY BILLS.....

Senator Priority Bills

Adams	LB 562 Change provisions relating to the Community Development Law
Agullar	LB 564 Change the Recreational Liability Act
Ashford	LB 373 Provide for inadmissibility of apologies regarding medical care as evidence
Avery	LR 6CA Constitutional amendment to provide for investment by political subdivisions
Burling	LB 218 Change provisions relating to the acquisition of certain drug products
Carlson	LB 458 Require vegetation management in certain streams
Chambers	LB 476 Change penalty from death to life imprisonment without possibility of parole and provide for restitution
Christensen	LB 701 Adopt a river basin administration committee
Cornett	LB 456 Provide an income tax credit for shareholders of subchapter S financial institutions
Dierks	LB 629 Adopt the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act
Dubas	LB 461 Provide rights for foster parents
Engel	LB 342 Provide adjustments to base-year operating revenue for community colleges
Erdman	LB 368 Adopt the Nebraska Limited Cooperative Association Act
Fischer	LB 677 Change late fees under the Livestock Waste Management Act
Flood	LB 658 Change provisions relating to Class I and Class VI school districts
Friend	LB 316 Create the Special Education Services Task Force
Fulton	LB 198 Change requirements for campaign messages
Gay	LB 338 Change income tax deductions for the Nebraska educational savings plan trust
Hansen	LB 457 Change provisions governing court review of foster care placement
Harms	LB 415 Change provisions relating to provisional operator's permits and other operator's licenses and permits
Heidemann	LB 636 Exempt certain public power district contracts from sealed bidding requirements
Howard	LB 551 Provide for sales tax revenue appropriations under the Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act
Hudkins	LB 663 Change distribution and allocation of motor vehicle registration fees
Janssen	LB 367 Change motor vehicle and sales tax rates and eliminate sales tax on construction services
Johnson	LB 395 Adopt a new Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act
Karpisek	LB 232 Change the Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act
Kopplin	LB 596 Change retirement benefits and annuity payments for school employees
Kruse	LB 573 Adopt the Alcoholic Liquor Liability Act
Langemeier	LB 343 Provide an income tax credit for investments in biodiesel facilities
Lathrop	LB 674 Prohibit use of social security numbers by employers as prescribed and provide a penalty
Louden	LB 570 Provide for Gold Star license plates
McDonald	LB 143 Prohibit government officials from requiring a polygraph examination of a victim of a sex offense
McGill	LB 73 Change school breakfast reimbursement provisions
Mines	LB 304 Change qualifications for tax credits relating to long-term care insurance
Nantkes	LB 57 Provide for fair share representation contributions for certain labor representation by labor organizations
Nelson	LB 236 Provide requirements for in-home personal care services workers
Pahls	LB 482 Provide for the coverage of qualifying autism services under the Medical Assistance Act
Pankonin	LB 425 Create the Nebraska Operational Assistance Act
Pedersen	LB 405 Provide for additional city council members for cities of the metropolitan class
Pirsch	LB 142 Change provisions relating to intimidation through the use of communication devices
Preister	LR 1CA Constitutional amendment to change legislative salaries
Raikes	LB 603 Change core services and technology funding provisions relating to educational service units
Rogert	LB 255 Change the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act
Schimek	LB 554 Adopt a new Parenting Act
Stuthman	LB 157 Provide for leaving an infant with a firefighter or hospital staff member
Synowiecki	LB 542 Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services
Wallman	LB 488 Authorize an income tax credit for perpetual conservation easement donations
White	LB 498 Adopt the Business Partnership in Rural Education Program Act
Wightman	LB 502 Change inheritance tax rates

IF I COULD MAKE A LAW



Karissa Wright, age 11, West Holt Public Schools, Atkinson. "When you ride a bike, you have to wear a helmet, elbow padding, and knee padding."

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.

UNICAMERALUPDATE

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The Unicameral Update is produced by the Clerk of the Legislature's Office through the Unicameral Information Office.

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