

THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE'S
WEEKLY PUBLICATION

UPDATE

Gun violence measure draws testimony

Judiciary Committee members heard testimony Jan. 25 on a proposal focused on the issues of gun violence and unlawful possession of firearms by minors.

LB958, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Brad Ashford, would require individuals to report a lost or stolen firearm to local law enforcement within 48 hours after discovery of its loss or theft.

Beginning July 1, 2008, all firearms retailers would be required to include a

trigger or gun lock with each sale of a firearm. Failure to do so would result in a Class IV misdemeanor, which carries a fine of between \$100 and \$500.

Use of a firearm to commit a felony would carry a minimum five-year prison sentence.

The bill would establish a 12-member Gun Violence Commission. The commission would make specific recommendations to the Legislature by the end of the year regarding:

- specific administra-

tive, statutory and regulatory changes designed to reduce gun trafficking and illegal gun sales;

- other factors that lead to gun violence; and
- the funding needed to implement the commission's recommendations.

Under the bill, when weapons are found in the possession of a person who is under 18 and is not authorized by state or federal law to possess a firearm, or a weapon is discovered dur-

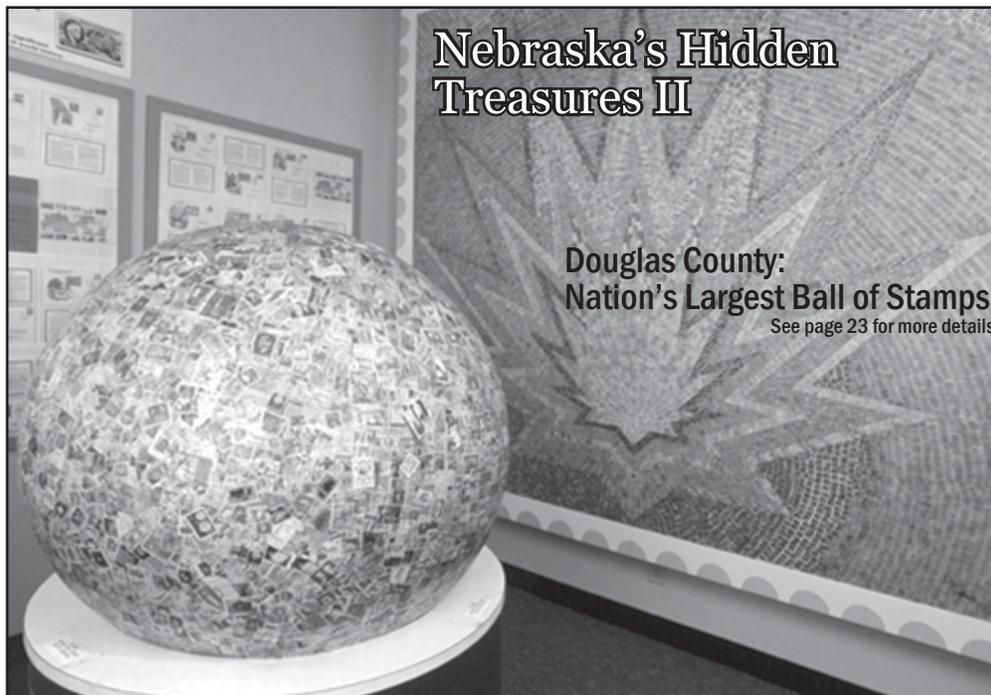
ing the course of a criminal investigation, law enforcement would be required to report to the Nebraska State Patrol how and from where the minor gained possession of the firearm.

The bill also would require the state patrol to conduct a public awareness campaign designed to decrease illegal firearm possession by juveniles and inform the public about the dangers of leaving loaded firearms within children's reach. The state patrol would be responsible for creating a hotline for citizens to call with reports of juveniles who are suspected of illegally possessing a firearm.

Finally, LB958 would exclude individuals from being able to obtain a gun permit if they have been found to be mentally ill and dangerous during the previous 10 years or are currently judged to be mentally incompetent. The state Department of Health and Human Services would be required to retain mental health information for 10 years for this purpose.

Ashford said LB958 is not designed to interfere

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Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Shooting range regulations, protections
debated

Lawmakers debated a measure Jan. 25 aimed at protecting shooting ranges from urban sprawl.

LB352, sponsored by Schuyler Sen. Chris Lange-
meier, would pro-
vide protections
to shooting rang-
es that adhere
to performance
standards as set
forth in a 1999
manual produced
by the National Rifle Association. The
Nebraska Game and Parks Commis-
sion would be required to review the
standards every five years.



Sen. Chris Langemeier

As proposed under a Government,
Military and Veterans Affairs Com-
mittee amendment, the bill would
prohibit changes in use or construc-
tion of a structure within 750 feet of a
shooting range if the change in use or
construction would cause the shoot-
ing range to be out of compliance with
the law or the performance standards.
A change in use or construction of a
structure could be approved if the
person seeking the approval agrees
to provide any mitigation to keep the
range in compliance with the law and
the standards.

Shooting ranges would be subject
to noise restrictions. Langemeier said
the noise restrictions would result in
a limit of 65 decibels. The bill would



leave it to local governments with
zoning authority to regulate hours of
activity for shooting ranges.

Shooting ranges conforming to the
law and the performance standards
would be protected from nuisance
actions in court. Other legal action
against shooting ranges would not
be prohibited. Finally, a shooting
range could not be forcibly closed by
government officials unless it is found
to be a clear and immediate safety
hazard by a court of law.

Langemeier said the bill resulted
from concern about growing urban-
ization around established shooting
ranges.

“Each time you go there, the hous-
es are just a little bit closer,” he said.

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers
questioned the appropriateness of
providing protections to shooting
ranges that are not available to any
other entities. He also expressed op-
position to recognizing an interest
group such as the NRA in state law.

Senators voted 26-1 to adopt an
amendment offered by Chambers
that struck language allowing shoot-
ing ranges to acquire land for the
purpose of establishing buffer zones
and maintaining compliance with the
law and performance standards.

Langemeier asked to have LB352
bracketed, or delayed, until Feb. 15.
The bill remains on general file.

Guard members would receive extended
tuition credit

The Government, Military and
Veterans Affairs Committee heard
testimony Jan. 25 on a bill that
would extend tuition credits for some
members of the Nebraska National
Guard.

Currently, guard members may
receive a credit for 75 percent of resi-
dent tuition rates for up to 10 years
from the date of
their initial guard
membership.

LB746, spon-
sored by Grand
Island Sen. Ray
Aguilar, would ex-
tend the allotted
time period if a
guard member is unable to complete
their course of study due to deploy-
ment.



Sen. Ray Aguilar

Under the bill, if a member is de-
ployed for no less than 180 days on
either the federal or state level, the
adjutant general may extend their
tuition entitlement for a period equal
to the time spent on active duty, up to
a maximum of five years.

“These men and women sacrifice
a great deal when they’re deployed,”
Aguilar said, urging the committee
not to make guard members sacrifice
even more when they return home.

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Adjutant General Timothy Kadavy testified in favor of the bill, saying that it would help to alleviate the impact of extended and multiple deployments. The tuition credit has been a valuable recruitment and retention tool, he said.

A committee amendment would lower the minimum deployment requirement to 120 days.

The committee voted unanimously to advance LB746.

Health and Human Services

EMS training and licensure changes discussed

The Health and Human Services Committee heard testimony Jan. 23 regarding potential changes to the Emergency Medical Services Practice Act.

LB730, introduced by Norfolk Sen. Mike Flood, would replace the existing U.S. Department of Transportation curricula for emergency medical services (EMS) technicians with one developed by the Nebraska Board of Emergency Medical Services.

The bill also would require the Nebraska EMS Board to develop a new skills competency test for licensure.

According to Bruce Beins, a Republican City EMT, Nebraska is one of 44 states that currently use the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians written exam.

Beins said the state has an EMS recruitment and retention problem in rural areas, but moving away from the national standard for training and



Sen. Mike Flood

testing isn't the answer.

"Degrading or downgrading the testing won't help," he said. "We just don't have the bodies."

Mike Buscher, a current member of the Nebraska EMS Board, testified that the board lacks the expertise to develop and implement a new curriculum and that he sees no reason to change from the current DOT standard.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill would change child abuse disclosure rules

A bill heard by the Health and Human Services Committee Jan. 24 would expand the state's ability to release information in child abuse and neglect cases.

LB782, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Gwen Howard, would permit the Nebraska HHS Director of Children and Family Services or the department's CEO to release information in child abuse cases under limited circumstances.

Among the situations when disclosure would be allowed are those involving the death of a child, when a child is missing from an HHS placement or when information related to a case has already been made public by sources outside of HHS.

"The public has a legitimate interest to know more in these cases," Howard said.

Todd Landry, Nebraska HHS Division Director of Children and Family Services, agreed. Testifying in support of the bill, Landry said he had been frustrated in the past by the inability to confirm or clarify information.



Sen. Gwen Howard

The department needs to be able to respond with accurate information when tragic events occur, he said.

Jennifer Carter of Nebraska Appleseed also supported the bill, calling it "a great first step" toward transparency.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Judiciary

Senators discuss expansion of civil protective custody

Senators opened debate Jan. 22 on a bill that would expand civil protective custody laws to allow 72-hour incarceration of certain intoxicated individuals.

Currently, law enforcement officers may incarcerate individuals for 24 hours if they are determined to be a danger to themselves or others. **LB335**, introduced by Omaha Sen. Lowen Kruse, would extend incarceration up to 72 hours for individuals who have been detained for this reason at least three times in six months.

According to Kruse, the bill aims to give persons suffering from addictions more time to become sober so they can make treatment choices in a clearer state of mind.

"For alcoholics, 24 hours is not long enough to reach sobriety," Kruse said. "Thus, many alcoholics released per current law are still inebriated."

But for bill opponents, the overriding issue was the possibility of infringing on an individual's right to due process.

"To hold someone for 72 hours



Sen. Lowen Kruse

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against their will is the wrong way to deal with this problem,” said Omaha Sen. John Synowiecki. “We use incarceration in a very limited way to protect, not to treat.”

A Judiciary Committee amendment would limit use of 72-hour incarceration to counties that have adopted a resolution certifying suitable facilities exist in the county for care and treatment of those suffering chronic alcohol or drug abuse.

Omaha Sen. Brad Ashford said the committee amendment would “ensure we are dealing with suitable facilities and that we are working with individuals who need this level of support.”

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers introduced a motion to bracket the bill until March 15. The motion failed on a vote of 18-25. LB335 remains on general file.

Bill aims to add credibility to court testimony

Lawmakers advanced a bill to select file Jan. 23 that would regulate the use of testimony from a jailhouse informer in criminal proceedings.

Currently, a jailhouse informer is defined as a person in custody as an accused defendant, a convicted defendant awaiting sentencing, a convicted defendant serving a sentence or a criminal suspect.

LB465, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers, would expand this definition to include individuals detained for questioning and would clarify that an informant need not be physically present in a jail to be considered “in custody.”



Sen. Ernie Chambers

The bill also amends the sections of law requiring that certain disclosures be made to defense counsel before the testimony of a jailhouse informer is admissible in court. Under the bill, all investigations involving an informer must disclose the following information 10 days prior to trial:

- the informant’s known criminal history;
- any deal, inducement or benefit which has been made or may be made in the future to the informant;
- the specific statements allegedly made by the person against whom the informant will testify; and
- all cases and investigations in which the jailhouse informant testified or offered statements against a person but was not called as a witness.

Investigations known to the prosecutor or law enforcement authority involving a jailhouse informer must also be disclosed.

Chambers said a person in any form of custody may be induced to offer testimony that is of questionable reliability. The courts should know the manner in which the testimony was gathered before it is admissible in court, he said.

“Efforts are made to pressure people to say things that they know to not be true,” Chambers said.

A Judiciary Committee amendment, adopted 37-0, clarifies that the bill would apply only to those detained for questioning who were offered or received any deal, promise, inducement or benefit in exchange for their participation in the investigation.

The amendment also limits the requirement that a prosecutor turn over information on all investigations in which a jailhouse informer

was involved in any manner to only those situations in which a deal or other inducement was offered.

Omaha Sen. Tom White said the bill could help prevent people being convicted of crimes they did not commit. The more the court knows about how the information was obtained, the fairer the trial will be, he said.

“Any time we withhold information from citizens in the jury, we do citizens a disservice,” White said.

The bill advanced 32-5.

Lawmakers advance medical lien changes

Senators advanced a bill Jan. 23 aimed at changing provisions relating to medical liens.

LB586, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett, would reduce the amount of a lien by the discount or other limitation that would have applied to the claim if it had been submitted to a medical insurer for reimbursement.



Sen. Abbie Cornett

According to Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha, the proposal will encourage hospitals to bill insurers promptly.

A Judiciary Committee amendment added chiropractors to the list of treatment providers subject to the bill’s provisions and removed Medicaid and Medicare from the bill’s discount provisions.

The bill was advanced to select file on a 39-0 vote.

Senators advance measures aimed at recouping bad debt costs

Senators advanced two bills Jan. 23 that would make it easier for state

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agencies to recoup bad debt costs and prevent future bad debt from known payors.

LB619 and **LB620**, introduced by Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch, would allow agencies to assess returned check fees, require cash payments from bad debt payors and require the use of electronic payments.



Sen. Pete Pirsch

Under current law, the state treasurer manages all checks returned to state agencies and charges them a \$20 fee for debt collection expenses. General funds are used to offset costs associated with bad debt. LB619 would allow agencies to recoup these costs by charging payors a returned check fee.

Senators adopted a committee amendment that would limit bad check fees to \$30.

LB619 advanced on a vote of 36-0.

LB620 would make changes to current law regarding bad debt and returned check fees within the state's Child Support Processing Center.

The bill would:

- create a cash fund within the Child Support Processing Center as the designated account for returned check fees;
- allow the state treasurer to require a cash form of payment after a payor has issued two returned child support checks in a year;
- require the use of electronic processing to collect and disburse child support payments; and
- require employers with more than 50 employees to remit child support payments elec-

tronically.

Senators voted 28-0 on advancing LB620 to select file.

Alcohol and marijuana laws could be updated

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony related to drunken driving liability and marijuana penalties Jan. 24.

LB810, introduced by Omaha Sen. Lowen Kruse, would hold a retailer liable for the resulting death, injury or damage done by a drunk driver if the retailer was reckless or negligent in serving alcohol to that person prior to the accident.



Sen. Lowen Kruse

Under the bill, the retailer would be held liable if the patron was served alcohol in his or her establishment, despite being noticeably intoxicated.

Kruse said more than 40 states have passed such laws. The bill includes a unique provision, however, that provides a way for businesses to protect themselves from such liability.

If the bar or restaurant owner and all their employees who serve alcohol have successfully completed a state-certified server training program and were following the training tenets at the time of sale or service to the individual who caused harm or injury to a third party, the owner would not be held liable.

Kruse said state training courses were set up two years ago and thousands of servers have already completed them.

"The servers are the ones who can protect our life and limb," he said.

Nick Ellinger of MADD said overserving alcohol to patrons in a bar

produces an average blood alcohol level of .16 or .18—the equivalent of eight shots of tequila.

Drivers who have had this much to drink are 380 times more likely to be in a fatal crash than nondrinking drivers, he said. In addition, half of those pulled over for drunk driving said their last drink was from a bar or restaurant, he said.

Jim Partington of the Nebraska Restaurant Association said he was enthusiastic about the training, but that the bill is based on subjective requirements such as "visible intoxication."

Restaurants cannot be responsible for how much people drink before or after they are in a restaurant, he said.

The bill could result in a restaurant owner being charged with liability for something they didn't have a part in and having to spend time and money on attorneys to get through the legal process, he said.

"That's a burden the hospitality industry shouldn't have to bear," he said.

Kathy Siefken of the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association said the bill holds grocery stores to a difficult standard. Bars have more time to determine whether their patrons are too intoxicated to be served, she said.

"Our clerks have a six-second window to determine whether someone is intoxicated or not," she said.

The committee also heard testimony on a bill that would increase penalties for possession of marijuana.

LB844, introduced by Sen. Russ Karpisek of Wilber, would increase penalties for possession of marijuana as follows:



Sen. Russ Karpisek

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- a person knowingly or intentionally possessing marijuana weighing one ounce or less would be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor;
- a person knowingly or intentionally possessing marijuana weighing more than one ounce but not more than one pound would be guilty of a Class II misdemeanor; and
- a person possessing drug paraphernalia would be guilty of a Class IIIA misdemeanor.

Under current law, the first offense for marijuana possession is a citation and a \$100 fine. The change would make penalties for a minor in possession of marijuana comparable to those for a minor in possession of alcohol.

“We are sending the message that marijuana is not as dangerous as alcohol because the punishment is so much less,” Karpisek said. “A person with (the equivalent of) 1,000 joints would get a lesser penalty than a minor carrying one can of beer.”

He said that marijuana has doubled in potency in the last 20 years and is associated with crime and violence. Further, it is addictive and poses health consequences.

“Marijuana is a more dangerous drug than alcohol, especially to our youth,” he said.

Kathy Burson of PRIDE Omaha agreed.

“Smoking pot is just as serious a crime as teenage drinking,” she said. “Our current law is far too lenient.”

When our laws do not serve as a strong deterrent, Burson said, they give the impression that marijuana is not harmful. But in reality, smoking one joint causes the same lung damage as five cigarettes, she said.

Moreover, she said, a 15-year-old who has smoked marijuana is 60 times more likely to use more danger-

ous drugs.

Len Schropfer, a Fillmore County farmer, said there is no compelling reason to increase penalties for use of the drug.

“I would far rather trust my safety to a driver on the road under the influence of marijuana than under the influence of alcohol,” he said.

Susan Kirchmann, a criminal defense attorney, also opposed the bill, saying that increased penalties will neither decrease the demand nor the use of the drug.

Marijuana is considered a gateway drug only because it is cheap and easy for young people to get, she said, not because its use causes use of heavier drugs.

Further, young people who are charged with possession now have a record to contend with that could create future roadblocks, such as preventing them from getting college scholarships, she said.

The committee took no immediate action on either bill.

Increased penalties for motor vehicle homicide proposed

A proposal for increased penalties for motor vehicle homicides was presented to the Judiciary Committee Jan. 25.

LB872, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch, would allow the

court to revoke a driver’s license in a motor vehicle homicide case. Currently, motor vehicle homicide carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.

In addition to a potential jail sentence and fine, a driver convicted of motor vehicle homicide could be sub-

ject to a license revocation of between one and 15 years. Under LB872, if the motor vehicle homicide accident caused injury to a pregnant woman resulting in the termination of her pregnancy, the perpetrator could be subject to a license revocation of between six months and 15 years.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Natural Resources

Committee reviews wind energy rights bill

“Proceed with caution” was the message from some senators, regarding a bill that would place limits on the use of land for wind and solar power.



Sen. Annette Dubas

The Natural Resources Committee heard **LB923**, a bill introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, on Jan. 24. The bill aims to provide protections for landowners who enter agreements with developers of wind and solar energy. The bill would require that a lease or easement between a landowner and a developer allow up to five years to begin development of power production on leased property, prohibit the severing of wind rights from the land to be developed and limit the lease period to 50 years.

Under the bill, a contract would become void on its fifth anniversary if development of power production had not begun. LB923 also would require that payments under any continuance agreement be made annually.

The bill’s supporters cited concerns that consumers may be per-



Sen. Pete Pirsch

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suaded to enter lease agreements that would tie up land use indefinitely or pay a below-market value for use of the land. John Hansen with the Nebraska Farmers Union indicated that some landowners are unsure about the value of wind energy and their rights under the contracts.

"Terms vary and some are reasonable, while others are not reasonable," said Hansen. "A few years ago this wasn't an issue. No one thought about the value of using wind blowing over your property. Today, we have reason to consider one's rights in capitalizing on the development of this resource."

Some senators questioned the bill's ability to set meaningful standards, as well as the Legislature's obligation to shelter consumers from bad deals.

"Is it our place to give consumers a 'do-over' if they think they didn't get the best deal on a contract?" asked Gretna Sen. Gail Kopplin.

Others who testified in support of the bill indicated the five-year clause would protect the public's interest by ensuring public power suppliers would not be locked out of the best production sites while investor-owned companies hold properties without developing them.

But opponents indicated LB923 could put Nebraska at a competitive disadvantage with other wind energy states. Nebraska developer Dan Alberts testified that his company, Third Planet Winds, hopes to build a wind farm in Nebraska.

"LB923 could put our project in jeopardy because the plans revolve around a seven-year evaluation period," said Alberts.

"The bill could require several agreements with landowners to be redrafted," he added. "This bill would cause more confusion for developers who want to get their operations

up and running as soon as they are able."

Dubas indicated she would continue to work on the bill to address the committee's concerns. The committee took no immediate action on LB923.

Transportation and Telecommunications

Fine for super-speeders could increase

People who drive more than 35 mph over the speed limit would be subject to increased penalties under a bill given first-round approval by lawmakers Jan. 24.

Under **LB621**, introduced by Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch, those convicted of driving 35 mph over the speed limit would be subject to a \$300 fine and assessed four points against their license. Currently, the penalty is a \$200 fine and three points against the driver's license.

LB621 was advanced to select file by a 27-5 vote.

State tech policy changes proposed

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee heard a bill Jan. 22 that would change the state's technology policy.

LB823, proposed by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, would authorize the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) to designate enterprise projects, require progress reports on reviewed projects and review technology projects regardless of their funding source.

Under the bill, state agencies would submit an accounting of their

technology assets to the state's chief information officer and the NITC would provide an annual report of this information.

Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek, chairperson of the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, said the NITC is currently not authorized to analyze

projects beyond the initial planning phases. The bill would help mitigate costly technology failures, she said.

"State agencies have a great resource in NITC and this bill will help them make the most of it," Schimek said.

Brenda Decker, the state's CIO, testified in support of the bill, saying that it will help the NITC make recommendations to the Legislature and the governor on the state's technology projects.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



Sen. DiAnna Schimek

Revenue

Snuff tax bill advanced from Revenue

The Revenue Committee heard a measure Jan. 23 that would change the method of taxing chewing tobacco.

LB722, sponsored by Sen. Pat Engel of South Sioux City, would reclassify tobacco-related substances into three categories:

- smoking tobacco, which would include



Sen. Pat Engel

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tobacco-related items that can be smoked, with the exception of cigarettes;

- tobacco products, which would include tobacco items intended primarily for chewing; and
- cigarettes, which are not impacted by the bill.

Under LB722, tobacco products would be taxed at a rate of 65 cents per ounce. Currently, tobacco products are generally taxed at a rate of 20 percent of the wholesale price.

The bill is similar to a measure passed by the Legislature in 2007, but vetoed by the governor.

Engel said the current system places brand-name products at a disadvantage when compared to lower-cost generic products.

"To me, this is an equity issue and we'll let the free market prevail," he said.

According to Engel, 11 states have already changed their method of

taxing smokeless tobacco to a weight-based system.

Robert Shepherd, representing U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company, said that when the current law was enacted in 1987, wholesale pricing was roughly the same across the industry, yielding the same amount of excise tax revenue. However, he said, some companies began realizing that they could artificially lower the price of the product by manufacturing a lower-quality product with a lower, price-based tax.

"Today, the system is broken," he said.

Shepherd said passing LB722 would take Nebraska's revenue system out of what he called "an industry fight."

Bob Maples, representing Swisher International, called LB722 "anti-competitive and anti-consumer."

Maples charged that the industry's dominant company has worked to

keep prices from decreasing. Under LB722, he said, the state tax on a three-ounce pouch of chewing tobacco would increase by 300 to 400 percent.

The current system of taxing chewing tobacco by price is progressive in nature, Maples said, while the proposed system would "artificially impede the marketplace."

Jim Moylan, representing Reynolds American, said companies with higher-priced products should simply lower their prices to compete, rather than asking for a change in the tax system.

"Every other company in this country has to compete by regulating their prices," Moylan said.

The committee advanced LB722 to general file on a 6-0 vote with a proposed amendment that would index the 65-cent tax rate on smokeless tobacco annually according to inflation.

Gun violence measure draws testimony

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with a citizen's right to own or lawfully operate a gun. However, he said, Nebraskans are too familiar with the results of gun violence, especially in light of the recent shooting at a Von Maur store in Omaha. The Legislature is being asked to respond, he said.

Ashford specifically cited the bill's proposed trigger lock requirement as one which could help prevent violent firearm crimes.

"It's that little bit of time that could possibly prevent someone from picking up that gun and creating mayhem," he said.

Pam Ellis of Omaha is a friend of

Janet Jorgensen's family. Jorgensen was one of the victims who were fatally wounded in the Von Maur shooting. Ellis said she believes in the right to bear arms.

"But with every freedom, comes responsibility," Ellis said.

Gun owners should take responsibility for their firearms, she said, and face consequences for failing to do so. Calling the devastation to the Jorgensen family "profound and surreal," Ellis said the actions of the shooter in the incident affected many others and did so with little effort.

The bill's proposed trigger lock requirement would be "a small price

to pay if it saves one life," Ellis said.

Jeffrey Schaffart survived the Von Maur incident. He spoke in favor of LB958, calling the proposal "a sensible first step."

Saying that the weapon used to injure him had been left unsecured, Schaffart suggested adding language to the bill that would require gun owners to safely store their firearms when not in use.

Opponents of the legislation focused on whether additional gun control laws are necessary.

Andreas Allen of Omaha said LB958 would not address the causes

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

Gun violence measure draws testimony

(Continued from previous page)

of gun violence in society.

“The violence in our community is being caused by poverty, by failure in the mental health industry. It’s not being caused because there is a gun out there,” he said.

Allen said gun owners do need to be responsible, but that responsibility needs to be enforced by the community, not through legislation. Also, he said, trigger lock and storage rules would effectively take away the ability of a citizen to keep a firearm in the home for self defense.

Pleasant Dale resident Bud Callahan said there are already ample laws to regulate gun ownership.

“Passing more laws, piling laws upon laws, I see no purpose,” he said.

Callahan said there are more effective ways to deal

with the issue than requiring trigger locks.

“They do not replace education. They do not replace common sense,” he said.

Jordan Austin, a state liaison with the National Rifle Association, described his members as upstanding, law-abiding citizens. Legislation that proposes additional restrictions on gun ownership penalizes those who follow the law while failing to address those who do not, he said.

Criminals don’t follow laws such as those proposed in LB958, he said.

“No matter how many laws we pass, they are not going to abide by them,” Austin said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB958.



Omaha Sen. Brad Ashford introduces LB958 to the Judiciary Committee Jan. 25.

A CLOSER LOOK.....

Heavican addresses Legislature

Chief Justice Michael Heavican, joined by five of the six Nebraska Supreme Court associate justices, addressed the Legislature Jan. 25 regarding the state of the judiciary.

Referring to the judiciary as the least understood branch of government, the chief justice highlighted some of the court's accomplishments, challenges and special initiatives.

In 2007, district courts in Nebraska filed more than 41,000 cases, and county courts filed 233,555 cases.

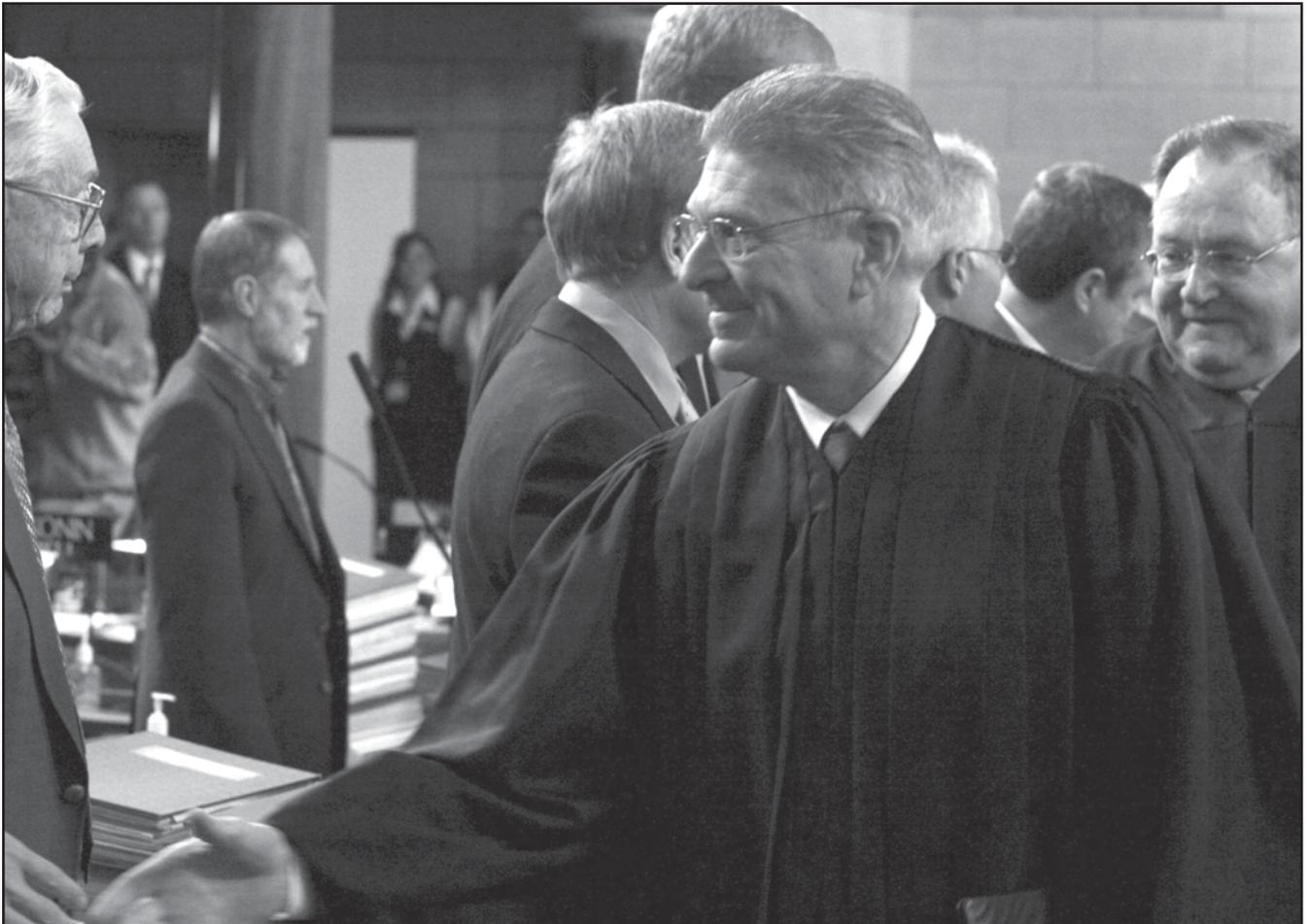
"The sheer number of cases our court system handles each year is astonishing," he said.

He noted that while the judiciary's annual appropriation is just 2 percent of the state's overall budget, much of this funding is offset by fees and fines that are collected by the courts and distributed to other government programs such as local school systems, Nebraska Legal Services, the Law Enforcement Improvement Fund and the general fund.

Heavican discussed a program

that has made significant improvements with regards to children in Nebraska's juvenile court system. Launched in 2006, the Through the Eyes of the Child initiative created 25 teams across the state that review cases and develop plans to help children reach permanency as quickly as possible.

Each team is led by a county court judge or a juvenile court judge and team members include guardians ad litem, protection and safety case managers, law enforcement officers,



Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Mike Heavican is greeted by senators as he walks down the aisle of the Norris Chamber Jan. 25 following his State of the Judiciary address.

A CLOSER LOOK.....

child advocates and others in the community.

“Dodge County provides a good illustration of the initiative’s effectiveness,” said Heavican, referring to a 50-percent decrease in foster care cases in that county since the program began.

Heavican also affirmed the success and cost-effectiveness of Nebraska’s drug courts, citing an estimated cost of \$31,000 to incarcerate an offender for one year compared to \$3,500 when a case is handled through a drug court. He explained that the focus of drug courts is to treat and rehabilitate offenders, rather than to punish. Nebraska currently has 20 drug courts, located in 10 of the state’s 12 judicial districts.

More recent developments include the Nebraska Minority Justice Com-

mittee, aimed at strengthening public confidence in the court system and improving services to non-English speaking persons. The committee recently received funding for translation services in the courts. According to Heavican, the demand for translation and interpretation services in the courts has grown rapidly and put a strain on program budgets.

Other challenges, he noted, include the growing number of self-represented, or pro se litigants in civil cases. Approximately half of all civil cases in Nebraska courts involve pro se litigation.

“These cases are time consuming and try the patience of judges and litigants alike,” he said.

A committee is working to find ways to alleviate some of the strain placed on the courts by these types

of cases.

Finally, the chief justice turned his focus to the role of technology in the courts. He cited the benefits of online payment systems for traffic tickets, currently available in 25 counties. Acknowledging the work of the Supreme Court Technology Committee, he announced the development of electronic filing for court documents. With e-filing, litigants will have 24-hour access to court documents.

The chief justice also announced efforts in connection with Nebraska Educational Television to place permanent cameras in the Supreme Court and Appeals Court hearing rooms.

“We believe Nebraska’s courts have a great story to tell,” Heavican said. “Audio and visual coverage of the courts enhance our ability to tell that story.”

Legislative information available to the public

The Unicameral Information Office produces several informational brochures and booklets about the Nebraska Legislature. All the publications below are free and may be obtained from the Clerk of the Legislature’s Office, State Capitol, Room 2018, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604. The Information Office phone number is (402) 471-2788.

A Look at Your Unicameral

Booklet that includes a history of the Unicameral, the steps of how a bill becomes law, photos and addresses of state senators, a list of the duties of a state senator, descriptions of legislative support offices, a description of the legislative chamber and a glossary of legislative terms.

2008 Nebraska Legislature: Unicameral Membership and Committees

Brochure listing all senators by district, their home addresses and phone numbers, and their Capitol room numbers and phone numbers. Also lists the members of all legislative committees and indicates when and where the committees regularly meet.

The Lines of Government

Booklet of Nebraska maps showing the boundaries of legislative districts, Public Service Commission districts, State Board of Education and Board of Regents districts, and U.S. congressional districts.

Public Hearing Testimony in the Nebraska Legislature

Brochure outlining the procedures for testifying at a public hearing on legislation being considered by committees.

The Nebraska Unicameral: A Citizen’s Legislature

Brochure exploring the nation’s only unicameral legislature. Also identifies ways that citizens can become involved in the process.

A Student Guide to the Nebraska Legislature

Booklet targeted to grade-school students that provides information about the Legislature and incorporates puzzles and questions to test students’ knowledge. Includes photos of state senators, a description of how a bill becomes law, maps of legislative districts and a glossary of legislative terms.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Monday, January 28, 2008

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 pm

LB918 (*Pahls*) Change provisions relating to bank holding company ownership limitations and interstate mergers

LB779 (*Pirsch*) Change requirements for filing certain statements with the Director of Insurance under the Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangement Act

LB920 (*Langemeier*) Authorize insurance producers to charge certain incidental fees

LB792 (*Karpisek*) Change provisions governing insurance producers

Business and Labor

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

LB819 (*Business and Labor Committee*) Change Employment Security Law information disclosure and electronic payment provisions

LB820 (*Business and Labor Committee*) Change wage and hour and amusement ride provisions

LB821 (*Business and Labor Committee*) Change provisions relating to claims against the state and the Risk Manager

LB833 (*Lathrop*) Change unemployment compensation benefits

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Bishop, Riko - Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Appointment - Zink, Carol - Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

LB987 (*Raikes*) Change provisions relating to the Quality Education Accountability Act

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Hiller, John F. - State Electrical Board

LB723 (*Engel*) Change the State Electrical Act

LB760 (*Gay*) Create the Nebraska State Library Task Force

LB995 (*General Affairs Committee*) Change provisions relating to cemeteries

Transportation and Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 pm

LB827 (*Fischer*) Change the retention period for motor vehicle registration records

LB756 (*Transportation and Telecommunications Committee*) Change provisions relating to motor carriers

LB834 (*Fischer*) Change procedures for notation of liens on certificates of title

LB910 (*Pirsch*) Require that motor vehicle and motorboat titling be performed by county treasurers

LB709 (*Pahls*) Permit motor vehicle and motorcycle dealers to issue certificates of title and registration and license plates

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Agriculture

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Valasek, Melvin - Beginning Farmer Board

Appointment - Reed, Todd - Beginning Farmer Board

Appointment - Mark, Darrell - Beginning Farmer Board

Appointment - Graff, Mark - Beginning Farmer Board

Appointment - Anthony, Donald - Beginning Farmer Board

LB875 (*Fulton*) Change eligibility requirements under the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act

LB1027 (*Erdman*) Provide a personal property tax exemption under the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act

LB789 (*Erdman*) Change grant requirements under the Agricultural Opportunities and Value-Added Partnerships Act

LB1053 (*Erdman*) Create a production incentive for biodiesel production

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Frohman, Ann - Department of Insurance

LB853 (*Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee*) Change provisions relating to insurance

LB854 (*Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee*) Adopt the Discount Medical Plan Organization Act

LB855 (*Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee*) Change group life insurance provisions

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 pm

LB1013 (*Gay*) Adopt the Higher Education Academic Scholarship Program Act

LB973 (*Raikes*) Change calculation of state aid to community colleges

Transportation and Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 pm

LB837 (*Karpisek*) Change provisions relating to railroad crossings

LB741 (*Fulton*) Change distribution of motor vehicle tax proceeds

LB1034 (*Louden*) Designate the Nebraska Expressway System

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Urban Affairs

1510 - 1:30 pm

LB984 (*Cornett*) Eliminate resolution, public hearing, and publication requirements for annexation by cities of the first class

LB997 (*McDonald*) Change provisions relating to economic development programs of political subdivisions

LR229CA (*McDonald*) Constitutional amendment to change the powers of municipalities relating to fund sources for economic or industrial development

Wednesday, January 30, 2008

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 pm

LB720 (*Schimek*) Change requirement regarding prerecorded messages

LB817 (*Avery*) Require certain constitutional officers to devote their full time to their offices

LB870 (*Avery*) Prohibit certain former officeholders from being lobbyists

LB981 (*Pirsch*) Prohibit nepotism in state government

Health and Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Buscher, Michael
- Board of Emergency Medical Services

Appointment - Boswell, Kathy
- Rural Health Advisory Commission

Appointment - Fiala, Ann - Board of Emergency Medical Services

Appointment - Dunn, Robert
- Board of Emergency Medical Services

Appointment - Fattig, Martin L.
- Nebraska Rural Health Advisory Commission

Appointment - Vandegrift, Sharon
- Nebraska Rural Health Advisory Commission

LB759 (*Hudkins*) Change provisions relating to relabeling and redispensing prescription drugs

LB830 (*Lathrop*) Adopt the Prescription Drug Cost Savings Act

LB866 (*McDonald*) Adopt the Chronic Disease Drug Repository Program Act

LB882 (*Johnson*) Change provisions relating to prescription medication for indigent persons

LB885 (*Johnson*) Redefine prescription relating to the practice of pharmacy

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 pm

LB930 (*Cornett*) Change provisions relating to dangerous sex offender evaluations

LB957 (*Ashford*) Change the Sex Offender Registration Act

LB735 (*Fulton*) Rename the Sexual Predator Residency Restriction Act and provide for certain employment restrictions

LB902 (*Pankonin*) Change provisions relating to controlled substances schedules and inventory

LB840 (*McDonald*) Regulate Salvia divinorum and Salvinorin A under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Berggren, Lynn
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

LB743 (*Christensen*) Eliminate restrictions on trapping wildlife in county road rights-of-way

LB865 (*Hudkins*) Allow trapping of raptors within the county road right-of-way

LB805 (*Wallman*) Change membership of the Propane Education

and Research Council

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

LB758 (*Hudkins*) Increase motor fuel taxes and allocate and reallocate revenue

LB846 (*Fischer*) Change motor fuel taxes

LB881 (*Stuthman*) Impose an excise tax on production of ethanol

LB946 (*Burling*) Impose an excise tax on ethanol production

LB1040 (*Louden*) Impose a tax on ethanol production, terminate an excise tax, and change funding for the Water Resources Cash Fund

Thursday, January 31, 2008

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 pm

LB859 (*Pankonin*) Appropriate funds to the Department of Economic Development for the Nebraska Lied Main Street Program

LB956 (*Schimek*) Change provisions relating to job training grants

LB998 (*Gay*) Appropriate funds to the Nebraska Innovation Zone Commission and provide for a transfer from the Cash Reserve Fund

LB1052 (*Ashford*) Appropriate funds to the Department of Economic Development

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 pm

LB803 (*Aguilar*) Provide for election-day voter registration for statewide general elections

LB991 (*Avery*) Provide for election day voter registration

LB1062 (*Karpisek*) Change election recount provisions

LR225CA (*Karpisek*) Constitutional amendment to require manually

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

counted paper ballots at elections

Health and Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Brown, Larry - Foster Care Review Board

Appointment - Dilly, Douglas A. - Nebraska Rural Health Advisory Commission

LB753 (*Synowiecki*) Provide for nurse practitioners to practice without integrated practice agreements

LB807 (*Aguiar*) Require medic-aid coverage of tobacco-cessation products and services

LB818 (*Avery*) Change eligibility provisions for medical assistance

LB835 (*Preister*) Prohibit transfer of certain lead-containing items

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 pm

LB787 (*Gay*) Create degrees of offenses of assault on an emergency services provider or a health care provider

LB1024 (*Karpisek*) Provide for listings maintained by the Secretary of State to facilitate filings and service of process under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act

LB847 (*Erdman*) Provide for notice of appointment of a personal representative to the Department of Health and Human Services

LB901 (*Johnson*) Provide immunity for emergency management workers as prescribed

LB952 (*Lathrop*) Change provisions relating to administrative subpoena powers

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Baker, John - Environmental Quality Council

Appointment - Turnbull, John - Environmental Quality Council

LB986 (*Preister*) Adopt the Electronics Recycling Act

LB1061 (*Louden*) Provide for fees, rebates, and grants relating to electronic equipment recycling

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

LB737 (*Fulton*) Provide income tax credits for returns filed claiming dependents eligible for assistance

LB757 (*Hudkins*) Adopt the Volunteer Emergency Responders Incentive Act

LB783 (*Howard*) Provide an income tax credit for adoption expenses as prescribed

LB891 (*Gay*) Provide an income tax credit for certain health-related expenditures

LB974 (*Gay*) Provides an income tax credit for health insurance or care expenses of certain employers

LB1012 (*Gay*) Allow an income tax credit for certain long-term care insurance policy premiums

Friday, February 01, 2008

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 pm

LB748 (*Rogert*) Adopt the Interior Designers Certification Act

LB904 (*Lautenbaugh*) Change provisions relating to applications for veterans aid

LB822 (*Legislative Performance Audit Committee*) Change provisions relating to performance audits

Health and Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 pm

LB749 (*Stuthman*) Provide for electronic application submission and a civil penalty for manufactured homes

LB892 (*Pedersen*) Change modular housing and manufactured home provisions relating to the Public Service Commission

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Casmer, Esther - Nebraska Board of Parole

LB839 (*Pedersen*) Change provisions relating to fireworks

LB1063 (*Chambers*) Change a penalty from death to life imprisonment without possibility of parole

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Kinter, John - Environmental Quality Council

Appointment - Hoyt, Leigh - Environmental Quality Council

LB1065 (*Louden*) Provide for customer-generators of electricity

LB1066 (*Louden*) Change provisions relating to special generation applications before the Nebraska Power Review Board

LB1138 (*Dierks*) Change approval provisions relating to electric generation facilities

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Sorensen, Ruth A. - Property Assessment and Taxation

Appointment - Hotz, Rob - Tax Equalization and Review Commission

Appointment - Salmon, Nancy J. - Tax Equalization and Review Commission

Appointment - Wickersham, William R. - Tax Equalization and Review Commission

LB778 (*Pirsch*) Change property tax assessment and equalization provisions

LB897 (*Janssen*) Change property tax provisions

LB864 (*Langemeier*) Change the standard of review for the Tax Equalization and Review Commission

LB989 (*Friend*) Change priority of special assessment liens in cities of the metropolitan class

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Monday, February 04, 2008

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

LB959 (*Speaker Flood*) Provide for deficit appropriations

LB960 (*Speaker Flood*) Appropriate funds for employee pay and benefits

LB961 (*Speaker Flood*) To provide for transfers of funds and increase property tax relief

Agency 10 AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Agency 12 STATE TREASURER

Agency 16 REVENUE, DEPARTMENT OF

Agency 75 INVESTMENT COUNCIL, NEBRASKA

Agency 93 TAX EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW COMMISSION

Business and Labor

Room 2102 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Jensen, Sam - Commission of Industrial Relations
LB936 (*Friend*) Provide for a fair share representation contribution by non-labor organization members for representation provided by the labor organization

LB926 (*Lathrop*) Prohibit mandatory overtime for certain state employees

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 pm

LB1089 (*Dierks*) Annul orders of the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts pursuant to Laws 2005, LB 126

LB903 (*Lathrop*) Adopt the Nebraska Elementary Attendance Region Act

LB976 (*Raikes*) Change provisions relating to dissolution of unified school districts

LB977 (*Raikes*) Provide for free-holders' petitions relating to school districts which exceed certain levy limitations

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 pm

Appointment - Newman, Murray - Nebraska Arts Council

Appointment - Catalan, David - Nebraska Arts Council

Appointment - Vierk, Richard - Nebraska Arts Council

Appointment - Hastings, Donna - Nebraska Arts Council

Appointment - Smith, Nana - Nebraska Arts Council

LB996 (*General Affairs Committee*) Change provisions relating to bingo and lotteries

LB1058 (*McDonald*) Change fund distribution and use provisions for state lottery funds for problem gambling

LB728 (*Karpisek*) Change provisions relating to the state song

Tuesday, February 05, 2008

Agriculture

Room 2102 - 1:30 pm

LB751 (*Christensen*) Change noxious weed funding provisions relating to stream vegetation removal

LB862 (*Agriculture Committee*) Change noxious weeds funding provisions

LB860 (*Burling*) Remove fingerprinting requirement for license for grain dealer or grain warehouse

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 pm

Agency 48 COORDINATING COMMISSION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Agency 50 NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM

Agency 51 UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SYSTEM

Agency 47 EDUCATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, NEBRASKA

LB1060 (*Fulton*) Appropriate funds to the University of Nebraska for planning and design of a Lincoln Division College of Nursing facility

LB1075 (*Lathrop*) Appropriate funds to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska to provide support for the Nebraska Regional Poison Center

LB905 (*Avery*) Provide funding for Nebraska educational telecommunications

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*, 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.

NEW **BILLS**.....

January 22

Bill/Res.	Introducer	One-Line Description
LB1061	Louden	Provide for fees, rebates, and grants relating to electronic equipment recycling
LB1062	Karpisek	Change election recount provisions
LB1063	Chambers	Change a penalty from death to life imprisonment without possibility of parole
LB1064	Kopplin	Provide for Legion of Merit license plates
LB1065	Louden	Provide for customer-generators of electricity
LB1066	Louden	Change provisions relating to special generation applications before the Nebraska Power Review Board
LB1067	Aguilar	Change provisions allocating election costs to political subdivisions
LB1068	Louden	Create the road classification of remote residential road
LB1069	Dubas	Change provisions governing railroad companies blocking certain railroad crossings
LB1070	Dubas	Provide for a child placement resources form for a child placed with the Department of Health and Human Services
LB1071	Karpisek	Impose an excise tax on wire transfers
LB1072	Friend	Change rate filing provisions under the State Natural Gas Regulation Act
LB1073	Pahls	Adopt the Nebraska Construction Prompt Pay Act
LB1074	Nantkes	Provide requirements for owners and certified operators of swimming pools
LB1075	Lathrop	Appropriate funds to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska to provide support for the Nebraska Regional Poison Center
LB1076	Rogert	Prohibit additional restrictions on firearms and ammunition
LB1077	Rogert	Provide for collection of DNA samples upon arrest for certain offenses
LB1078	Pirsch	Provide name change court orders to child abuse and sex offender registries
LB1079	Raikes	Exclude a portion of legal expenses from the definition of general fund operating expenditures in the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
LB1080	Raikes	Change tax levy provisions relating to school districts
LB1081	Raikes	Change budget limits of educational service units
LB1082	Cornett	Amend the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act to redefine injury and personal injuries
LB1083	Raikes	Change tax levy and funding provisions for school districts, school districts that are members of learning communities, and educational service units
LB1084	Flood	Change provisions relating to assault on an officer
LB1085	Flood	Change Parenting Act and other domestic relations provisions
LB1086	Lautenbaugh	Change workers' compensation provisions relating to third-party claims, subrogation, and settlement
LB1087	Dierks	Change proof of ownership requirements pending motor vehicle registration
LB1088	Dierks	Eliminate limits on tax credits under the Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act
LB1089	Dierks	Annul orders of the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts pursuant to Laws 2005, LB 126
LB1090	Lathrop	Change insurance provisions relating to underinsured motorist coverage
LR230CA	Pedersen	Constitutional amendment to permit exemption of the increased value of a homestead from taxation

NEW **BILLS**.....

January 23

Bill/Res.	Introducer	One-Line Description
LB1091	Gay	Provide for private entrances and exits on expressways
LB1092	Harms	Require seat belts on school buses
LB1093	Harms	Appropriate funds to the Department of Economic Development
LB1094	Carlson	Change allocation provisions relating to the Nebraska Resources Development Fund
LB1095	Aguilar	Change provisions relating to the extension of natural gas mains under the State Natural Gas Regulation Act
LB1096	Friend	Provide for the hiring of a fire chief in a city of the first class
LB1097	Pahls	Authorize federal law enforcement agencies to obtain undercover drivers' licenses and license plates
LB1098	Hudkins	Change tax levy provisions for rural and suburban fire protection districts
LB1099	Hudkins	Adopt the Electrical Power Plant Siting Act and the Electric Transmission Line Siting Act
LB1100	Adams	Adopt the Quality Education Trust Act
LB1101	Friend	Provide financing information requirements for redevelopment plans under the Community Development Law
LB1102	Friend	Provide requirements for infrastructure system replacement mechanisms under the State Natural Gas Regulation Act
LB1103	Karpisek	Change provisions relating to sale of farm winery wines
LB1104	Fulton	Provide for unlawful billing practices under the Uniform Credentialing Act
LB1105	Fulton	Provide for confidentiality of certain workers' compensation court documents and information
LB1106	Pirsch	Create offense of intimidation by electronic communication device
LB1107	Synowiecki	Provide for problem-solving courts
LB1108	Erdman	Change licensure requirements for mental health practitioners
LB1109	Erdman	Change provisions relating to allocation of the cigarette tax
LB1110	Erdman	Adopt the Property Tax Review Court Act and repeal the Tax Equalization and Review Commission Act
LB1111	Erdman	Change membership of the Tax Equalization and Review Commission
LB1112	Erdman	Provide campaign contribution limits, change reporting requirements, and repeal the Campaign Finance Limitation Act
LB1113	Erdman	Create the Family Farm Policy Advisory Council
LB1114	Erdman	Require a vote of the people to approve county fairground bonds
LB1115	Erdman	Change Nebraska State Fair Board membership
LB1116	Erdman	Change state fair and Nebraska State Fair board provisions
LB1117	Pedersen	Change homeowners' association requirements in sanitary and improvement districts
LB1118	Pedersen	Require filing of additional budget and tax levy information
LB1119	Johnson	Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services
LB1120	Johnson	Change exemption provisions under the Nebraska Health Care Certificate of Need Act
LB1121	Johnson	Adopt the Medicaid Insurance for Workers with Disabilities Act
LB1122	Johnson	Change dental coverage provisions under the medical assistance program
LB1123	Johnson	Change membership on the Children's Behavioral Task Force
LB1124	Engel	Provide for mobile home health and safety standards
LB1125	Adams	Change provisions relating to early childhood education endowment funds

NEW **BILLS**.....

LB1126	White	Exempt documents prepared by court reporters and copies of medical records from sales and use taxes
LB1127	Christensen	Change permitted uses of the Water Resources Cash Fund
LB1128	Ashford	Change tenancy termination provisions under the Nebraska Housing Agency Act
LB1129	Flood	Change provisions relating to highway planning
LB1130	Synowiecki	Provide for the merger of adult probation and parole services
LB1131	Christensen	Authorize a collection fee for collection of a natural resources district occupation tax
LB1132	Christensen	Change provisions relating to river-flow enhancement bonds
LB1133	Karpisek	Appropriate funds to the Public Employees Retirement Board
LB1134	Langemeier	Redefine animal life for sales and use tax purposes
LB1135	Rogert	Prohibit certain regulatory actions against student-athletes
LB1136	Rogert	Change requirement of and purpose for county classification
LB1137	Preister	Change provisions relating to new wind energy projects and a sales and use tax exemption
LB1138	Dierks	Change approval provisions relating to electric generation facilities
LB1139	Johnson	Transfer money from the cash reserve to fund road construction
LB1140	Pedersen	Exempt social security and government retirement benefits from income tax as prescribed
LB1141	Schimek	Provide for evaluation of students attending schools which elect not to meet state accreditation or approval requirements
LB1142	Johnson	Provide for postsecondary education subsidy court orders for child support
LB1143	Synowiecki	Provide duties to the Nebraska Investment Council
LB1144	McGill	Change the Delayed Deposit Services Licensing Act
LB1145	Louden	Change dates relating to expenditures from the Petroleum Release Remedial Action Cash Fund
LB1146	Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee	Redefine compensation in the School Employees Retirement Act
LB1147	Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee	Change benefit adjustment provisions relating to the Judges Retirement Act, the School Employees Retirement Act, and the Nebraska State Patrol Retirement Act
LB1148	Schimek	Prohibit certain pig confinement
LB1149	Johnson	Provide funding for behavioral health workforce development
LB1150	Langemeier	Appropriate funds to the Department of Natural Resources
LB1151	Raikes	Change provisions relating to distance education and telecommunications
LB1152	Raikes	Provide for a special education allowance within the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
LB1153	Raikes	Change provisions relating to special education and the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program Act
LB1154	Raikes	Change learning community provisions
LB1155	Raikes	Change provisions relating to teacher certification
LB1156	Synowiecki	Adopt the Nebraska Sports Tourism Advantage Act
LB1157	Raikes	Change provisions relating to the statewide system for assessment and reporting of student learning
LB1158	Ashford	Provide economic development grants for private, nonprofit organizations in high-poverty areas
LB1159	Ashford	Change provisions relating to truancy and parenting plans, authorize citations issued to parents, and provide for mediation

NEW **BILLS**.....

LB1160	Ashford	Change Nebraska Juvenile Code jurisdiction and jurisdiction determination provisions and provide for facilitated conferencing
LB1161	Karpisek	Appropriate funds to the Department of Natural Resources
LB1162	Lautenbaugh	Remove statutory minimum fees under the Game Law
LB1163	Lautenbaugh	Require tanning facilities to post warning signs and obtain and maintain consumers' signatures
LB1164	Lautenbaugh	Adopt the Wildlife Damage Act
LB1165	Nelson	State intent to appropriate funds to the Nebraska Cultural Preservation Endowment Fund
LB1166	Nelson	Provide for the extension of the corporate limits of a city of the metropolitan class into an adjoining county
LB1167	Pedersen	Provide for a statewide 24/7 sobriety program
LB1168	Hudkins	Direct the use of funds previously appropriated to the Department of Health and Human Services
LB1169	White	Authorize health care assistance for certain veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom
LB1170	White	Create a cause of action against employers of illegal immigrants
LB1171	Dierks	Adopt the Agricultural Commodities Protection Act
LB1172	Dierks	Adopt the Food Supply Animal Veterinary Incentive Program Act
LB1173	Dierks	Provide for certification of animal therapists
LB1174	Dierks	Restrict entity ownership of agricultural land and farm and ranch operations
LB1175	White	Change income tax withholding provisions
LB1176	Dubas	Change provisions relating to medicaid benefits and departmental reports
LR231CA	Erdman	Constitutional amendment to create a property tax appellate court and eliminate the Tax Equalization and Review Commission
LR232	Flood	Authorize the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee to review the uncompleted segments of the 1988 expressway plan
LR233CA	Christensen	Constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination or preferential treatment by the state, state agencies, and political subdivisions

Contacting the Capitol: State government office phone numbers



Governor's Office	(402) 471-2244
Lt. Governor's Office	(402) 471-2244
Secretary of State's Office	(402) 471-2554
State Capitol Tours	(402) 471-0448
Legislative Hot Line (Lincoln)	(402) 471-2709
Legislative Hot Line (Nebraska outside Lincoln)	(800) 742-7456
Legislative 24-Hour Automated Request Line	(402) 471-2877

WEEKLY REVIEW

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION TAKEN TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008, THROUGH FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2008

Agriculture

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB632	Dierks	Change provisions relating to the national uniform system of animal identification	Placed on Select File with ER8147
LB790	Erdman	Change buffer strip reimbursement provisions	Placed on General File
LB791	Erdman	Provide for rules for certified seed potatoes	Placed on General File
LB925	Fischer	Change provisions relating to estrays	Placed on General File with AM1607

Banking, Commerce and Insurance

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB123	Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee	Adopt the Nebraska Foreclosure Protection Act and change provisions relating to deceptive trade practices	Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial
LB379	Pahls	Change certain corporate reporting, notice, and filing provisions and eliminate references to professional limited liability companies	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB380	Pahls	Change a license application requirement under the Mortgage Bankers Registration and Licensing Act	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB383	Pahls	Change filing requirements involving the address of a partnership's agent	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB386	Langemeier	Adopt the Nebraska Security Instrument Satisfaction Act	Placed on Select File with ER8148
LB715	Pahls	Change provisions relating to nonresident real estate licensees	Placed on General File

Business and Labor

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB210	Business and Labor Committee	Change membership and procedures of the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment

Education

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB205	Howard	Require schools to adopt a bullying policy	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB196	Schimek	Permit the Adjutant General to designate certain vehicles as military emergency vehicles	Placed on Select File with ER8146
LB269	Burling	Change provisions relating to county organization and formation of county libraries	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB312	Aguilar	Change provisions relating to resignations, vacancy appointments, and recall elections	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB750	Aguilar	Designate the Secretary of State's Office as a voter registration agency	Placed on General File
LB752	Flood	Change membership provisions of the Nebraska Capitol Commission	Placed on General File
LB763	Avery	Create the Nebraska State Capitol Environs District Revitalization Task Force	Placed on General File with AM1625
LB856	Lautenbaugh	Provide for special congressional elections in case of multiple vacancies	Placed on General File
LB857	Lautenbaugh	Change certification provisions for candidates for President and Vice President	Placed on General File

WEEKLY REVIEW

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION TAKEN TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008, THROUGH FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2008

Health and Human Services

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB480	Johnson	Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act	Placed on Select File with ER8149

Judiciary

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB157	Stuthman	Provide for leaving an infant with a firefighter or hospital staff member	Placed on Select File with ER8131
LB179	Lathrop	Require electronic recording of custodial interrogations	Advanced to Enrollment and Review Initial
LB465	Chambers	Change provisions relating to jailhouse informants	Placed on Select File with ER8142
LB467	Chambers	Grant the Ombudsman authority with respect to county and municipal jails and mental health and veterans institutions and provide for appointment of an assistant public counsel	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB586	Cornett	Change medical lien provisions	Placed on Select File with ER8143
LB619	Pirsch	Change provisions relating to bad debt charges by the State Treasurer	Placed on Select File with ER8144
LB620	Pirsch	Change provisions relating to debt collection by the State Disbursement Unit and by state agencies	Placed on Select File with ER8145
LB692	Hudkins	Prohibit intentional discharge of firearm within two hundred yards of a dwelling	Failed to advance to Enrollment and Review Initial
LB843	Pedersen	Change sentencing requirements with respect to certain minors	Pedersen priority bill
LB92	Cornett	Change provisions relating to foreign national minors	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment

Natural Resources

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB202	Louden	Change the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB690	Fischer	Provide for apprentice hunter education exemptions under the Game Law	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment

WEEKLY REVIEW

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION TAKEN TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2008, THROUGH FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2008

Revenue

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB235	Nantkes	Adopt the Nebraska Advantage Film Production Incentive Act	Placed on Select File with ER8140
LB575	Kruse	Change a sales tax exemption for nonprofit entities and provide an exemption for nonprofit assisted-living facilities	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment
LB896	Janssen	Update references to the Internal Revenue Code	Placed on General File
LB898	Janssen	Change provisions of the Unfair Cigarette Sales Act	Placed on General File
LB915	Revenue Committee	Change income tax and disclosure provisions	Placed on General File with AM1622
LB985	Stuthman	Change provisions relating to tangible personal property tax returns	Indefinitely postponed

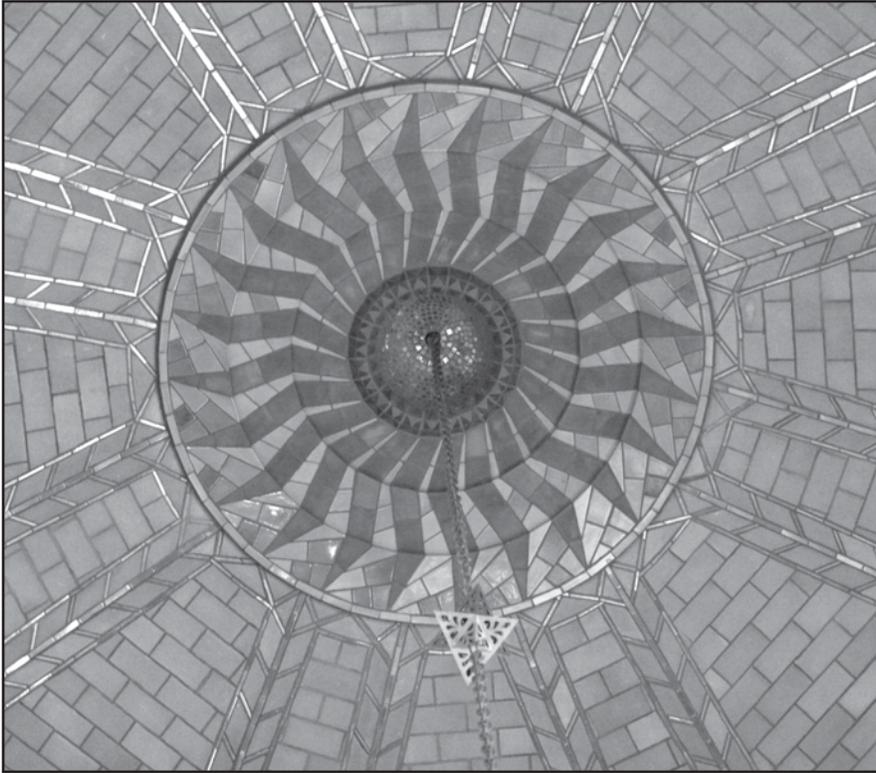
Transportation and Telecommunications

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LB163	Fischer	Require certification of payment of sales tax to obtain a certificate of title for an all-terrain vehicle	Indefinitely postponed
LB182	Kruse	Change grant provisions under the public transportation assistance program	Indefinitely postponed
LB279	Stuthman	Change provisions relating to driver training schools	Placed on General File
LB287	Transportation and Telecommunications Committee	Change vehicle titling and registration provisions	Indefinitely postponed
LB360	Pedersen	Change limitations on the issuance of Purple Heart license plates	Indefinitely postponed
LB421	Erdman	Permit issuance of multiple Purple Heart specialty plates	Indefinitely postponed
LB59	Engel	Require education of motor vehicle dealers, agents, and salespersons as prescribed	Indefinitely postponed
LB621	Pirsch	Change provisions relating to points and fines for speeding	Placed on Select File with ER8150
LB660	Transportation and Telecommunications Committee	Change the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Services Fund Act	Indefinitely postponed

Urban Affairs

BILL	SPONSOR	ONE-LINE DESCRIPTION	STATUS
LR5CA	Friend	Constitutional amendment to authorize use of revenue bonds to develop property for use by nonprofit enterprises	Advanced to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment

THE CAPITOL'S HIDDEN TREASURES



Q: *This architectural detail can be found somewhere in the State Capitol Building. Do you know where it is?*

Check next week's issue to learn where to find this hidden treasure.

A: *The detail featured in last week's issue is the knob on the end of the banister in the north stairwell on the Capitol's first floor.*



FROM THE COVER

Editor's Note: During the 2008 session, each week's cover of the Unicameral Update will feature a "Hidden Treasure of Nebraska II." Hidden treasures are sites and events throughout Nebraska that may not be widely known or publicized and reflect the state's culture, heritage and diversity. This series picks up where the 2004 series left off.

Boys Town students began to create this stamp ball in 1953 by wrapping stamps around a small pencil. A July 1955 column in "Ripley's Believe It or Not" featured the 32" diameter stamp ball, which weighs 600 lbs. and is made of 4,655,000 ordinary stamps.

The day after the column was published, crowds of people came to view the unique artifact, some traveling over 100 miles.

Today, the stamp ball is displayed in Boys Town's Leon Myers Stamp Center Museum. Boys Town still held the record for the largest stamp ball as of 2000.

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.

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

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