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UPDATE

Angel investment tax credits advanced



Sen. Abbie Cornett (left) answers a question from Sen. Annette Dubas (right) about LB389.

Angel investors supporting high-tech small businesses in Nebraska would receive refundable income tax credits under a bill advanced from general file March 8.

LB389, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett at

the request of the governor, would provide for up to \$5 million in annual tax credits for investments made in a business with at least 51 percent of its work force and payroll in Nebraska and 25 or fewer employees primarily engaged in researching, developing or using products and services in the high-tech field. A Revenue Committee amendment, adopted 38-0, reduced the amount to \$3 million annually.

The bill would define high-tech field to include aerospace, agricultural processing, renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, environmental engineering, food technology, cellulosic ethanol, information technology, materials science technology, nanotechnology, telecommunications, biosolutions, medical device products, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, biologicals, chemistry and veterinary science.

To qualify for tax credits, an individual would need to invest at least \$25,000 in a calendar year and qualified

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Half-percent sales tax increase sought for cities

Cities could ask for an additional 0.5 percent in local option sales tax under a bill heard by the Revenue Committee March 9.

Current law permits cities to impose a local option sales tax of 0.5 percent, 1 percent or 1.5 percent with voter approval.

LB357, introduced by Omaha Sen. Brad Ashford, would permit cities to levy a 2 percent local option sales tax. The bill also would require cities to

include a description of the proposed use for local option sales tax revenues if a rate increase were proposed.

Ashford said the Legislature has not modified local option sales tax rates since 1979. In order to meet 21st century demands, he said, the state should grant cities flexibility to raise more revenue from sales taxes.

LaVista mayor Douglas Kindig testified in support of the bill, saying it could help alleviate financial

constraints. City budgets are straining due to growing expenses and revenue losses due to recent legislative action to eliminate state aid to cities, he said.

LaVista is close to its maximum property tax levy rate, Kindig said, and each half cent of local option sales tax could generate between \$600,000 and \$800,000 for the community.

"Given the choice, we believe our residents do not want reduced services or an increase in property taxes," Kindig said.

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A CLOSER LOOK

Angel investment tax credits advanced

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funds — composed of three or more investors — would be required to invest at least \$50,000. Refundable credits equaling 40 percent of the investment would be granted to investors with caps of \$350,000 for married couples filing joint returns and \$300,000 for all other filers. The committee amendment reduced the credit to 35 percent after 2012. Credits could not exceed \$1 million per taxable year for any one business.

As amended, the bill would fund the tax credits by reducing the amount of credits offered under the Nebraska Advantage Rural Development Act from \$4 million to \$1 million and retain the credit limit under the Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act at \$2 million. The new limits would be imposed in 2012, and the program would expire after 2017.



Sen. Chris Langemeier expressed reservations about the proposal to fund angel investments.

Kearney Sen. Galen Hadley spoke in support of the bill. While 60 to 70 percent of angel investments are lost due to business failures, he said, tax credits would attract risk capital, which is important for start-up businesses that are having difficulty assessing credit and capital.

Angel investing provides a bridge between early stage financial support from an entrepreneur's friends and family and later investment from venture capital, Hadley said. Angel investors also offer networking and planning for start-ups, he said.

Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz, who selected LB389 as his priority bill, said angel investments are a necessity for rural Nebraska. Angel investment tax credits could connect in-state capital with small businesses in rural areas, he said.

"We need to find ways to take that capital ... and reinvest it in Nebraska businesses," Schilz said.

Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch explained that the tax credit offered in LB389 is funded using an existing appropriation for an economic development program that is not fully utilizing its allocated funds. The tax credits have spurred investment in more than 20 other states with similar legislation, he said, citing a three-fold increase in



Sen. Ken Schilz selected LB389 as his priority bill.

angel investments in Wisconsin in the five years following enactment of the state's program.

Schuyler Sen. Chris Langemeier said he was concerned about the low success rate of angel investments. In a budget-cutting session, he said, the Legislature should consider whether allocating funds for a "slot machine" program is appropriate.

Sen. Tom Carlson of Holdrege said Douglas, Sarpy and Lancaster counties are not in need of additional economic development programs, so LB389 should be tailored to benefit the other 90 counties in Nebraska.

After adopting a technical amendment offered by Cornett, the Legislature voted 38-0 to advance LB389 from general file. ■

A CLOSER LOOK

Half-percent sales tax increase sought for cities

(continued from front page)

Lincoln finance director Don Herz said the city has reduced its workforce by 116 positions but still does not have adequate revenue to address needed infrastructure improvements. An extra 0.5 percent sales tax would generate \$19 million that could be used for these projects, he said.

Omaha mayor Jim Suttle also testified in support of the bill, saying the added sales tax authority would allow Omaha to eliminate its restaurant tax. In addition, the voter approval required to implement the tax would give residents a choice, he said.

Pam Spaccarotella, finance director for the city of Omaha, said sales tax revenues grew only 2.2 percent from 2001 to 2009, compared to 6.4 percent from 1992 to 2000. Internet sales, exemptions, tax incentive refunds and shifts in consumer spending all have curbed sales tax revenues, she said, while operating expenses have risen.

Spaccarotella said sales taxes provide a way to tax nonresidents to fund city services and reduce reliance on property taxes.

Lynn Rex, representing the League of Nebraska Municipalities, testified in favor of LB357, saying additional sales taxes could help some of the 240 cities in Nebraska that are at their property tax levy lid.

"Local option sales tax has been the single most important way for localities in this state to reduce property taxes," Rex said.

Richard Halvorsen of Lincoln opposed LB357, he said, because sales taxes are regressive. Unlike property taxes, sales taxes cannot be deducted from one's income tax, so they will cost taxpayers more in the long run, he said.

Dacia Kruse, representing the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, testified in a neutral capacity. A 0.5 percent increase in sales tax is more transparent than occupation taxes, she said, but the implementation of a higher sales tax should be offset by reductions in other taxes.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill. ■

"Local option sales tax has been the single most important way for localities in this state to reduce property taxes,"

--Lynn Rex

League of Neb. Municipalities

SEARCH FOR BILLS

Learn more about bills considered by the Unicameral by logging on to www.NebraskaLegislature.gov. The Legislature's website offers a bill search on the upper-right portion of the home page. Entering a

bill number will retrieve the bill's text, fiscal note, statement of intent, transcripts and more. You also can search current laws using the keyword search found below the bill search.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Nebraska Legislature website. The header includes the text "NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE" and "The official site of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature". A navigation menu on the left lists links such as Home, About the Legislature, Bills and Laws, Calendar, Committees, Contact, FAQs, Glossary of terms, Legislative Divisions, News, Reports, Senators, Session Information, and Transcripts. A central banner reads "The 102nd Legislature convened on Wednesday, January 5, 2011." Below this, a section titled "Recent Legislative Information" lists various reports and documents. On the right side, there is a search area with a "Search Current Bills" section containing a dropdown menu for "LB" and a "Go" button. Below this is a "Search Past Legislation" section with a text input field and a "Go" button. Further down is a "Search Laws" section with a "Keywords" input field and a "Go" button. At the bottom right, there is a "Live Video Streaming" section with a "net" logo.

ISSUES UPFRONT

Business & Labor

Delinquent child support payment income provisions could change

The Business and Labor Committee heard testimony March 7 on a bill regarding delinquent child support payments.

LB341, introduced by Sen. Jim Smith of Omaha, would clarify that compensation and benefits awarded pursuant to the Workers' Compensation Act are subject to income withholding under the Income Withholding for Child Support Act, as well as the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act.

The bill also would add compensation insurers, risk management pools and self-insurers to the definition of employer under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act.

Smith said LB341 would ensure that garnishments are enforceable across state lines.

"We need to develop uniformity throughout the country and make it difficult for parents to dodge their responsibility for [child support] payments by skipping from state to state," he said.

Brenda Spilker of Nebraskans for Workers' Compensation Equity and Fairness testified in support of the bill.

Some children living outside of Nebraska are not receiving the child



Sen. Jim Smith

support they are entitled to, Spilker said. LB341 would ensure that such children do not get lost in "red tape bureaucracy," she added.

Todd Bennett of the Nebraska Association of Trial Attorneys testified in opposition to the bill.

LB341 involves injured workers who are no longer working but are receiving workers' compensation benefits, Bennett said, yet the bill would treat those benefits as income.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Tighter restrictions on employee monitoring proposed

The Business and Labor Committee heard testimony March 7 on a bill that would tighten restrictions on employers who electronically monitor employees.

LB674, introduced by Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, would define electronic monitoring as a collection of information on an employer's premises or property owned by the employer concerning employees' activities or communications by any means other than



Sen. Burke Harr

direct observation, including the use of a computer, telephone, wire, radio, camera, electromagnetic, photoelectric or photooptical systems.

The bill would require an employer to notify all employees if they will be monitored electronically. An employer who engages in electronic monitoring without giving proper notice could be assessed a \$100 fine for the first offense and a \$500 fine for each subsequent offense.

An employer would be allowed to conduct monitoring without giving prior written notice if he or she has reasonable grounds to believe that it would provide evidence that an employee is violating the law, violating the legal rights of the employer or another employee or creating a hostile workplace environment.

Under the bill, electronic monitoring could be used in a disciplinary proceeding against an employee if the information is obtained in the course of a criminal action. Any information not obtained in the course of a criminal investigation may be used only in a disciplinary proceeding if done so within 10 days after acquiring the information. If used after the 10 day limitation, the employer could face a \$1,000 fine for the first offense and a \$5,000 fine for each subsequent offense.



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LB674 is an attempt to provide certainty and clarity on expectations in the workplace, Harr said.

Angela Amack, lobbyist for the Nebraska Professional Firefighters Association, testified in support of the bill.

LB674 would set parameters for informing employees about what is tolerable and would provide a timeline for those parameters to be carried out, Amack said.

Ron Sedlacek, attorney and lobbyist for the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, testified in opposition to the bill.

If a company offers Internet service in the workplace, Sedlacek said, it should be assumed that Internet activity could be monitored. Furthermore, he said, some employers who monitor Internet usage do so under contract with other companies, making it difficult to obtain information within 10 days.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Education

Educational barriers could be removed for military children

The Education Committee heard testimony March 8 on a bill that would remove educational barriers for military children transitioning between schools.

LB63, introduced by Sen. Abbie Cornett of Bellevue, would adopt the federal Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children designed to remove barriers imposed on children of military families



Sen. Abbie Cornett

who move frequently.

The bill would permit military children to:

- enroll in school when they arrive and provide hand carried records;
- have 30 days to obtain required immunizations;
- continue schooling at the same grade level they were in prior to transferring;
- participate in athletics and extracurricular programs, even if they are in the middle of the school year;
- have additional excused absences if a parent is preparing for or returning from deployment;
- have a power of attorney as guardianship; and
- complete graduation requirements and receive a high school diploma from their previous school if they transferred in the middle of their senior year.

The bill also would require the state Department of Education to develop a six member council to coordinate compliance with the compact. Members of the council would be eligible for the reimbursement of their expenses.

On average, Cornett said, military families move every three years and their children must change schools with each move. The bill would do the right thing for military families and their children by making this transition easier, she said.

Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey testified in support, saying the compact is needed because 75 percent of active service members are married. The U.S. is in a "lose-lose situation" if those families separate from the military because their children's education is at stake, he said.

Tom Hinton, senior state liaison for the Office of Under Secretary of Defense, also testified in support, saying the compact has become the "linchpin" of military children's mobility between states. The compact allows states to act collectively regarding education requirements without surrendering control to federal entities, Hinton said.

Rachel Wheeler, a military spouse and mother, testified in support of the bill, saying her seventh-grade daughter already has been enrolled in six schools.

Wheeler said military families often must separate in order to continue children's educational opportunities. Furthermore, she said, military children take on adult responsibilities at a younger age while coping with a parent's deployment.

"Our children play a large role in the military mission," Wheeler said. "The military children are the unsung heroes in this global war on terror."

There was no opposition testimony and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Education cuts made

Lawmakers gave final approval March 9 to a bill containing recommendations prepared by the Education Committee in anticipation of budget reductions.

LB333, introduced by the committee, removes the statutory requirement for schools to have a student achievement coordinator, estimated to save \$103,000 over the next two fiscal years.

Additionally, the bill transfers funds to the lottery fund to support the following programs:

- Early Childhood Education grants;

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- high ability learner grants;
 - an integrated information system; and
 - the Center for Student Leadership and Extended Learning.
- LB333 passed on a 44-0 vote.

Bill would encourage policies on student expression

The Education Committee heard testimony March 8 on a bill that would encourage school districts to adopt a policy on student expression and clarify students' rights.

LB582, introduced by Sen. Ken Haar of Malcolm, would affirm a student's right to:

- express his or her thoughts and beliefs through speech and symbols;
- create, write, publish, perform and disseminate his or her views; and
- assemble peacefully with other students on school property for the purpose of expressing opinions.

The bill also would prohibit student expression that is obscene, defamatory, creates a clear and present danger, causes substantial disruption of the school's operation or invades the privacy of others.

Haar said the bill would restore a level of protection of students' right to free speech.

"If we want our young people to learn about freedom, then our schools need to teach [them] that," Haar said.

Amy Miller, legal director of ACLU Nebraska, testifying in support, said

school administrators need to increase their awareness about students' rights.

"My office is fielding [complaints] about once a month and we are usually able to resolve it without litigation," Miller said.

"[LB582] does not solve the problem," she said. "But it moves us towards a better place than we are right now where administrators do not have enough guidance."

Miller said the best, brightest and most successful students are the ones who currently are being "squashed" and would be protected under LB582.

Adam Morfeld, executive director of Nebraskans for Civic Reform, also testified in support of the bill.

"There is a disconnect between what is taught and what is actually practiced in schools," Morfeld said. "If we are not teaching civil discourse in our high schools ... how do we expect our leaders to have that in the real world?"

Lincoln attorney John Recknor testified in opposition to the bill, saying it is too vague.

Recknor questioned how teachers could easily determine a student's expression to be obscene when the Supreme Court has difficulty doing so.

"It is a huge mistake to adopt a bill where, instead of solving a problem, you create a whole new flight of things for [attorneys] to litigate," Recknor said.

Brian Hale, director of the Nebraska Association of School Boards, testified in opposition, saying the bill could be misleading to students.

Hale said that giving students the expectation that their self-expression will be accepted without any reservation seems "disingenuous" and does not prepare them for what actually happens in the workplace.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Executive Board

Extension of legislative oversight committee approved

Senators voted March 7 to reauthorize legislative oversight of the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC).

LR47, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop, provides for continuation of the Developmental Disabilities Special Investigative Committee, which was established three years ago in response to problems at BSDC and was extended for two years in 2009.

In 2008, the facility was the subject of a federal Department of Justice report that found serious violations of residents' civil rights, Lathrop said. BSDC subsequently was decertified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, he said, resulting in the loss of \$25 million per year in federal funding.

Lathrop said the oversight committee has been instrumental in creating positive changes at Beatrice and needs one more year to oversee the facility's full recertification by the federal government.

"We're asking to reconstitute [the committee] once again so we can see BSDC through recertification and be with them as they cross the finish line," Lathrop said.

Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas supported the resolution, saying the committee has served as an example of constructive cooperation between the



Sen. Ken Haar



Sen. Steve Lathrop

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various branches of state government.

"This special committee is a wonderful example of what can happen when you bring people together with a very specific focus," she said.

The resolution was adopted on a 47-0 vote.

General Affairs

Alcohol permitted in charter vehicles

A bill allowing limousine and private bus passengers to consume alcohol passed March 10.

Under LB281, introduced by Wilber Sen. Russ Karpisek, passengers may consume alcoholic beverages if their chartered limousine or bus is in a public parking area or on any highway in the state as long as the driver is prohibited from consuming alcohol and it is not readily accessible to the driver.

The bill passed on a 42-6 vote.



Sen. Russ Karpisek

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Bill clarifies when political parties can nominate

Senators gave final approval March 10 to a bill that clarifies when a political party can nominate a candidate.

Under LB368, sponsored by Bancroft Sen. Lydia Brasch, political par-

ties are prohibited from nominating a candidate for an office at a state post-primary convention if the party did not nominate a candidate for the office at the primary election.

An exception is provided for new political parties and parties may nominate candidates at a convention in cases of a special election or a vacancy on the ballot.

LB368 passed on a 48-0 vote.

Nomination petition signature requirements changed

Lawmakers passed a bill March 10 that changes nomination petition signature requirements for certain offices.

Previously, an individual who wished to place his or her name on a general election ballot as a candidate for nonpartisan office was required to obtain at least 25 signatures from each county that contains at least 100 registered voters in the district.

LB399, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Bill Avery, eliminates the distribution requirement and the standard becomes at least 10 percent of the registered voters who cast ballots for governor or president in the last election, not to exceed 2,000 signatures. The distribution requirement for the Board of Regents also is eliminated under the bill.

Similarly, an individual who wished to place his or her name on a general



Sen. Lydia Brasch

election ballot for statewide partisan office previously was required to obtain 50 signatures from one third of the counties in the state. Under LB399, the standard for partisan statewide offices is at least 4,000 signatures, with at least 750 signatures obtained in each congressional district.

The bill passed on a 48-0 vote and takes effect immediately.

Bill would require petition circulator IDs

Petition circulators in Nebraska would be required to wear identification under a bill heard March 9 by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

LB523, introduced by Boys Town Sen. Rich Pahls at the request of the secretary of state, would require the sponsor of a petition under the Election Act to provide each circulator with visible identification. The ID would include a number unique to each circulator but could not contain the circulator's name or other personal information.

A petition sponsor would be required to maintain records of the name, address and number assigned to each circulator and to make those records available upon request to the secretary of state, attorney general or law enforcement agencies for investigation purposes.

Pahls said the bill was a response to controversial actions taken by some circulators in the past.

"This [bill] may bring a level of professionalism to petition drives," he said.



Sen. Rich Pahls



Sen. Bill Avery

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Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale testified in support of the bill, saying it would bring more civility to the petition signature gathering process. While acknowledging the importance of the initiative process to Nebraska politics, Gale said his office has received many complaints from citizens about aggressive and confrontational circulator behavior.

"This is one area that we've found is a very rough and tumble area of election law," he said.

Requiring circulators to wear identification numbers would allow officials to investigate circulators who violate election law and hold them accountable for their actions, Gale said.

But Kent Bernbeck of Elkhorn said the bill would hinder petition drives that use volunteer circulators.

Testifying against LB523, Bernbeck said volunteers often informally recruit like-minded citizens who also wish to circulate a petition, making record keeping too complicated and burdensome for petition sponsors.

"This bill does nothing more than impede the process," he said, adding that citizens already have a means of responding to circulators who engage in illegal conduct.

"We call the cops when someone breaks the law," Bernbeck said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Hamilton, Merrick counties to no longer use Platte River as border

Hamilton and Merrick counties will cease using the Platte River as a dividing county line due to a bill approved by the Legislature March 10.

LB556, introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, instead uses GPS coordinates to draw the boundary line so it remains consistent.

Lawmakers voted 48-0 to approve the bill.



Sen. Annette Dubas

Health & Human Services

Welfare recipient drug testing proposed

Nebraska applicants and recipients of cash assistance benefits under the Welfare Reform Act would be subject to drug testing under a bill heard March 10 by the Health and Human Services Committee.

LB221 would require the state Department of Health and Human Services to develop a program to screen Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) applicants or recipients for use of nonprescribed controlled substances, if there is reasonable cause to believe the individual is using such a substance.

If a positive result is confirmed after an administrative hearing, the individual would be ineligible for ADC assistance for one year and the department would refer the individual to the division of behavioral health for referral to a treatment program.

Fremont Sen. Charlie Janssen, sponsor of the bill,



Sen. Charlie Janssen

said he introduced the measure after many Nebraskans told him it was unfair for them to be drug tested to qualify for employment when no such requirement exists for those receiving cash assistance from the state.

Janssen said he limited the bill's provisions to individuals receiving ADC out of concern for their ability to parent.

"Clouding this important responsibility with drug use is not fair," he said.

Fullerton dentist Daniel Maas testified in favor of the bill, saying the state should have the same ability to drug test welfare recipients as employers have to test employees.

Tax dollars from citizens' payroll deductions should not be used to subsidize drug use, he added.

"I am disturbed that some of the money my staff has earned is going to support people who are abusing drugs," Maas said.

Aubrey Mancuso of Voices for Children in Nebraska testified against the bill, saying its provisions are punitive and contrary to ADC's goal of moving families to self-sufficiency.

A family that qualifies for ADC already is in a desperate financial situation, she said, and any reduction in cash benefits would have a significant impact.

"LB221 will harm innocent children and struggling families," she said.

Saying the bill would be more likely to harm children than help them, James Goddard of Nebraska Appleseed testified in opposition.

The state's child welfare system currently has mechanisms in place for addressing parental drug abuse, he said, adding that the bill's effect may be the opposite of what is intended due to parents' fear of losing benefits.

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"This bill could deter them from seeking treatment in the first place," Goddard said.

Amy Miller, legal director of ACLU Nebraska, also testified in opposition, saying the state likely would face legal challenges if the measure becomes law. She said the only court that has examined the issue of drug testing as a qualification for public assistance ruled that doing so violates the Fourth Amendment.

Drug testing for private sector employment is not the same as the government engaging in drug testing, Miller said, because Fourth Amendment search and seizure prohibitions do not apply to the private sector.

"That's a private arrangement with an employer," she said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Concussion awareness measure advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval March 9 to a bill that would establish a state policy on concussions for child athletes.

LB260, introduced by Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop, would adopt the Concussion Awareness Act, which would provide schools and organizations with information and training about concussions. Similar measures have been adopted in several other states, Lathrop said, and Nebraska should take steps to increase awareness.

Lathrop said the governor of Washington has reported decreased head injuries among student athletes since passage of that state's concussion awareness law, resulting in less spending on emergency medical care and

rehabilitation services.

"Passage of LB260 will hopefully have a similar effect in Nebraska," he said.

Among other provisions, the bill would:

- make concussion and brain injury training available to coaches of all organized athletic teams involving school-aged children;
- provide concussion and brain injury information to athletes, parents and guardians prior to participation in practice or competition; and
- require that a child athlete who appears to have suffered a concussion or brain injury be removed from practice and competition until a licensed health care professional provides written clearance for his or her return.

The required information made available to athletes, parents and guardians would describe the risks, signs and symptoms of a concussion and actions to be taken in response to sustaining a concussion.

The bill also would require notification of a parent or guardian if a child is removed from an athletic activity due to suspected concussion or brain injury.

Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas supported the bill, saying it would educate athletes and parents on the dangers of concussions. Dubas said she chose to remove her son from the high school football team for the season after he suffered a concussion on his 16th birthday. LB260 would support other parents in making difficult decisions to safeguard their child's health, she said.

Following adoption of a technical Health and Human Services Committee amendment, the bill advanced to

select file on a 33-0 vote.

Judiciary

Early release incentives for good behavior approved

A bill reducing incarceration time for well-behaved inmates and parolees passed March 10.

Currently, the state Department of Corrections can reduce the time an inmate or parolee serves by six months for each year of his or her time served and prorate any time served which is less than one year.

Under LB191, introduced by Omaha Sen. Brenda Council, the department additionally may reduce the time by three days each month during a 12 month period of incarceration during which the inmate has not been found guilty of a Class I or Class II offense or has not had more than three Class III offenses of the department's disciplinary code.

The bill directs the Parole Board to reduce a parolee's parole term by an additional 10 days for each month of his or her term for good conduct in conformity with the conditions of a parole. Parolees are currently eligible for a reduction of two days for each month.

The bill passed on a 45-0 vote and takes effect immediately.

Minimum distance required for funeral picketers increased

Senators voted to increase the mini-



Sen. Brenda Council

ISSUES UPFRONT

mum distance required for picketing funerals passed March 10.

LB284, introduced by Omaha Sen. Bob Krist, prohibits picketing of a funeral or memorial service within 500 feet of a cemetery, mortuary, church or other place of worship at the time of a funeral or memorial service. The previous limit was 300 feet.

The bill passed on a 48-0 vote.

Health care providers could abstain from some procedures

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony March 9 on a bill that could prevent a healthcare employee from having to conduct procedures that violate his or her moral or religious beliefs.

LB461, introduced by Sen. Pete Pirsch of Omaha, would prohibit a health care facility from discriminating against an employee by refusing to accommodate their religious observance — unless the facility can demonstrate that the accommodation would pose an undue hardship on the facility.

Health care facilities would be required to accommodate an employee request not to participate in a procedure or experiment that would:

- perform an abortion, unless the patient suffers from a physical disorder, injury or illness which, as certified by a physician, causes her to be in imminent



Sen. Bob Krist

danger of death unless an abortion is immediately performed and no other personnel are available;

- destroy an in vitro human embryo or use cells or tissue derived from the destruction of an in vitro human embryo;
- use an in vitro human embryo that is not related to the beneficial treatment of the in vitro human embryo;
- use a developing child in an artificial or natural womb, at any stage of development, that is not related to the beneficial treatment of the developing child;
- use fetal tissue or organs that come from a source other than a stillbirth or miscarriage, including a transplant procedure; or
- intentionally cause the death of an individual.

LB461 would allow employees to bring a civil action against an employer who violates the bill's provisions. Any person or facility found in violation would be required to pay attorney fees.

Dr. Edward DeSimone, who was a pharmacist for 39 years, testified in support of the bill.

Pharmacists have been fired for exercising their right of conscience and refusing to sell abortifacients, DeSimone said, which has resulted in significant litigation expenses. Lawsuits could be avoided if an employee's religious beliefs were accommodated, he said.

Tracy Durbin, director of quality and risk management for Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, testified in opposition to the bill, saying it could pose health risks.

Women seeking abortion services

should not have to place a provider's moral objections above their own health interests, she said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill would prohibit remotely administered chemical abortions

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony March 9 on a bill that would prohibit chemical abortions from being administered from remote satellite locations.

LB521, introduced by Sen. Tony Fulton of Lincoln, would require that chemical abortions be administered in the physical presence of a performing physician.

Under the bill, a physician, or person acting on his or her behalf, must ensure that a patient returns 12 to 18 days after administration of the drug to confirm that the pregnancy has been terminated and assess the patient's medical condition.

A person in violation of the bill could be charged with a Class I misdemeanor. No penalty would be assessed against the patient.

Currently, Fulton said, physicians in Iowa are administering chemical abortions from remote locations. Although this practice is not currently taking place in Nebraska, he said, the bill could prevent the proliferation of such a practice in the state.

"Chemical abortions should not be administered without a physician present," he said.

Greg Schleppensch, state director



Sen. Tony Fulton

ISSUES UPFRONT

of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, testified in support of the bill, saying the FDA requires a physician to be present when administering drugs used for chemical abortions.

Schleppenbach said allowing a physician from a remote location to supervise a woman who is receiving an abortion is “pushing the limits of safety.”

Tracy Durbin of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, opposed the bill and said there is no evidence that physicians providing abortion care via satellite are putting their patients at risk.

Durbin said 94 percent of women who were surveyed about this method were satisfied with their experience.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Child enticement provisions could change

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony March 10 on a bill that would change provisions of the state’s criminal child enticement law.

Under LB665, introduced by Sen. Pete Pirsch of Omaha, a person could not solicit, coax, entice, lure or attempt to solicit, coax, entice or lure any child under the age of 14 to enter a place intending to seclude him or her from a parent, guardian, legal custodian or the general public, whether or not the person knows the age of the child.

Current law only prohibits luring a child into a vehicle.

A person who violates the bill could be guilty of a Class IIIA felony. If such person previously has been convicted of criminal child enticement, assault or sexual assault of a child, kidnapping or false imprisonment of

a victim younger than 18, he or she could be guilty of a Class III felony.

This bill seeks to prevent people from enticing children away from guardians or the general public, Pirsch said, adding that enticement is a danger that exists in our community.

“I am not sure that there is a greater fear that a parent has than their children coming up missing,” Pirsch said.

Marty Conboy of the Nebraska County Attorneys Association testified in support of the bill, saying three local instances of child enticement have occurred in the past year.

Conboy described an Omaha case involving a man who attempted to entice two young girls into nearby bushes. Because he had not attempted to lure them into a vehicle, he said, police could not charge the man with child enticement.

No opposition testimony was given and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Changes to parental consent for abortions proposed

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony March 9 on a bill that would amend parental notification requirements.

LB690, introduced by Sen. Lydia Brasch of Bancroft, would amend parental notification requirements for an abortion to require notarized written consent from a pregnant patient younger than 18 and her parent or legal guardian before obtaining an abortion. Currently, a notice must be made by

registered or certified mail addressed to the minor’s parent with restricted delivery and a requested return receipt.

If the minor is a victim of abuse by the parent, a physician could accept notarized written consent from a sibling at least 21 years of age, stepparent or grandparent. An unauthorized person providing consent would be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor. The bill also would permit an attending physician to perform an abortion without parental consent if a medical emergency exists and there is insufficient time to obtain the required consent.

Under the bill, a minor could not be forced to obtain an abortion and would be deemed emancipated to receive public-assistance benefits if denied financial support by her parents, guardians, or custodians for refusing an abortion. Such benefits could not be used for an abortion.

Brasch said she does not want young women who seek abortions to face their decision alone.

“The issue here is not whether you are for or against abortion,” Brasch said. “I wholeheartedly believe requiring parental consent for an abortion is the best option for young women’s safety, well-being and peace of mind.”

Daniel McConchie, representing Americans United for Life, testified in support of the bill, saying 16 percent of Nebraska women who receive abortions are under the age of 19.

“The medical, emotional and psychological consequences [from abortions] are serious and can be long lasting,” he said. “Especially when patients are not yet mature.”

Leah Bernhardson, a minor who testified in support of the bill, said parental consent was required to have



Sen. Lydia Brasch

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her ears pierced.

“Parental consent is necessary even when relatively minor procedures are performed, yet the same standard does not apply to abortion,” Bernhardson said. “At barely 18, I see parental consent for this type of procedure as extremely important for me and my peers.”

Lincoln attorney Sue Ellen Wall testified in opposition to the bill, saying it is unnecessary. A minor who is concerned about receiving parental consent already can apply for a judicial bypass. Further, she said, the number of applicants to receive a judicial bypass has dropped significantly in recent years.

The system should be left as it is because it works and serves young women’s needs, Wall said.

Tracy Durbin, of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, also opposed the bill, saying approximately 90 percent of teenage girls who seek abortion care do so with parental involvement. The girls whose parents are not involved are usually victims of abuse, incest or rape, she said.

Durbin said the bill would be “ineffective” and “cruel” to young women who do not have stable relationships with their parents.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Natural Resources

Boating safety education bill advances

A requirement to complete a boating safety education course would be expanded by a bill advanced from general file March 9.

Current law requires anyone under the age of 18 to complete a boating

safety education course before operating a boat or watercraft on state waters.

LB105, introduced by Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz, would require anyone born after Dec. 31, 1985, to complete such training before operating a boat. The bill would have an operative date of Jan. 1, 2012.

Schilz said all surrounding states except South Dakota require boating education. He said such education is important due to safety concerns resulting from untrained operators and sparse law enforcement monitoring state waters.

“We want to make sure that people who come to our parks to boat have a relaxing time and don’t have to worry about accidents on the water,” Schilz said.

Lawmakers voted 27-0 to advance LB105 from general file.

State park permit fees could increase

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission’s annual park entry permit fees would increase under a bill advanced from general file March 9.

LB421, introduced by Louisville Sen. Dave Pankonin, would increase the maximum annual entry permit fee from \$20 to \$25 for resident motor vehicles and from \$25 to \$30 for non-resident motor vehicles. The maximum fee also would increase from \$4 to \$5 for temporary resident entry permits and from \$5 to \$6 for nonresidents.



Sen. Ken Schilz



Sen. Dave Pankonin

The bill also would increase the fee collected by entities issuing permits as reimbursement for clerical work. The current range for the fee is 25 to 35 cents. The bill would set a standard fee of \$1.

The changes would go into effect Jan. 1, 2012.

Pankonin said state park facilities are an asset that should be maintained. Insufficient park fees have resulted in \$34 million of deferred maintenance at state parks, he said, adding that failure to provide adequate funds could result in reduced hours of availability or park closures.

“Sometimes fee increases are necessary to maintain the functions of government,” Pankonin said.

The Commission already has taken steps to lower expenses by reducing park system staff from 216 to 179 employees, he said.

Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz agreed that state parks already are staffed at minimal levels. For instance, he said, only one law enforcement officer is responsible for covering the 105 miles of beach at Lake McConaughy.

The proposed \$25 fee is in line with inflation, Pankonin said, as the 1978 fee of \$7.50 would be \$25.33 today. Nebraska’s fee, which has not been increased for five years, is the lowest park fee among states that use fees to support parks, he said.

Valentine Sen. Deb Fischer spoke in support of the bill, saying the parks need additional revenue for maintenance. A fee increase would supplement the Commission’s other money-saving projects, she said, such as returning parks to local communities.

North Platte Sen. Tom Hansen spoke in opposition to the bill, saying a 25 percent fee increase could

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discourage potential park users from purchasing a permit.

Sen. Dave Bloomfield of Hoskins said the Commission could avoid raising fees by selling publicly-owned land and ceasing land acquisitions.

A Natural Resources Committee amendment, adopted 31-2, would require placement of park permits on the driver's side of vehicle windshields.

Schuyler Sen. Chris Langemeier, chairperson of the committee, said the amendment would aid those who work in park inspection booths, which are on the left side of vehicles.

LB421 advanced from general file on a 29-4 vote.

Revenue

Wheel taxes on out-of-town commuters eliminated

Municipal wheel taxes can be levied only on city residents due to a bill approved by the Legislature March 9.

LB81, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett, prohibits all cities from levying a motor vehicle fee on nonresidents. The bill phases out a new Omaha ordinance requiring nonresidents who commute to Omaha to pay a \$50 fee, collected by their employer.

Nonresidents include those who use or store a vehicle no more than six months in a city or village and those who do not have a primary residence or own a place of business within city limits. Full-time college students attending school in a city other than the



Sen. Abbie Cornett

one in which their vehicle is registered also are considered nonresidents.

The bill phases out motor vehicle taxes for those living in an extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction of a city or village on Jan. 1, 2013.

LB81 was approved 37-4.

Elimination of Energy Conservation Improvement Fund considered

The Energy Conservation Improvement Fund would lapse to the general fund under a bill heard by the Revenue Committee March 9.

The fund currently provides grants for public and nonprofit electric utilities with matching funds to complete energy conservation improvements for Nebraska homeowners whose income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The fund receives revenues from state sales taxes collected on electric bills.

LB385, introduced by Hastings Sen. Dennis Utter at the request of the governor, would terminate the fund on June 30, 2012.

Utter said the energy conservation program has been underutilized and its elimination would provide an increase of \$4.7 million to the general fund.

Ginger Willson, director of the Nebraska Energy Office, testified in support of LB385. She said the energy conservation program duplicates efforts of the Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program administered by her office.

Tom Richards, representing the Nebraska Power Association, testified in



Sen. Dennis Utter

opposition to the bill. Electric utilities absorb most of the costs of the energy conservation program, he said, adding that federal stimulus funding that supports the Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program will expire soon.

"When federal stimulus dollars run out in the state of Nebraska, there will be an increase in demand for the [Energy Conservation Improvement Fund]," he said.

The committee advanced the bill to general file 8-0.

Sales tax on services introduced as budget precaution

Members of the Revenue Committee heard a bill March 10 proposing to increase the number of services subject to sales taxes.

LB560, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Abbie Cornett, would add to the list of taxable services:

- motor vehicle repair and maintenance;
- hair care, personal grooming, skin care, nail care and other personal care;
- funeral, burial and cremation;
- dating services;
- clothes cleaning;
- storage services;
- waste hauling and disposal;
- recycling;
- parking; and
- landscaping, yard maintenance, seed planting and snow removal.

The bill would take effect Oct. 1, 2011.

Cornett said LB560 is part of a package of bills that would be acted upon only if economic forecasting projections for state revenues were

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significantly reduced or the Legislature was unable to enact necessary spending cuts to balance the budget.

"If we come to a place where we have to raise taxes because either the forecast is lower than we projected or we cannot pass the budget, this committee has to have all options available," Cornett said.

Jack Cheloha, representing the city of Omaha, testified in support of LB560, saying the broadened tax base would help municipalities by increasing local option sales tax revenues.

Loy Todd, president of the Nebraska New Car and Truck Dealers Association, testified in opposition to LB560, specifically the provision adding motor vehicle repair to taxable services. Automotive repairs are the result of misfortune much like hospital bills, he said, and, accordingly, neither should be subject to sales tax.

Bill Lauber, representing the Nebraska Funeral Directors Association, also testified in opposition to the bill. Families already pay sales taxes when purchasing urns, caskets and other burial items for their deceased loved ones, he said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Supermajority vote for tax increases proposed

It would take more than 25 of the Legislature's 49 members to pass a tax increase under a proposed constitutional amendment heard by the Revenue Committee March 10.

LR46CA, introduced by Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch, would require that every bill imposing or increasing a tax or a license fee receive an affirmative

vote of two-thirds of the Legislature in order to be enacted. The proposed constitutional amendment would be submitted for voter approval during the 2012 general election.

Pirsch said it currently is easier for legislative bodies to raise taxes than to cut spending. The resolution could tip the scale toward spending cuts, he said.

"If you make it a little bit harder to raise taxes, as opposed to cutting spending, it will create a mild presumption that spending cuts are to be looked at first," Pirsch said.

Fifteen states require a supermajority vote to raise taxes, he said.

No one testified in support of or opposition to LR46CA and the committee took no immediate action on the measure.

Transportation & Telecommunications

Voters could require counties to mow ditches

Citizens could require counties to mow drainage ditches under a bill heard by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee March 8.

Current law requires landowners to mow all weeds that can be mowed with an ordinary farm mower to the middle of all public roads and drainage ditches at least twice a year.

LB87, introduced by Imperial Sen. Mark Christensen, would allow voters to require the county to mow weeds in



Sen. Mark Christensen

all drainage ditches. A resolution from the county board or a petition would place the issue on the ballot.

The bill also would provide a means for revoking a mowing mandate and returning mowing responsibility to landowners.

Christensen said every county in his legislative district mows weeds except one, which recently discontinued offering the service. With LB87, he said, counties would be required to accept a two-year mowing commitment.

"The people decide if they want to pay taxes to have the county do the mowing or have the landowners do it," Christensen said.

Beth Bazyn Ferrell, representing the Nebraska Association of County Officials, testified in opposition to LB87, saying it would increase expenditures for counties already preparing to operate without state aid. The bill also would present liability problems if a landowner does not fulfill his or her mowing responsibilities and someone is injured because of untrimmed vegetative growth after mowing responsibilities shift to the county, she said.

No one testified in favor of LB87 and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill would eliminate front license plates

Front license plates would no longer be required under a bill heard by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee March 7.

Every motor vehicle is required to display front and rear license plates, except for dealers, motorcycles, mini-trucks, truck-tractors, trailers, buses and apportionable vehicles.

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LB185, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Tony Fulton, would eliminate the front license plate requirement effective Jan. 1, 2012.

Fulton said an increasing number of car manufacturers are producing vehicles without front license plate holders. In addition, 19 other states require only a rear license plate, he said, which is evidence that they are sufficient for law enforcement purposes.

"While I acknowledge that the front license plate is not entirely without use, there seems to be no indication that there is a causal relationship between the front plate and law enforcement," Fulton said.

Lt. Mark Trapp, representing the Nebraska Sheriffs' Association, testified in opposition to the bill, saying it would hinder law enforcement.

New technology can scan the license plates of oncoming traffic and notify police officers of invalid registrations and other anomalies, he said.

Removing front license plates would limit a police officer's ability to identify vehicles optically, Trapp said, a practice that resulted in 1,500 citations and 100 arrests in Sarpy County last year.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Collector car, specialty license plates considered

Two bills dealing with unique license plates were heard by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee March 7.

LB216, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Colby Coash,



Sen. Colby Coash

would create special interest license plates that would be available to car club members who own motor vehicles that are unaltered from original specifications and are collected, preserved, restored or maintained for leisure.

One special interest license plate would be issued to a qualified applicant to be affixed to the rear of a vehicle. The additional fee for a special interest plate fee would be \$50.

Coash said six states have a general policy requiring vehicles to have two license plates but permit one plate for special interest vehicles. He said such a policy would mirror the current historical license plates offered in Nebraska for cars that are at least 30 years old.

Owners of collector cars would benefit from LB216, Coash said, because some cars are designed without a bracket for front license plates. Consequently, some car owners must drill holes in expensive vehicles to abide by state law, he said.

Loy Todd, president of the Nebraska New Car & Truck Association, testified in support of LB216, saying many states are able to provide adequate law enforcement with single plates. The number of cars designed without accommodations for front license plates has risen, he said, adding that front license plates hurt the value of such vehicles.

No one testified in opposition to LB216.

LB661, introduced by Wilber Sen. Russ Karpisek, would decrease the additional fee for a specialty license plate from \$70 to \$50.

Current law provides for the issuance of specialty license plates if the state Department of Motor Vehicles receives 500 prepaid applications for an organization's designed plate.

Karpisek said no organization has amassed 500 applications since specialty plates were first offered in January 2010. He said reducing the fee could lead to additional revenues by increasing the pool of organizations that qualify for the plates.

No one testified in support of or opposition to LB661. The committee took no immediate action on either bill.

Bill to eliminate PSC railroad inspection program advances

The state Public Service Commission would no longer conduct a railroad inspection program under a bill advanced from general file March 10.

LB255, introduced by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, is estimated to save \$124,000 annually.

Committee chairperson Sen. Deb Fischer of Valentine said the bill would eliminate two full-time positions that provide spot-checks of railroads. Existing federal oversight and industry inspection would ensure adequate safety, she said.

Kearney Sen. Galen Hadley said Colorado, Kansas, South Dakota and Wyoming have no state inspection programs. Eliminating two positions would not hinder railroad safety, he said.

Sen. LeRoy Louden of Ellsworth spoke in opposition to the bill, saying Nebraska has some of the busiest railroads in the world and should not compromise railroad safety.

"[Inspections aren't] something that you can expect the [railroad] corporations to do themselves," Louden said.

Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop said the railroad inspection program should be retained because state inspectors ensure

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that comprehensive railroad accident reports are available to the public.

Lawmakers voted 27-12 to advance LB255 from general file.

Urban Affairs

Nonprofit revenue bond bill approved

A bill that implements the provisions of a recently approved constitutional amendment regarding revenue bonds was given final approval March 10.

The 2010 Legislature passed LR-295CA, which placed a proposed constitutional amendment on the May primary election ballot authorizing any county, city or village to acquire, own, develop and lease real and personal property for use by charitable nonprofit enterprises, and to issue revenue bonds to defray the cost of acquiring, developing or financing such property.

Voters approved the measure, and Lincoln Sen. Amanda McGill introduced LB159 to amend the Nebraska Industrial Development Act to reflect the language of the constitutional change.

Any revenue bonds issued pursuant to the bill will not be the obligation of the issuing county or municipality and no taxes may be levied to pay for the bonds.

A nonprofit enterprise must be incorporated or authorized to do business in Nebraska to utilize the bill's provisions, and any portion of a nonprofit enterprise project used for sectarian instruction or study, or for devotional activities or religious worship is excluded.



Sen. Amanda McGill

Lawmakers approved LB159 on a 48-0 vote.

New economic development revenue sources approved

Senators gave final approval March 10 to a bill that gives cities more revenue sources to fund economic development projects.

During the 2010 general election, Nebraska voters approved a constitutional amendment to allow cities to use a greater number of revenue sources for economic or industrial development projects approved by city voters. Previously, property taxes and local option sales taxes were the only revenue sources authorized.

The approved constitutional amendment added to the list of suitable funding sources any general tax authorized by the municipality and revenue generated from municipal utilities, grants, donations, or state and federal funds.

LB471, introduced by Wilber Sen. Russ Karpisek, incorporates the amendment into the Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act. The bill also restricts uses for revenues generated from municipal utilities to utility-related projects or activities associated with a city council-approved economic development program, such as energy efficiency, load management and site development.



Sen. Russ Karpisek

The bill was approved on a 48-0 vote.

Residential sprinkler bill advanced

Lawmakers advanced a bill from

general file March 8 that would adopt the 2009 version of the International Residential Code (IRC) as the state building code, with the exception of the mandatory sprinkler provision for new residences.

LB546, introduced by Grand Island Sen. Mike Gloor, would permit state agencies and local political subdivisions to amend their building codes to include a mandatory new-home sprinkler provision.



Sen. Mike Gloor

Gloor said the bill would provide local control by allowing municipalities and counties to require a residential sprinkler system in newly constructed homes if they choose to include a mandate in local building codes. Many small communities do not have building departments, Gloor said, which would make it difficult for them to opt out of a statewide mandate.

Omaha Sen. Bob Krist said the bill sends the wrong message to local governments. The Legislature should not adopt a state building code while carving out exceptions for unpopular provisions, he said.

Krist offered and later withdrew an amendment that would have adopted the 2009 IRC in its entirety as the state building code and would have allowed local governments to opt out of the mandatory new home sprinkler provision.

Krist said doing so would be consistent with state electrical, boiler and plumbing codes.

After adopting two technical amendments, senators voted 32-3 to advance LB546 to select file. ■

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COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Monday, March 14

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB93 (Howard) State legislative intent with respect to administrators' salaries within the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health & Human Services
LB464 (Campbell) Change child care reimbursement
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Operations
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Division of Children and Family Services
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Division of Public Health
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Division of Veterans Homes

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 2:00 p.m.

Testimony Will Not be Received During Briefing

Department of Insurance - Federal Health Care Reform Briefing by Bruce Rame, Director of Dept. of Insurance

Business & Labor

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Kirkpatrick, Robert - Boiler Safety Code Advisory Board
Appointment: Bley, Steven - Boiler Safety Code Advisory Board
Appointment: Phipps, Thomas - Boiler Safety Code Advisory Board
LB141 (Lautenbaugh) Provide for public records that may be withheld
LB272 (Fulton) Provide for confidentiality and limited access to first-injury reports under the Neb. Workers' Compensation Act
LB348 (Lautenbaugh) Change employer liability provisions under the Neb. Workers' Compensation Act
LB291 (Nelson) Change periodic payment modification provisions under the Neb. Workers' Compensation Act
LB585 (Business & Labor) Provide for payment of claims against the state
LB586 (Business & Labor) Deny payment of certain claims against the state

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Camara, Wayne - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment
Appointment: Watkins, Dallas - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment
Appointment: Bieganski, Gary - Board of Trustees of the Neb. State Colleges
Appointment: Peterson, Carter - Board of Trustees of the Neb. State Colleges
Appointment: Starman, Darlene - Educational Telecommunications Commission
Appointment: Ward, Charles - Board of Educational Lands and Funds

Tuesday, March 15

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB325 (Howard) Appropriate funds for behavioral health care in Region 6 as prescribed
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Division of Behavioral Health
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
Agency 25: Dept. of Health & Human Services - Division of Developmental Disabilities

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

AM673 to LB315

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB58 (Adams) Provide for a study of dual-enrollment courses and career academies
LB635 (Adams) Change the Quality Education Accountability Act

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:00 p.m.

Appointment: Peak, Frank - Community Corrections Council
Appointment: Davis, Jeffrey - Community Corrections Council
Appointment: Dorwart, Thomas - Community Corrections Council

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1525 - 12:10 p.m.

Neb. Investment Council Annual Report
Neb. Public Employees Retirement Systems Annual Report

Wednesday, March 16

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB142 (Lautenbaugh) Change campaign statement and report filing provisions and repeal the Campaign Finance Limitation Act
LB175 (Avery) Provide for transfers from the Campaign Finance Limitation Cash Fund
LB292 (Avery) Eliminate per diems for members of the Accountability and Disclosure Commission
LB568 (Schumacher) Provide duties for the State Treasurer relating to state employee benefits

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LR23 (Smith) Recognize pregnancy care centers for their unique and positive contributions
LB599 (Campbell) Provide coverage for certain children as prescribed pursuant to the Medical Assistance Act
LB433 (Campbell) Provide requirements for contracts for child welfare services between private agencies and the Dept. of Health & Human Services

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB609 (Pirsch) Adopt the Correctional Facility Reimbursement Act
LB545 (Pahls) Establish a copay for medical services provided at a correctional facility
LB671 (Flood) Prohibit a sex offender from changing his or her name
LB508 (Bloomfield) Authorize certain residency restrictions near parks for sexual predators
LB460 (Ashford) Change the Sex Offender Registration Act

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Redistricting

Room 1525 - 12:00 p.m.

LR102 (Redistricting) Adopt criteria for the 2011 redistricting process

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB559 (Cornett) Change the income tax rate

LB561 (Cornett) Change the sales tax rate

LB695 (Pirsch) Change the income tax rate

LB603 (Conrad) Exempt fees and admissions charged by student organizations at institutions of higher education from sales tax

Thursday, March 17

Agriculture

Room 2102 - 1:00 p.m.

Appointment: Minert, Lowell - State Fair Board

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Sankey, David - State Patrol

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Incontro, Thomas - Foster Care Review Board

Appointment: Zimmerer, Mark - Foster Care Review Board

Appointment: Parker, Martha - Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board

Appointment: Parsow, Debra - State Board of Health

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB612 (Pirsch) Increase statute of limitations for plaintiffs suffering injury from sexual assault as a child

LB565 (Ashford) Require secure storage of firearms and notice of such requirement by retailers upon sale and create the offense of improper storage of a firearm

LB647 (Christensen) Prohibit the use of certain foreign laws in Nebraska courts

LB515 (Christensen) Adopt the Federal Health Care Nullification Act and provide a civil right of action and criminal penalties relating to enforcement

Tuesday, March 22

Education

Room 1525 - 8:00 a.m.

Progress Report on Attainment of Higher Education Priorities - Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education pursuant to §85-1429

Wednesday, March 23

Education

Room 1525 - 8:30 a.m.

Appointment: Seline, Steve - Educational Telecommunications Commission

Appointment: Engles, Robert - Board of Trustees of the Neb. State Colleges

Appointment: Baack, Dennis - Educational Telecommunications Commission



UNICAMERAL YOUTH LEGISLATURE



High school students who want to learn what it's like to be a senator in the Nebraska Legislature are encouraged to register for the 2011 Unicameral Youth Legislature, which will convene June 12-15.

The Unicameral Youth Legislature is a four-day legislative simulation conducted at the State Capitol Building and coordinated by the Clerk's Office of the Nebraska Legislature. Student senators will sponsor bills, conduct committee hearings, debate legislation and discover the unique process of the nation's only unicameral.

Students will learn about the inner workings of the Legislature directly from senators, staff and lobbyists. Bills will be based on legislation

considered during the current legislative session.

Early-bird registration is available until April 1. Registration forms can be obtained from the Legislature's Unicameral Youth Legislature page: www.nebraskalegislature.gov/education/unicamyouth.php and the UNL Big Red Summer Academic Camps website: liferaydemo.unl.edu/web/4hcamps/bigredcamps.

The registration deadline is May 15.

The Unicameral Youth Legislature is organized by University of Nebraska 4-H and has been supported by AmeriCorp VISTA, the Nebraska Cooperative Extension and the Southeast Research and Extension Center.

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