

State guardian program advanced

A new state office would offer legal guardianship for elderly and disabled Nebraskans who lack other options under a bill advanced from general file Feb 21.

LB920, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Colby Coash, would adopt the Public Guardianship Act, which would establish an office to serve as guardian or conservator in situations in which no family member or suitable individual is available. The office also would provide education, training and support to current and future guardians and conservators.



Sen. Colby Coash

The bill would create the Office of Public Guardian under the jurisdiction of the Nebraska State Court Administrator and would establish a director, deputy public guardian and up to 12 associate guardians.

A Judicial Committee amendment, adopted 33-0, would create the Public Guardianship Cash Fund. The amendment also removed proposed immunity provisions for staff members and added knowledge of intellectual disabilities as a requirement of the new public guardian.

Coash said Nebraska is the only state in the country without a guardianship office because the volunteer system has worked well.

"Nebraskans take care of our own," he said. "But as the last state, what we're going to find is a growing need [for volunteers] and a diminished

(continued page 3)

Tax credit for historic restoration advances

Senators gave first-round approval Feb. 20 to a bill that would provide a nonrefundable tax credit to people restoring historically significant property.

Under LB191, introduced by Omaha Sen. Jeremy Nordquist, owners returning a historically significant property to service would qualify for a tax credit equal to 20 percent of eligible expenditures up to \$10 million and 10 percent of expenditures over \$10 million. Nordquist said cities and towns across the state would benefit from the credit.

"Areas and buildings of historic value can be found in all of our districts," he said. "Too often these properties can be an eyesore, but they all have the potential to be valuable and fill a need in the community."

A Revenue Committee amendment, adopted 29-0, reduced the eligible expenditures limit from \$10 million to \$5 million. As amended, the bill would require the Nebraska State Historical Society – in conjunction with the state Department of Revenue – to file a report detailing the number of applications and credits approved or denied under the program.

A Nordquist amendment to the



Sen. Jeremy Nordquist said restoring historic properties would improve Nebraska communities.

committee amendment, adopted 25-0, would require the report to be filed electronically by Dec. 31, 2017.

Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas supported the bill, saying it would allow communities to turn historic buildings into assets.

"When you travel across the state, we have some very beautiful historic buildings," she said. "This bill would allow us to look at these buildings as resources rather than liabilities."

Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz also supported the bill. He said it would unite communities with a common goal.

"This gives people of those com-

(continued page 2)

Tax credit for historic restoration advances

(continued from front page)

munities the opportunity to do something and step up,” he said. “It brings ownership to communities and gives them a reward for doing it.”

In order to be eligible for the credit, an application must be filed with the state historic preservation officer prior to beginning work. Within 12 months of the project’s completion, a final approval request must be made, after which the final credit would be awarded.

If a property restored under the tax credit program is significantly changed within five years of completion — including, but not limited to, work done out of compliance with standards or demolition — the department would employ a sliding scale to recapture credits.

If recapture occurs within:

- one year of project completion, 100 percent of the credit may be recaptured;
- two years of project completion, 80 percent of the credit may be recaptured;
- three years of project completion, 60 percent of the credit may be recaptured;

- four years of project completion, 40 percent of the credit may be recaptured; or
- five years of project completion, 20 percent of the credit may be recaptured.

Taxpayers would be eligible for the credit beginning Jan. 1, 2015, and applications would be accepted until Jan. 1, 2020.

Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher expressed concerns about the state’s potential liability if the bill were passed, saying it does not have enough restrictions in place to protect taxpayers from an influx of credit applications. Nordquist agreed to work with Schumacher to address his concerns in an amendment that lawmakers could consider during the next stage of debate.

“As well meaning as this is, it’s a state-of-the-art Trojan horse in the people’s vault,” he said. “There is no limit to the state’s exposure, no budgetary control whatsoever and no guidance as to what a historically significant district is.”

Senators advanced the bill to select file on a 32-0 vote. ■

State guardian program advanced

(continued from front page)

capacity.”

The lack of available guardians has forced the courts sometimes to select unqualified conservators, he said.

“This gap has led to some pretty horrendous things that have happened to people across our state in every district,” Coash said, citing a state audit report that revealed that a single person had been made a legal guardian for more than 600 people.

Omaha Sen. Bob Krist supported the bill, saying LB920 is especially important for parents of children with special needs.

“There’s always a concern,” Krist said, “Who will be there to take care of them? Who will be there to speak for them?”

The bill was advanced to select file on a 34-0 vote. ■



UNICAMERAL UPDATE

The Unicameral Update is a free, weekly newsletter published during the legislative session. It is produced by the Clerk of the Legislature's Office through the Unicameral Information Office. For print subscriptions, call 402-471-2788 or email uio@leg.ne.gov. Visit us online at Update.Legislature.ne.gov and follow us on [Twitter.com/UnicamUpdate](https://twitter.com/UnicamUpdate).

Clerk of the Legislature: Patrick J. O'Donnell
 Editor: Heidi Uhing; Writers: Kate Heltzel, Ami Johnson, Jon Taylor; Photographer: Bess Ghormley

Printed copies of bills, resolutions and the Legislative Journal are available by calling the 24-Hour Request Line at 402-471-2877. Subscriptions are available by calling 402-471-2271 or visiting Room 2108 in the State Capitol. For status of bills and resolutions, visit NebraskaLegislature.gov/bills or call the Legislative Hotline (during session) at 402-471-2709 or 800-742-7456. Live video of hearings and floor debate can be viewed on NET2 and at NetNebraska.org/capitol.

Senators may be contacted by mail at this address:
 Senator Name, District #, State Capitol, P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Assistance provided by the Clerk of the Legislature's Office, the Legislative Technology Center, committee clerks, legal counsels, journal clerks, pages, transcribers, mail room and bill room staff and the State Print Shop.

THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE'S OFFICIAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1977

APPROPRIATIONS

Bill would establish venture capital fund

The Appropriations Committee heard testimony Feb. 19 on a bill that would establish the Development and Venture Enterprise Act.

LB1019, introduced by Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher, would create a statewide entrepreneurship plan and provide venture capital to qualified businesses.



Sen. Paul Schumacher

The bill would establish the Nebraska Venture Fund Authority, which would be housed within the state Department of Economic Development for administrative purposes. The nine-member authority would include a small business owner, a business executive and at least four members with experience in raising venture capital or providing professional services to the venture capital industry.

The fund – which would consist of a one-time, as yet undetermined, appropriation from the Legislature and funds raised from private investors – would be used to make investments in qualified businesses. If a minimum amount of private investment were not raised, the fund would be dissolved.

Schumacher said the specific amount of general funds and the minimum level of private investment were “subject to negotiation,” but that it would need to be enough to entice private investors to join the project. Many Nebraskans have money to invest, he said, but the state lacks a large pool of organized capital for them to consider.

“We’ve got some problems in Nebraska, because we do not have a

good investment vehicle to take all the money that’s out there and organize it to dispatch it for corporate acquisitions or to invest it in entrepreneurial activity,” Schumacher said.

Renee Fry, executive director of the OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in support of LB1019. Nebraska ranks low in access to venture capital, she said, which is essential for start-up companies. The bill would provide an incentive to invest in Nebraska companies and create jobs, she said.

“An investment in venture capital would do more for economic growth than cutting taxes,” Fry said.

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

Water sustainability funds sought

The Appropriations Committee heard testimony Feb. 18 on two bills that would provide funding for water sustainability projects in Nebraska.

LB1046, introduced by Holdrege Sen. Tom Carlson, would create a Water Sustainability Fund with an initial \$50 million transfer from the state’s general fund. An additional \$50 million in general funds would be transferred annually, beginning Oct. 1, 2015. The fund would be administered by the state Natural Resources Commission and used for water sustainability projects throughout the state.



Sen. Tom Carlson

Carlson said he considers the bill a companion piece to LB1098, a measure he introduced this session that would restructure the state’s Natural Resources Commission to create a greater emphasis on water sustainability.

He said the newly restructured commission would evaluate projects

and fund those that best meet the needs of future generations across a range of priorities, including reducing aquifer depletion, increasing stream flow, managing flood threats, ensuring that municipal and industrial needs can be met, protecting wildlife and promoting conservation.

“We have a tremendous challenge but this is an immense opportunity,” Carlson said. “I think this is the most important decision on [water] issues in my eight years in the Legislature.”

LB940, introduced by Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz, also would create a Water Sustainability Fund and would make a one-time \$50 million transfer from the state’s cash reserve to the new fund by July 31, 2014.



Sen. Ken Schilz

The Water Sustainability Fund would be used to fund programs, projects and activities identified by the Water Funding Task Force. The fund could not be used for new capital projects.

Water projects are central to Nebraska’s future, Schilz said, but are underfunded at the state level.

“Water is the issue of the decade,” he said. “Water funding needs to go along with that.”

Mace Hack, state director of the Nature Conservancy of Nebraska, testified in support of both bills. Nebraska needs to bring together urban and rural stakeholders to find creative solutions to the state’s water sustainability challenges, he said.

“The status quo isn’t sustainable or acceptable to anyone,” Hack said. “We really need to commit to comprehensive planning.”

Ron Wolf of the Nebraska Water Coalition testified in support of both bills. Wolf said he understood lawmak-

ers' reluctance to use the state's cash reserve for water funding, but said any savings account can be invested wisely.

"One of the best things you can do for economic development in this state is to ensure a dependable water supply," Wolf said.

Ken Winston of the Nebraska chapter of the Sierra Club testified in opposition to both bills, citing concerns regarding a lack of specific criteria for how the funds would be spent.

"It's not an objection to the goals," Winston said, "It's how we get there."

The committee took no immediate action on either proposal.

Bills would bolster property tax credit fund

The Appropriations Committee heard testimony Feb. 18 on three bills seeking to increase funding for the state's Property Tax Credit Cash Fund.

The fund was established in 2007 to offer relief to property taxpayers in Nebraska and is slated to receive \$113 million from the state's general fund in 2014. The proposed measures each seek to increase the property tax credit fund, but differ in their amounts and funding sources.

LB1094, introduced by Hyannis Sen. Al Davis, would increase the general fund transfer for the current fiscal year to \$138 million. Davis said the one-time \$25 million increase would offer some property tax relief without endangering state funding for needed programs.



Sen. Al Davis

"I think it's reasonable; I think it's sustainable," he said.

Two other bills would bolster the fund through transfers from the state's cash reserve.

LB1086, introduced by Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch, essentially would double the

annual appropriation over the next two years by transferring \$115 million from the cash reserve in 2014, and another \$115 million in 2015.



Sen. Pete Pirsch

Pirsch said the state's cash reserve - estimated to reach approximately \$725 million by the end of 2015 - is strong enough to sustain a \$230 million reduction in order to provide property tax relief. He said the coming two years are expected to be fairly strong economically.

"I think given what our projections are now, gives where our cash reserve is, I think it's a very reasonable and a very plausible number," Pirsch said.

LB669, introduced by Omaha Sen. Beau McCoy, would authorize a one-time \$85 million transfer from the cash reserve in fiscal year 2014.



Sen. Beau McCoy

McCoy said the property tax credit fund is not going as far as it once did in reducing property taxes, while the burden on taxpayers has increased. Omaha currently has the 12th highest property tax rate in the country for a major metropolitan area, he said, and Nebraska agriculture producers pay the third highest property taxes in the country.

"We're overtaxing Nebraskans," McCoy said. "I don't see this as a spending program, I see this as giving back to hardworking Nebraskans."

Harvey Sankey of Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom testified in support of the bills, saying Nebraska ranks in the top 10 among states with the highest property taxes as a percentage of home value. Property tax relief was the highest priority among those who spoke at

recent meetings of the Legislature's Tax Modernization Committee, he said.

"Most of the people spoke about relief in property taxes," Sankey said. "That's what they were all concerned with. I think this is a good way to tell ... your constituents that you heard what they had to say."

Renee Fry, executive director of the OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in opposition to LB669 and LB1086. Lawmakers should not draw down the state's cash reserve in order to provide minimal property tax relief, she said, adding that the average homeowner would receive \$57 in additional tax credits under LB669 and \$77 under LB1086.

Fry said Nebraska would have been in serious fiscal trouble during the last recession if not for the influx of over \$500 million in federal stimulus dollars. Without those funds, she said, the state's cash reserve would not have been strong enough to avoid raising taxes and making even deeper cuts to programs and services. "We need to learn from those lessons and make sure that we continue to follow on that path of fiscal responsibility and make sure that we don't set ourselves up to fall short," Fry said.

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



New model business act advanced

Nebraska's current Business Corporation Act would be replaced under a bill advanced from general file Feb. 20.

LB749, introduced by Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, would repeal the act and enact a revised and updated Nebraska Model Business Corporation Act

(NMBCA).

Harr said the bill resulted from a legislative resolution to evaluate the state's model business code. The proposed NMBCA



Sen. Burke Harr

was promulgated by the American Bar Association (ABA), Harr said, as was the existing Business Corporation Act, which was adopted in 1994. The model act has been updated frequently in the intervening years, he said.

"Nebraska has adopted very few of the ABA committee's subsequent updates in the past two decades," Harr said, adding that it would be beneficial for businesses to operate in states with corporate laws that are consistent with those of other jurisdictions.

LB749 advanced to select file 30-0.

Update of insurer reserves advances

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 20 to a bill that would update laws governing the establishment of reserves by life and health insurers in Nebraska.

LB755, introduced by Grand Island Sen. Mike Gloor at the request of the state Department of Insurance, would adopt the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) Standard Valuation Act.



Sen. Mike Gloor

Under the bill, the department director would be required to adopt a valuation manual by July 1, 2017, that conforms substantially to the manual adopted by the NAIC. The bill also would require the director annually to value the reserves of every company issued on or after the operative date of the valuation manual for the following

outstanding contracts:

- life insurance;
- deposit-type;
- accident and health; and
- annuity and pure endowment.

Gloor said the bill would move the state to a principle-based valuation standard for insurer reserves and is model legislation that reflects approximately 10 years of research by the NAIC.

LB755 advanced to select file on a 29-0 vote.



More funds proposed for career education

The Education Committee heard testimony Feb. 18 on a bill that would provide increased funding for high school career education programs.

LB754, introduced by Papillion Sen. Jim Smith, would authorize the state Department of Education to award grants to improve career education programs. Smith said it is important to promote the trades in education.



Sen. Jim Smith

"We have a great need in our state for young people to choose the trades as a career path," he said. "This bill provides the resources for them to make that decision more easily."

The bill would allocate an additional \$1 million from the Education Innovation Fund for fiscal year 2014-15 and FY2015-16. The department would award grants to assist schools in evaluating and improving career education programs. Specifically, the schools would be charged with aligning programs with the state's economic and workforce needs.

Richard Baier of the Nebraska

Chamber of Commerce supported the bill, saying the state's unemployment rate is both a blessing and a curse.

"Most of our people are working but our employers are having a hard time finding people to fill jobs," Baier said. "This [bill] would leverage state resources and better prepare our students for the careers and opportunities that face them in the future."

Rich Katt, director of career education at the state Department of Education, also testified in support of LB754. He said student employment is at its lowest level since World War II.

"A lot of students don't have exposure to the world of work until they graduate," he said. "We know it's important that students get that exposure to work early on."

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.

Later school aid certification date passed

The deadline for certifying state aid to schools under the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) will be delayed one month under a bill passed Feb. 21.

LB838, introduced by Cedar Rapids Sen. Kate Sullivan, delays the deadline from March 1 to April 10 for certifying state aid, budget authority and applicable allowable reserve percentages under TEEOSA for 2014.



Sen. Kate Sullivan

The change also applies to the deadline for the state Department of Education to report the necessary funding level to the governor and the Appropriations Committee and Education Committee of the Legislature.

Senators passed the bill on a 45-0 vote.

More funds requested for teacher loan forgiveness

Students in teacher education programs could have a greater amount of student loans forgiven under a bill heard by the Education Committee Feb. 18.

LB842, introduced by Hyannis Sen. Al Davis, would allocate an additional \$200,000 in state lottery proceeds to the Excellence in Teaching Act. The annual funding for the act, which provides loan forgiveness to college students in teacher education programs and teachers in graduate level programs, would be increased to \$1.2 million.



Sen. Al Davis

Davis said providing loan forgiveness is important to keeping well-trained teachers in the state.

“Funding has not been adequate to meet the demand,” he said. “Many teachers have applied and have been turned away.”

Skyler Reising, a music teacher at Kloefkorn Elementary School in Lincoln, supported the bill. He said the bill would allow more teachers to continue their education, which ultimately benefits students as well.

“I don’t know a teacher who doesn’t want to be the best they can be, but it takes ongoing study and it’s hard to make ends meet,” he said. “Our students ultimately will benefit from having teachers with higher education in their subject areas.”

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.

GOVERNMENT, MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS

Online voter registration advanced

Senators gave first-round approval to a bill Feb. 20 that would allow Nebraskans to register to vote online.

Under LB661, introduced by Omaha Sen. Bob Krist, those with a valid driver’s license or state identification card could complete voter registration through a secure website under the secretary of state office. The state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) would provide the applicant’s signature from their records to complete the online voter registration.



Sen. Bob Krist

Krist said 13 states already have implemented a similar program.

“Allowing potential voters to register online through a secure website is quickly gaining popularity,” he said. “This would also eliminate the last paper-based record that is still created through the DMV licensing process.”

LB661 also would require the development of a paperless registration system, which would allow the DMV to electronically transmit completed registrations to the proper county election officials. Further, the bill would authorize the DMV to provide applicants’ social security numbers to the secretary of state for voter registration purposes.

Omaha Sen. Tanya Cook spoke in support of the bill, saying it would lead to a broader and more accurate voter database.

“This bill does what we all hope our voting laws would do,” she said. “This will increase access to the polls

as well as participation in elections across the state.”

Following the adoption of a technical amendment, senators advanced the bill to select file on a 35-0 vote.

Bill would address township board vacancies

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 19 on a bill intended to address township board vacancies.

LB980, introduced by Wahoo Sen. Jerry Johnson, would establish a time frame for a township board termination procedure.



Sen. Jerry Johnson

The township board form of government is used in 26 counties, Johnson said, and involves a three-member board with levy authority. He said state law provides for townships to oversee cemeteries and libraries and to provide fire protection, snow removal and other functions.

Johnson said it can take up to a year under current law to have a township board officially declared inactive.

“For those 26, we need this [bill] because we’re finding it hard to get people to serve on those township boards,” he said.

Under the bill, a county board could hold a public hearing regarding termination of a township board within 45 days of two or more vacancies occurring on a board. Notice of the hearing would be required for two consecutive weeks.

If no appointments were made within 45 days of the public hearing, the county board could adopt a resolution to terminate the township board. The bill also would authorize the county board to pay future obligations of the township until the township

board was reactivated.

Saunders County Clerk Patti Lindgren testified in support of the bill, saying it is important to allow county boards to continue levying authority when a township board is inactive. Otherwise, she said, not everyone in the county is paying their fair share for county services.

Lindgren said it recently took three years to fill a township board in Saunders County, complete a budget and request levying authority.

“So, we went three years without any taxes being collected,” she said.

No one testified in opposition to LB980 and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Public employment waiting period proposed

Certain public officials who leave of office would be required to wait two years before serving again under a bill heard Feb. 20 by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, sponsor of LB1075, said he introduced the bill to try and close the “revolving door” in Nebraska politics. He said a waiting period would help prevent the appearance of impropriety.



Sen. Burke Harr

“We, as elected officials, are held to a higher standard,” Harr said. “The public places a great trust in us and expects us to do what is right.”

Under the bill, any person elected or appointed to serve on the governing body of a political subdivision or the governing body of an agency of the executive branch of the state that is created by the state constitution or by statute would be ineligible for public employment for two years after leaving such position.

Any individual who appoints a member to serve on an entity covered by the bill would be ineligible for employment by that entity for two years after leaving the position by virtue of which he or she made the appointment.

Beth Bazyn Ferrell of the Nebraska Association of County Officials testified in opposition to the bill, saying that it could inhibit a county’s ability to fill vacancies in county offices.

No one testified in support of the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.



Continued health care system evaluation proposed

A partnership established to examine how best to control costs and improve quality in Nebraska’s health care system would be continued under a proposal heard Feb. 21 by the Health and Human Services Committee.

LR422, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Kathy Campbell, would build on a resolution adopted by the Legislature in 2013, which designated the Health and Human Services Committee, in cooperation with the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee, to evaluate the state’s health care system.



Sen. Kathy Campbell

Campbell said that resolution resulted in a conference involving policymakers and stakeholders that examined what Nebraska’s health care system should look like in 15 years.

“We have reintroduced this con-

cept in LR422 to continue the work that was started,” she said, “We want to continue to provide a comprehensive review.”

Under LR422, the committees would bring together policymakers and stakeholders at all levels to work toward the following goals:

- providing a comprehensive review of Nebraska’s health care delivery, cost and coverage demands;
- defining opportunities for expansion of health care delivery to rural and medically underserved regions;
- determining the role of team-based care;
- assessing opportunities for loan forgiveness for health care providers who practice in designated underserved counties;
- engaging partners in dialogue, roundtable discussions and public policy discourse;
- developing a framework for health care system transformation to meet public health, workforce, delivery and budgetary responsibilities; and
- developing cooperative strategies and initiatives for the design, implementation and accountability of services to improve care, quality and value while advancing the overall health of Nebraskans.

The Health and Human Services Committee would hold additional hearings and make recommendations in conjunction with the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee regarding health care for all Nebraskans.

Funding for activities outlined in the resolution would be provided by existing appropriations from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund.

Dr. Rowen Zetterman testified in

support of the resolution, saying the state requires a comprehensive vision for the future of health care delivery. Mortality rates in several Nebraska counties have increased since the 1990s, he said, mostly from preventable diseases related to lifestyle choices.

“All Nebraskans deserve to have access to health care that emphasizes good habits, wellness and prevention,” Zetterman said.

Jennifer Carter of Nebraska Appleseed also supported the measure. Implementation of the federal Affordable Care Act has provided Nebraska with a unique opportunity to examine the state’s health care delivery system, she said.

No one testified in opposition and the committee took no immediate action on LR422.

Relaxed asbestos regulations proposed

Restrictions on asbestos abatement would be eased under a bill heard by the Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 19.

LB852, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Sue Crawford, would allow municipalities that own residential properties with four units or less to follow the less stringent Environmental Protection Agency asbestos management guidelines applied to individual property owners.

The bill would apply only to small projects involving asbestos removal, asbestos enclosure or demolition of structures where asbestos exists and would make Nebraska statutes compliant with federal regulations adopted in 1995.

Crawford said the bill would give municipalities the same rights



Sen. Sue Crawford

regarding asbestos management that individual property owners have had for years.

“A house is a house whether a city owns it or an individual property owner owns it,” she said.

Larry Burks, Bellevue assistant city administrator, testified in support of the bill, saying the current law causes municipalities to let abandoned homes degrade. He said the strict guidelines are a factor in creating dangerous properties that are a health threat to communities.

Lash Chaffin of the League of Nebraska Municipalities also testified in support of the bill, saying it would allow communities to address dilapidated properties more quickly.

“Cities acquire residential dwellings all of the time,” he said. “These are houses that need to be knocked down and asbestos laws—particularly in small towns—can be a barrier.”

Chris Bockmann of Bockmann Inc. testified in opposition to LB852, saying that only qualified professionals should do asbestos abatement.

“Asbestos is a carcinogen; there is no known safe level,” she said.

Without proper inspection and demolition, Bockmann said, properties containing asbestos could contaminate workers and neighboring homes.

The committee took no immediate action on LB852.

JUDICIARY



Loan forgiveness proposed for rural lawyers

Attorneys who serve low-income citizens in Nebraska’s less populated areas would be eligible for financial aid under a bill heard by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 21.

LB808, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Danielle Conrad, would reduce student loan obligations for attorneys who provide public legal service in rural Nebraska.



Sen. Danielle Conrad

Public service attorneys practicing in areas having a population of less than 15,000 people would be eligible for \$6,000 a year in loan forgiveness. The bill also would provide \$500,000 to the loan repayment fund.

Conrad said there are 12 Nebraska counties with no attorneys and areas in the state in which people have to drive 200 miles for legal counsel. LB808 would address this critical shortage of attorneys in rural Nebraska by giving recent law school graduates a financial incentive to move to underserved communities, she said.

Testifying in support of the bill, Dr. Liz Neeley of the Nebraska State Bar Association said law school tuition has nearly doubled over the last decade, leaving an average law school graduate approximately \$150,000 in debt.

“This major increase in student loan debt hinders rural Nebraska’s ability to attract lawyers in their communities,” Neeley said.

David Piester of Legal Aid of Nebraska also testified in support of LB808, saying that often, new attorneys can’t afford to provide public service and pay their loans.

“By increasing the amount of money available to assist lawyers with their loan obligations, it facilitates the hiring and retention of lawyers committed to serving the interests of the poor and low-income clients, particularly in rural areas,” Piester said.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB808.

Safe deposit box access examined

Decedents' safe deposit boxes could be accessed more easily under legislation heard by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 19.

LB988, introduced by Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher, would allow banks and other institutions to facilitate access to a decedent's safe deposit box to locate a will, deed to a burial plot or burial instructions. The bill would apply only in situations when a decedent is the sole owner or last surviving co-owner of a safe deposit box.



Sen. Paul Schumacher

The bill would provide that attorneys, heirs and personal representatives of a decedent, after submitting authorized documentation to institutions, could access safe deposit boxes. Only employees of institutions managing the boxes would be allowed to mail or hand deliver a will to county court. If a box must be cut open, expenses would be charged to the decedent's estate.

Schumacher said he brought the bill because the state lacks a simple procedure for banks and attorneys to follow when the only copy of a deceased person's will is in their safe deposit box and no designated representative is available.

Andrew Loudon of the Nebraska State Bar Association testified in support of the bill, saying current law delays estate administration and requires unnecessary legal expenses.

"It's next to impossible to access an original will out of a safe deposit box after someone has died," he said.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB988.

Bill to expand privacy law proposed

Privacy laws could be expanded to apply in public places under a bill heard by the Judiciary Committee Feb 20.

LB1034, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Amanda McGill, would prohibit a person from knowingly photographing, filming, recording or broadcasting images of another person's intimate areas without that person's consent, regardless of whether the person is in a public or private place.



Sen. Amanda McGill

Currently, Nebraska statute prohibits photography only in places where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as restrooms and locker rooms.

McGill said she brought the bill to address an action called "upskirting," in which offenders target women in public places by secretly photographing and sharing images taken under their skirts without their permission.

"I feel that our laws need to catch up with technology when it comes to this kind of violation of privacy," McGill said.

An initial violation of the law would be a Class I misdemeanor punishable by a \$1,000 fine and up to one year of incarceration. A subsequent violation would be a Class IV felony, punishable by a \$10,000 fine and up to five years of incarceration. Sharing images or video made in violation of the proposed law would be a Class III felony, punishable by up to 50 years imprisonment.

Additionally, if an offender is at least 19 years old and the victim is younger than 18, the offender would be required to register as a sex offender.

Jon Edwards of the Nebraska County Attorneys Association testified in support of the bill. He referred to a recent decision by a Cass County judge in which an alleged incident of upskirting was found not in violation of current laws. LB1034 is needed to expand the unlawful intrusion language, he said, to include violations of privacy that occur in public places.

Amy Miller of American Civil Liberties Union Nebraska testified in opposition to LB1034. She said that the bill's definition of "broadcasting" might unintentionally result in the wrong people being penalized for sharing images.

The committee took no immediate action on LB1034.

Court programs for veteran, military personnel considered

Court programs would be designed specifically for veterans and military personnel under a bill heard by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 20.

Under LB1105, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Amanda McGill, court programs would be established to hold accountable military veterans and service members who violate the law and provide treatment for their mental health needs.

McGill said military personnel who come into contact with the justice system have unique problems that need special consideration.

"The Legislature needs to acknowledge in an official way that a high number of veterans and service members experience mental health problems and/or substance abuse addiction," McGill said. "And those who come into contact with the justice system should have the opportunity to receive treatment as a priority."

Jim Cada of the Nebraska State Bar Association testified in support of the bill, saying a military-specific

court program would be similar to alternate criminal justice programs created for drug offenders. Specialized court programs for military personnel are important, he said, because judges and staff members would be trained to recognize post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental issues unique to those offenders.

John Hilgert, director of the veterans' homes division of the state Department of Health and Human Services, also testified in support of the bill.

He said veterans and service members deserve special programs as recognition for their service to their country and that their military experiences can result in illegal behavior once military personnel rejoin civilian society.

"If not for their service to our nation, they would not be making poor choices," Hilgert said.

Amy Miller of American Civil Liberties Union Nebraska testified in a neutral capacity on the bill, saying special court programs should be made available based on need and offense, not military status.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB1105.



Mountain lion hunting repeal advances

Mountain lions could no longer be hunted under a bill advanced from general file Feb. 21.

LB671, introduced by Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers, would repeal the law passed in 2012 that authorizes the state Game and Parks Commission to hold a mountain lion hunting season. Chambers said claims of dangerous mountain lions cannot be backed up

with data.

"When people give these anecdotal stories, it goes against all data and scientific studies out there," he said.

"These animals can and should be managed by Game and Parks, but not through a hunting season."

The bill also would eliminate limited permits currently issued to farmers and ranchers to kill mountain lions preying on their livestock or poultry.

A Natural Resources Committee amendment, adopted 36-0, would retain the statute currently in place that allows farmers and ranchers to kill a mountain lion they perceive to be a threat.

Lincoln Sen. Bill Avery supported the bill, saying there is no evidence to suggest a hunting season is warranted.

"Why do we need a season? Is it just for the pleasure of certain hunters who are seeking a trophy?" he asked. "Mountain lions are not like deer, they're not overpopulated and don't provide food suitable for human consumption."

Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz opposed the bill. He advised the Legislature to let the experts make determinations on wildlife management.

"We should recognize that the Legislature that put this in place a few years ago did what they were authorized to do," he said. "I hope we're not going to jump back and forth on issues like this and make it look like we don't know what we're doing. We should allow Game and Parks to do their job."

Senators voted to advance the bill to select file on a 31-5 vote.



Sen. Ernie Chambers

**NRD bond authority discussed
Natural resources districts**

(NRDs) would be able to issue general obligation bonds under a bill heard by the Natural Resources Committee Feb. 21.

LB1003, introduced by Omaha Sen. Rick Kolowski, would authorize NRDs to issue general obligation bonds to finance all or part of the cost of nonrevenue-producing water projects autho-



Sen. Rick Kolowski

rized by law. Kolowski said without bonding authority, NRDs are forced to pay for projects slowly over time.

"Without bonding authority, NRDs do not have the ability to raise the dollars it takes to complete projects within one year," he said. "The ability to bond for these projects will help spread the costs out over time, eliminating unnecessary delays."

Under the bill, issuance of bonds would require a two-thirds approval of members of an NRD's board of directors. Bonds would be retired using the district's tax revenue and any other funds available to the district not pledged for another purpose.

John Winkler, representing the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, testified in support of the bill. He said bonding authority has allowed NRDs to complete projects for less money and ahead of projected deadlines.

"We had several projects estimated to cost \$125 million without bonding authority," he said. "With bonding authority we'll be able to complete the projects for \$85 million. The projected construction period without bonding is 25 years, but with bonding authority it's only 10 years."

Papillion Planning Director Mark

Sturmsma also supported the bill, saying that general obligation bonds would allow NRDs to more easily complete municipal projects on time.

“This would allow NRDs to more accurately predict the schedule of projects making it easier to partner with and be in support of private development,” he said. “Municipalities use general obligation bonds to great effect. We see no reason why they shouldn’t have the same tools.”

Mick Mines, representing the Papio Valley Preservation Association, testified in opposition. He said there are too many unanswered questions in the bill.

“We need to remember that not all projects are worthy and not all projects are necessary,” he said. “Not all elected boards are fiscally responsible and this bill has very few protections for taxpayers.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

REVENUE

Occupation tax limitation advanced

Senators gave first-round approval to a bill Feb. 21 that would prohibit cities from imposing a city occupation tax on any transaction subject to a state tax, such as purchases of alcohol, gas and tobacco.

LB474, as originally introduced by Omaha Sen. Bob Krist, would have authorized municipalities to raise revenue by levying an occupation tax on any person, partnership, limited liability company,



Sen. Bob Krist

corporation or business.

The bill was amended 33-0 on general file to replace the original provisions with those of LB488.

Introduced by the Revenue Committee, the provisions of LB488 would prevent a municipality from levying an occupation tax on an item that is subject to a state excise tax. Currently, the only items subject to excise taxes are alcohol, tobacco and motor fuel.

Hadley said state sources of revenue like the excise tax should be protected.

“It’s important that we continue to hold these [taxes] as resources for the state, not to be diminished by cities putting occupation taxes on the same items that we put an excise tax on,” he said. “We have to make sure that we keep those things that are necessary for the state to be used by the state.”

Krist supported the amendment, saying that layering an occupation tax on top of an excise tax to pay for local projects would hurt many working families.

“The ability to tax, in law, is conveyed by the state to the people and to the municipalities,” he said. “We want development to happen, but we also have to be protective of the citizens so that some of that development [does not threaten] a family’s ability to survive.”

Senators advanced the amended bill on a 34-0 vote.

Valuation of irrigated cropland questioned

Members of the Revenue Committee heard testimony Feb. 19 on a bill that would change how irrigated cropland is valued.

Currently, some county assessors compare ground water irrigated land with surface water irrigated land when using the sales comparison approach of land valuation.

LB723, introduced by Imperial

Sen. Mark Christensen, would create subclasses of irrigated cropland to be used when assessing agricultural land.



Sen. Mark Christensen

Christensen said the current method does not take into consideration the capacity of a ground water well or government regulatory actions on surface water.

“We’ve seen decreases in surface water irrigated land solely due to compliance issues [on the Republican River],” he said. “This would reduce taxes on the people who really don’t have the value in the land that it’s being taxed at.”

Under the bill, irrigated cropland would be classified as:

- ground water irrigated;
- surface water irrigated;
- ground and surface water irrigated; or
- limited capacity irrigated.

Marilyn Hladky, representing the Nebraska Association of County Officials, opposed the bill. She said land valuations are driven by the market, not perceived values of land.

“I’ve had property owners protest agricultural land valuations next to a river that floods three out of every four years, but sales showed the land was still selling at a high level,” she said. “Assessors cannot make adjustments arbitrarily. The market has to support these adjustments.”

No one testified in support of the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.

Adjustment, elimination of inheritance tax considered

The state inheritance tax was the focus of two bills heard by the Revenue Committee Feb. 20.

LB960, introduced by Holdrege

Sen. Tom Carlson, would reduce the amount of inheritance tax levied on descendants. Under the bill, the tax for lineal descendants would be decreased from 13 to 7 percent. All other inheritance would be taxed at 9 percent, down from the current level of 18 percent.



Sen. Tom Carlson

The committee also heard testimony on LB812, a bill brought by North Platte Sen. Tom Hansen that would eliminate the state inheritance tax effective Jan. 1, 2015.



Sen. Tom Hansen

Carlson said the current inheritance tax rates are too high to be justifiable.

“I’ve heard opposition to this bill from counties, including my own,” he said “[This bill represents] a fair compromise on both sides of the question.”

Dick Clark, director of research for the Platte Institute for Economic Research, supported both bills, saying that the inheritance tax places an undue burden on agricultural families.

“This represents an additional layer of taxation on top of what should be simple generational transfers of land,” he said. “It makes it very difficult to pass property from one generation to the next.”

OpenSky Policy Institute Executive Director Renee Fry opposed the bills, saying it would remove a vital funding source for counties.

“This bill would deprive counties of one of their very few revenue sources,” she said. “Counties would have to increase property tax levies, on average, 7 percent to make up lost revenue.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bills.

Increase in earned income tax credit proposed

Taxpayers would see tax relief under a bill heard by the Revenue Committee Feb. 19.

LB956, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Danielle Conrad, would increase the state earned income tax credit from 10 to 13 percent of the federal credit. Conrad said more than 130,000 Nebraskans claimed the credit in 2013.



Sen. Danielle Conrad

“The earned income tax credit is one of the most well-established and ... effective anti-poverty tools,” she said. “It encourages the lowest income earners to work more hours, thus encouraging them to stay employed and support their families.”

The credit would become operative for tax years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2015.

Aubrey Mancuso of Voices for Children in Nebraska testified in support of the bill. She said almost one in six Nebraska taxpayers benefits from the earned income tax credit.

“Most of the families claiming the credit have a family income between \$10,000 and \$20,000 annually,” she said. “This would have a positive impact on children and families. It also would lead to an increase in student achievement as well as the child’s future earning potential as a working adult.”

Nebraska Catholic Conference Executive Director Jim Cunningham also supported the bill, saying it is “a proven, effective and socially just public policy that assists families that are often overlooked when fiscal policy is developed.”

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.

Bill would reinstate aid to municipalities, counties

State aid to municipalities, counties and natural resources districts (NRDs) would be reinstated under a bill heard by the Revenue Committee Feb. 20.

Under LB1053, introduced by Wilber Sen. Russ Karpisek, the first \$300,000 in excess funds under the Municipal Equalization Fund (MEF) would be distributed to municipalities. Funds would be distributed only to municipalities that have not adopted a local option sales tax by Jan. 1 of that fiscal year.



Sen. Russ Karpisek

Karpisek said after eliminating aid in 2011 to meet state obligations, now is the time to give it back.

“I think it would do just as well to give back to cities, counties and the NRDs the state aid so they would not have to raise their property taxes,” he said. “We have a lot of money in the [state’s cash reserve fund]. I don’t know why we don’t go back and reinstate some of the things we cut.”

The bill also would require the Legislature to appropriate additional aid to counties based on a percentage of the total real and personal property valuation of all counties. The percentage would not be less than .0075 percent and no more than .0125 percent. Of that amount, each county would receive \$30,000 and the remaining funds would be distributed to counties proportionally.

Renee Fry, executive director of the OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in support of the bill. She said a lack of

state aid has placed pressure on cities and counties to cut services.

“Local service responsibilities have increased while state support for local governments has decreased,” she said. “Restoration of state aid would also be highly likely to bring down property taxes.”

Jack Cheloha, representing the city of Omaha, also supported the bill. He said that cities provide many services, all of which require funding.

“Through the years state aid to cities was something we could count on, something that was sustainable,” he said. “Now that times are better, we think anything you could do to help us out would be great because we’d like to rebuild the relationship between local governments and the state.”

LB1053 includes a provision that would authorize the Legislature to appropriate additional aid to municipalities, although it would not be required. Any aid would be distributed based on a ratio of the specific municipality’s population to the total population of all incorporated municipalities.

The Legislature also would be au-

thorized to appropriate aid to NRDs based on the total amount of property taxes levied by a specific NRD in relation to the total amount of property taxes levied by all NRDs in the state.

The aid under the bill would take effect on July 1, 2014.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.

TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Federal mandates for roads amended, advanced

Drivers of commercial and passenger vehicles would be banned from using phones while driving under a bill advanced from general file Feb 20.

LB983, introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, would update Nebraska statutes to comply with federal regulations regarding commercial drivers’ licenses, permits and identification cards issued by the state Department of Motor Vehicles.

A Transportation and Telecommunications Committee amendment, adopted 25-0, added provisions of two other bills introduced by



Sen. Annette Dubas

Dubas:

- LB981 would ban commercial vehicle drivers, drivers of nine- to 15-passenger vans and school bus drivers from texting and using a hand-held telephone while driving, unless for emergency purposes; and
- LB249 would exempt farmers, their family members and employees from commercial driving regulations when driving covered farm vehicles.

Dubas said that without the statute changes, Nebraska would lose up to \$13.7 million in federal highway funding the first year and \$27.4 million for each subsequent year of noncompliance.

The bill was advanced to select file on a 26-0 vote. ■

Youth legislature registration now open

Registration for the 2014 Unicameral Youth Legislature is now open. Scheduled for June 8-11, the Unicameral Youth Legislature offers high school students the opportunity to learn what it’s like to serve as a state senator. Student senators will discover the unique process of our nation’s only unicameral by sponsoring bills, conducting committee hearings and debating legislation.

Participants will learn the details of the Nebraska Legislature directly from senators, staff and lobbyists using bill topics based on actual legislation considered during the most recent unicameral session. Students will conduct their legislative duties in the historic Warner Chamber, the former home of the Nebraska Senate.

If you know a student who has an interest in law, government, leadership or public speaking, encourage them to visit the Unicameral Youth Legislature website to learn more about this unique four-day event.

Early-bird registration is available until April 1. Registration and scholarship application forms can be obtained from NebraskaLegislature.gov/uyl or bigredcamps.unl.edu. The registration deadline is May 15.



SENATOR PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	Status	One-line description
Adams	LB438	Adams	Select File	Change the accountability system for schools and school districts under the Quality Education Accountability Act
Ashford	LB464	Ashford	Select File	Change court jurisdiction over juveniles and indictment procedures
Avery	LB814	Avery	General File	Change the distribution of sales tax revenue to provide funding to the Game and Parks Commission
Bloomfield	LB393	Bloomfield	General File	Change helmet and eye protection provisions regarding motorcycles
Bolz	LB690	Bolz	General File	Create the Aging Nebraskans Task Force and require a grant application
Brasch	LB145	Brasch	Referral	Change valuation of agricultural land and horticultural land
Campbell	LB887	Campbell	Referral	Adopt the Wellness in Nebraska Act
Carlson	LB1098	Carlson	Referral	Change membership and powers and duties of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission
Chambers	LB671	Chambers	E & R Initial	Eliminate provisions relating to hunting and killing of mountain lions
Christensen	LB390	Christensen	General File	Change provisions relating to Governor's powers regarding restrictions on firearms and ammunition under the Emergency Management Act
Coash	LB920	Coash	E & R Initial	Adopt the Public Guardianship Act
Conrad	LB485	Conrad	Referral	Prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation as prescribed
Cook	LB800	Mello	General File	Provide for designation of enterprise zones and preferences in certain business incentive programs
Crawford	LB740	Crawford	Select File	Provide residency requirements for postsecondary education purposes for veterans and their family members
Davis	LB402	Mello	Select File	Change provisions relating to community-based energy development projects
Dubas	LB1092	Dubas	Referral	Authorize issuance of highway construction bonds
Garrett	LB1067	Hadley	Referral	Extend the sunset dates under certain tax incentive laws
Gloor	LB935	Gloor	Referral	Require legislative approval to move state services
K. Haar	LB965	K. Haar	Referral	Change public policy provisions and findings required by the Nebraska Power Review Board relating to the provision of electric service
Hadley	LB867	Hadley	General File	Change provisions relating to review of sales and use tax information by municipalities
Hansen	LB884	Hansen	General File	Name and change the Exotic Animal Auctions and Swap Meets Act and change the Livestock Auction Market Act
Harms	LB807	Harms	Referral	Change provisions relating to provisional operator's permits, interactive wireless communication devices, and occupant protection systems and update references to certain federal provisions
B. Harr	LB752	Lathrop	General File	Change certain assault provisions
Howard	LB526	Howard	General File	Change optometry licensure and certification to perform minor surgery and use pharmaceutical agents
Janssen	LB383	Janssen	General File	Provide for Nebraska Armed Forces Pride Plates
Johnson	LB191	Nordquist	E & R Initial	Adopt the Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Revitalization Act and provide tax credits
Karpisek	LB998	Karpisek	Referral	Change provisions and penalties relating to prohibited acts regarding ignition interlock devices
Kintner	LB1032	Kintner	Referral	Require posting of signs regarding abortion
Kolowski	LB276	Nordquist	Referral	Change reimbursement provisions under the Early Intervention Act and require a medicaid state plan amendment
Krist	LB474	Krist	E & R Initial	Change provisions relating to occupation taxes
Larson	LB1058	Larson	Referral	Adopt the Interstate Compact on the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote

Priority	Bill	Introducer	Status	One-line description
Lathrop	LB1074	Lathrop	Referral	Change provisions relating to the regulation of ground water
Lautenbaugh	LB972	Lautenbaugh	Referral	Adopt the Independent Public Schools Act
McCoy	LB670	McCoy	Referral	Change property tax valuations of agricultural land and horticultural land
McGill	LB901	McGill	General File	Provide for psychology internships through the Behavioral Health Education Center
Mello	LB559	Mello	General File	Adopt a short-time compensation program under the Employment Security Law
Murante	LB946	Murante	Referral	Change provisions relating to elections
Nelson	LB565	Nelson	General File	Prohibit registering to vote and voting early on the same day
Nordquist	LB943	Nordquist	General File	Change the minimum wage rate
Pirsch	LB1087	Pirsch	General File	Create a homestead exemption for disabled veterans, widows, and widowers
Scheer	LB682	Scheer	General File	Provide for formation of allied school systems as prescribed
Schilz	LB942	Schilz	Referral	Change provisions relating to packers under the Competitive Livestock Markets Act
Schumacher	LR423CA	Nordquist	Referral	Constitutional amendment to provide that residential real property may be classified separately for property taxation
Seiler	LB999	Ashford	Referral	Adopt the Criminal Justice Reentry and Data Act and create the Reentry Programming Board
Smith	LB1097	Harr	Referral	Change individual income tax brackets and rates and corporate income tax rates
Sullivan	LB1103	Education	General File	Provide for a strategic planning process for education
Wallman	LB1001	Wallman	Referral	Allow production and marketing of industrial hemp, exempt industrial hemp from the Uniform Controlled Substances Act, and provide powers and duties for the Department of Agriculture
Watermeier	LB916	Crawford	General File	Eliminate integrated practice agreements and change provisions regarding nurse practitioners
Wightman	LB788	Schumacher	General File	Provide for governmental unit bond priority and rename the Nebraska Governmental Unit Security Interest Act

COMMITTEE PRIORITY BILLS

Agriculture	LB768	Schilz	General File	Change fee provisions of the Livestock Brand Act
Agriculture	LB941	Schilz	Referral	Provide for a dairy growth study
Appropriations	LB974	Mello	General File	Provide duties for certain divisions of the Dept. of Health & Human Services relating to budgeting and strategic planning
Appropriations	LB1114	Mello	General File	Change and state intent relating to funding for economic development programs and change a termination date
Banking, Commerce & Insurance	LB749	Harr	E & R Initial	Adopt the Nebraska Model Business Corporation Act
Banking, Commerce & Insurance	LB755	Gloor	E & R Initial	Adopt the Standard Valuation Act for valuation of insurance reserves
Business & Labor	LB560	Mello	General File	Provide enforcement provisions to certain labor and employment acts
Business & Labor	LB961	Cook	Referral	Change exclusive remedy provisions of the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
Education	LB725	Sullivan	Select File	Change student growth adjustment correction and local effort rate yield under the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
Education	LB967	Education	Referral	Change provisions relating to state aid to schools and funding for early childhood education programs
Executive Board	LB976	Karpisek	General File	Adopt the Redistricting Act
Executive Board	LB1016	Krist	General File	Grant legislative authorization to purchase a state aircraft and provide for operation
General Affairs	LR41CA	Lautenbaugh	Select File	Constitutional amendment authorizing legislation for licensing and regulating wagering on live or replayed horseraces

COMMITTEE PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	Status	One-line description
General Affairs	LB863	Karpisek	Referral	Eliminate certain election provisions under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
Government, Military, & Veterans Affairs	LB661	Krist	E & R Initial	Provide for voter registration on the Secretary of State's website and use of Department of Motor Vehicle records
Government, Military, & Veterans Affairs	LB1048	Murante	Referral	Change and eliminate political party provisions
Health & Human Services	LB853	McGill	Referral	Change and rename the Young Adult Voluntary Services and
Health & Human Services	LB854	Krist	General File	Prohibit issuance of a long-term care request for proposals before September 1, 2015
Judiciary	LB907	Ashford	Referral	Provide for supervised release, reentry probation officers, create the Nebraska Center for Justice Research, and change presentence investigations and good time provisions
Judiciary	LB1028	Coash	Referral	Change the number of judges of the separate juvenile court as prescribed
Performance Audit	LB836	Performance Audit	Referral	Provide and change provisions relating to legislative findings for tax incentive programs
Natural Resources	LB699	Larson	General File	Change provisions relating to hunting permits and hunter education programs
Natural Resources	LB844	Schilz	General File	Extend the termination date of the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Act
Retirement	LB759	Mello	Referral	Require annual reports from various defined benefit retirement plans
Retirement	LB1042	Nordquist	Referral	Provide for repayments by school employees rejoining a retirement system
Revenue	LB986	Revenue	General File	Change homestead exemption income limitations
Revenue	LB987	Revenue	Referral	Adjust individual income tax brackets for inflation and exempt social security benefits from income taxation
Transportation & Telecommunications	LB776	Hadley	General File	Adopt and update references to certain federal provisions related to motor vehicles
Transportation & Telecommunications	LB983	Dubas	E & R Initial	Change provisions relating to commercial driver's licenses and commercial learner's permits
Urban Affairs	LB1012	Schilz	Referral	Change provisions relating to blighted areas under the Community Development Law
Urban Affairs	LB1014	Murante	Referral	Change provisions for election of metropolitan utilities district board of directors

SPEAKER PRIORITY BILLS

Speaker Adams	LB51	Ashford	General File	Change provisions relating to publication of court opinions
Speaker Adams	LB132	Nordquist	General File	Adopt the Skin Cancer Prevention Act
Speaker Adams	LB251	Hansen	General File	Change a fee relating to the rental of motor vehicles
Speaker Adams	LB259	Karpisek	Select File	Exempt keno writers from licensure under the Nebraska County and City Lottery Act
Speaker Adams	LB373	Mello	General File	Change Nebraska Construction Prompt Pay Act provisions
Speaker Adams	LB546	Kolowski	General File	Eliminate review of postsecondary capital construction projects as prescribed
Speaker Adams	LB660	Krist	General File	Provide for extension of a pilot project and a contract relating to case management
Speaker Adams	LB674	Chambers	General File	Change provisions relating to abandonment or cruel neglect of an animal
Speaker Adams	LB692	Sullivan	General File	Change and eliminate provisions relating to the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Act
Speaker Adams	LB700	Schumacher	General File	Adopt the Risk Management and Own Risk and Solvency Assessment Act

Priority	Bill	Introducer	Status	One-line description
Speaker Adams	LB717	Gloor	General File	Change provisions relating to the Real Property Appraiser Act and professional qualifications
Speaker Adams	LB719	Crawford	General File	Provide a report requirement for the adoption of rules and regulations
Speaker Adams	LB728	Harms	General File	Change provisions relating to criminal history record information checks for certain employees of the Division of Developmental Disabilities of the Department of Health & Human Services
Speaker Adams	LB744	Avery	General File	Establish the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission
Speaker Adams	LB751	Conrad	Referral	Adopt the Nebraska Benefit Corporation Act
Speaker Adams	LB799	Carlson	General File	Change a filing requirement for insurance companies
Speaker Adams	LB810	Watermeier	General File	Change provisions relating to the enforcement and servicing of real estate loans
Speaker Adams	LB811	Schilz	Referral	Change provisions and penalties relating to the Uniform Controlled Substances Act
Speaker Adams	LB851	Hadley	General File	Change revenue and taxation provisions and provisions on nonresident owners under the Motor Vehicle Registration Act
Speaker Adams	LB908	Coash	Referral	Change child guardianship, ward, and adoption for child out of wedlock provisions
Speaker Adams	LB923	McGill	General File	Require training on suicide awareness and prevention for school personnel
Speaker Adams	LB982	Dubas	General File	Redefine the terms all-terrain vehicle and utility-type vehicle
Speaker Adams	LB994	Health & Human Services	Referral	Change fees as prescribed for vital statistics
Speaker Adams	LB1076	Campbell	General File	Provide for medicaid reimbursement rates and services for home health care
Speaker Adams	LB1115	Davis	General File	Appropriate funds to the Nebraska Power Review Board for a study and state public policy

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. At the top, the navigation bar includes the text "NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE" and "The official site of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature". A search box for "Search Current Bills" is highlighted with a red circle, containing a dropdown menu for "LB", a text input field, and a "Go" button. Below this is a "Search Past Legislation" link. Further down, there is a "Search Laws" section with a "Keywords" input field and a "Go" button, and a "Browse Statutes by Chapter" link. The main content area features a "103rd Legislature, 2nd Session - Day 3*" announcement, a notice that the legislature is adjourned until Friday, January 10, 2014 at 10:00 am, and a "Recent Legislative Information" section listing various reports and documents such as "LR155 Tax Modernization Committee report (12/13/2013)", "2014 Session Calendar", "2014 Senator List", "Introduced Legislation", "Hearing schedules", "2013 Biennial Budget Report (8/28/2013)", "2013 Passed Subject and Section Index", "2013 Carryover Bills and Resolutions", and "Interim Study Listing". A "Live Video Streaming" section at the bottom right features a "net" logo and text indicating streaming video provided by Nebraska Educational Telecommunications.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

*Current hearing schedules are always available at: nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar

Monday, February 24

Banking, Commerce & Insurance **Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB880 (Harms) Require notice of debit and preauthorization hold amounts as prescribed and provide for a violation to be a deceptive trade practice
LB991 (Nordquist) Prohibit collection of interchange fees by payment card networks on certain taxes and fees
LB886 (B. Harr) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Condominium Act
LB900 (Janssen) Change a Nebraska Uniform Trust Code provision governing charitable trusts

Business & Labor

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: (Carlson), Joel - Commission of Industrial Relations
LB949 (Business & Labor) Approve claims against the state
LB950 (Business & Labor) Deny claims against the state
LB955 (Dubas) Adopt the Paid Family Medical Leave Act
LB1090 (Conrad) Adopt the Healthy Families and Workplaces Act
LB1036 (Wallman) Provide for biennial contracts for cities of the primary class under the Industrial Relations Act
LB1073 (Lathrop) Require employers to e-verify immigration status of new employees

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Harwood, Frank - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment
Appointment: Hain, Jim - Board of Educational Lands and Funds
LB1081 (Karpisek) Change provisions relating to school-sponsored activities
LB789 (Bolz) Provide for a survey relating to paraeducators
LB958 (Cook) Provide for appointment of a student achievement coordinator
LB834 (Avery) Change provisions relating to funding for school breakfast programs
LB1009 (K. Haar) Establish a pilot program relating to problem-based learning

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Dinsdale, Kim West - Neb. Arts Council
Appointment: Pflueger, Paula L. - Neb. Arts Council
Appointment: Anselmo, Matthew - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Bruder, Marla - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Canada, Mark - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Holt, Janelle - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Leckband, Paul - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Lutz, Susan - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Scoville, Terry - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling
Appointment: Teutsch, Teresa "Teri" A. - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Keegan, Barbara J. - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards
Appointment: Litchfield, James - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards
Appointment: Syslo, Mick - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards
Appointment: Wootton, Edward - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards
LB925 (Coash) Provide for transfer of motor vehicle registration duties to county treasurers
LB954 (Dubas) Change rotating or flashing light provisions for certain vehicles

Tuesday, February 25

Agriculture

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1002 (Wallman) Add enforcement powers under the Commercial Dog and Cat Operator Inspection Act
LR413 (Davis) Request the United States Department of Agriculture immediately withdraw its proposed rule entitled "Importation of Beef from a Region in Brazil"
LR414 (Davis) Request the federal

government to reject changes to the current law governing country of origin meat labeling
LR427 (Carlson) Urge the United States government to support a sustainable Renewable Fuel Standard

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Buckendahl, Chad W. - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment
LB1060 (Lautenbaugh) Change from elected to appointed boards for educational service units
LB972 (Lautenbaugh) Adopt the Independent Public Schools Act
LB973 (B. Harr) Change and eliminate provisions relating to classification of school districts
LB1099 (K. Haar) Provide for a study relating to state aid to schools

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB667 (Krist) Provide an exception for motorcycles to certain vehicle light requirements
LB756 (Smith) Redefine bicycle and motor vehicle
LB847 (Hadley) Provide for fees for copies of motor vehicle accident reports
LB1071 (Lathrop) Provide additional rules of the road for bicycles and bikeways

Wednesday, February 26

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 8:45 a.m.

Appointment: Johnson, Larry - State Emergency Response Commission

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1049 (Wightman) Change provisions for actions for recovery of title or possession of real estate or foreclosure of mortgages or deeds of trust as mortgages
LB811 (Schilz) Change provisions and penalties relating to the Uniform Controlled Substances Act
LB1027 (Karpisek) Change provisions relating to restoration of seized firearms as prescribed
LB1035 (McGill) Require reports

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

*Current hearing schedules are always available at: nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar

regarding records of persons unable to purchase or possess handguns because of disqualification or disability
 LB1110 (Christensen) Change concealed handgun permit renewal provisions for members of the armed forces and their spouse

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1005 (Avery) Create the Surface Water and Ground Water Review Board and provide powers and duties
 LB1098 (Carlson) Change membership and powers and duties of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB978 (B. Harr) Authorize funding for on-bill payment programs under the Low-Income Home Energy Conservation Act
 LB979 (B. Harr) Change provisions relating to tax sales for delinquent property taxes
 LB1043 (Nelson) Exempt certain deeds from the documentary stamp tax
 LB1067 (Hadley) Extend the sunset dates under certain tax incentive laws

Thursday, February 27

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Goertz, Jessye - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission
Appointment: Fattig, Martin - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission
Appointment: Newman, Robert L. - Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Appointment: Lomicky, Carol - Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Appointment: Frerichs, Regina "Gina" - Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Appointment: Hogue, John - Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Appointment: Salansky, Jr., Paul L. - State Board of Health
Appointment: Fleming, Shane M. - State Board of Health

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1108 (Conrad) Change a standard used by a court in finding a pregnant woman sufficiently mature to decide to have an abortion
 LB1109 (Conrad) Change provisions relating to consent and parental notification and eliminate certain penalties with respect to abortion
 LB1032 (Kintner) Require posting of signs regarding abortion
 LB1000 (Karpisek) Change provisions relating to parenting plans
 LB1062 (Lautenbaugh) Require pre-sentment of operator's license and proof of financial responsibility or evidence of insurance to a peace officer by a driver involved in an accident or impoundment of vehicle and authorize civil actions for certain expenses

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1112 (Christensen) Change provisions relating to an occupation tax on irrigated land
 LB1113 (Christensen) Provide powers and duties relating to surface water appropriations

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB708 (Kintner) Exempt social security benefits from state income taxation
 LB709 (Kintner) Exempt military retirement benefits from state income taxation
 LB836 (Legislative Performance Audit) Provide and change provisions relating to legislative findings for tax incentive programs
 LB885 (B. Harr) Require the use of the income approach to value certain real property for tax purposes

Friday, February 28

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB963 (Brasch) Change provisions relating to personal property exemptions in cases of forced sale on execution
 LB724 (Lautenbaugh) Change provisions relating to unlawful possession of a firearm at a school

LB694 (Seiler) Change provisions relating to unlawful possession of a firearm at a school
 LB879 (Christensen) Provide for a permit to carry a concealed handgun in a school
 LB1030 (Kintner) Adopt the State Firearms Rights Act

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1025 (Bolz) Change the distribution of sales and use tax revenue
 LB1031 (Kintner) Change the distribution of sales and use tax revenue and provide for decreased income tax rates
 LB1057 (Davis) Change the distribution of sales and use tax revenue and provide duties for the Department of Revenue
 LR423CA (Nordquist) Constitutional amendment to provide that residential real property may be classified separately for property taxation

Tuesday, March 4

Executive Board

Room 2102 - 12:00 p.m.

LR444 (Legislative Performance Audit) Create the Tax Incentive Evaluation Committee as a special legislative committee ■



Unicameral Information Office
Nebraska Legislature
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
03-23-05

PRESRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LINCOLN, NE
PERMIT NO. 212



CAPITOL VISITORS

Left: Omaha Sen. Tanya Cook spoke to students visiting from Metropolitan Community College and Omaha Northwest High School as part of National TRIO Day.

Below: Students from Waverly Elementary learn about the Capitol building from a Capitol tour guide.

