Assisted living updates amended, advanced

Lawmakers amended and advanced a bill Feb. 21 intended to improve the services provided by Nebraska assisted living facilities.

Lincoln Sen. Anna Wishart, sponsor of LB439, said the bill was the result of several years of work by assisted living facility providers, consumers and employees on how to better serve the state’s aging population.

She said the “basic flaw” in current law is that it effectively bans nurses employed by assisted living facilities from providing simple health care services to residents. State law was designed to create a “bright line” between nursing and assisted living facilities, she said, but the result has been that nurses are unable to provide brief, temporary care in assisted living facilities.

Currently, nurses employed by a facility may assess residents and are required to oversee the management of medications, Wishart said, but this is the limit of their ability to practice.

“We need a statutory framework that allows assisted living facilities to effectively meet the needs of their residents,” she said, adding that the bill would not require a facility to hire nurses if they do not already employ them.

A Health and Human Services Committee amendment, adopted 36-0, replaced the bill. As amended, LB439 would permit an assisted living facility nurse to provide nursing care to residents on a part-time, intermittent basis. Such care is defined as less than 10 hours each week for each resident, with a predictable end time within a 21-day period.

(continued page 2)
Bill would ease regulations for certain broadband partnerships
(continued from front page)

remitted to the Nebraska Internet Enhancement Fund.

Kristen Gottschalk, representing the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, spoke in favor of the bill. She said having access to high-speed internet is no longer about being able to stream movies or play video games.

Reliable internet access is an important tool to keep business alive in rural Nebraska, Gottschalk said.

“Every new piece of agricultural equipment that comes from manufacturers now has a modem that is designed to connect to the internet,” she said. “But most of the modems go unused because they cannot connect.”

Also supporting the bill was David Young, fiber infrastructure manager for the city of Lincoln. He said public-private agreements would facilitate affordable, competitive and robust internet connections across the state.

By encouraging public entities to partner with the public sector, we will be able to drive down the costs of deploying broadband to both rural and urban areas,” Young said.

Eric Carstenson, president of the Nebraska Telecommunications Association, opposed the bill. He said a bill introduced earlier this session would create a broadband task force to study and consider public-private partnerships. The Legislature should wait to act until the results of that study are clear, Carstensen said.

“Government competition in the private telecommunications industry will chill future investment,” Carstensen said. “But we should continue to look at new and innovative ways to achieve that public-private partnership.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

The bill also would require assisted living facilities to disclose in writing if brief nursing care is available in their facility and would update a variety of definitions.

Seward Sen. Mark Kolterman offered an amendment, adopted 35-0, intended to eliminate any fiscal impact on the state. The amendment directs that any expenses that result from the bill would be paid from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund for fiscal year 2018-19 and FY2019-20. He said that any future expenses could be included in the regular budgeting process.

Kolterman said that the care of nearly half of the Nebraskans in nursing homes is paid for by the state, so any measure that encourages greater utilization of assisted living facilities—which are much less expensive—would provide long-term savings.

“When this bill came along, this seemed like a great opportunity to save some money,” he said.

The bill advanced to select file on a 38-0 vote.

The bill would ease regulations for certain broadband partnerships
(continued from front page)
Insurance producer, public adjuster requirements amended, advanced

A bill that would amend state law related to insurance producers was amended and advanced to final reading Feb. 22.

LB743, introduced by Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom, would create regulations for public adjusters—individuals who provide compensated assistance to an insured in the filing and settlement of a property claim against an insurer—through adoption of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners model law.

Omaha Sen. Burke Harr offered an amendment on select file that would incorporate into the bill provisions of his LB220. Harr said the amendment would provide protections for consumers who assign their property insurance rights or benefits to a contractor following a loss.

Among other provisions, the amendment would:

• expand the definition of a residential contractor;
• provide that an assignment of rights or benefits to a residential contractor may authorize the contractor to be named as a copayee for payment of benefits under a property and casualty insurance policy;
• expand notice provisions in order to inform an insured homeowner that with an assignment, the residential contractor would be entitled to pursue any rights or remedies that the insured homeowner has under the insurance policy; and
• require that the itemized description of the work, materials, labor, fees and total amount to be paid be furnished to the insured and insurer prior to commencement of repair or replacement work.

The amendment also specifies that the itemized description would not limit the insured or a residential contractor from identifying other goods and services necessary to complete repairs or replacements.

Lindstrom supported the amendment, saying it would ensure that homeowners understand what is happening if they assign their rights to a roofing company that makes repairs following a hailstorm, for example.

“[This] provides a notification that the roofing company would have to provide to the customer or client that if you sign this—if you assign this claim to us—you essentially are eliminating some of the rights that you have as the claimant on the claim itself,” Lindstrom said. “It doesn’t change the assignment process.”

The Harr amendment was adopted 35-0.

Among other provisions, LB743 also would:

• provide criteria for a business entity to become a public adjuster in Nebraska;
• remove a paper certificate requirement for insurance producer continuing-education activities and limit approval of those activities to four years; and
• prohibit an individual from acting as a public adjuster without being licensed in accordance with the act, misrepresenting that they work for an insurer or entering an agreement to repair property that the adjuster was engaged to adjust.

Following adoption of a technical amendment offered by Lindstrom on a 35-0 vote, the bill was advanced to final reading by voice vote.

Bill to improve tax incentive audits amended, advanced

A bill intended to improve legislative performance audits of the state’s tax incentive programs was amended and advanced to final reading Feb. 22.

LB936, introduced by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, would make a number of changes to the Legislative Performance Audit Act. The act requires the Legislative Audit Office to conduct performance audits that review state agency programs in order to evaluate the agency’s success in effectively implementing legislative intent.

Among other changes, the bill would extend from three to five the number of years between audit reviews of tax incentive programs. The bill also would require that audits analyze the cost per full-time worker and whether...
job growth in businesses receiving tax incentives is at least 10 percent above industry average.

In addition, the bill would define a high-quality job as one that averages at least 35 hours of employment per week and earns wages at least 10 percent higher than the statewide industry sector average.

Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz offered an amendment on select file that would further refine the wage portion of the definition of a high-quality job. The amendment would change the definition to wages that are at least 10 percent higher than the statewide industry sector average and that equal or exceed 110 percent of the Nebraska average weekly wage if the job is in a county with a population of less than 100,000 inhabitants, or 120 percent of the Nebraska average weekly wage if the job is in a county with a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

“The amendment just raises the bar a little bit in terms of how we are evaluating what it means to be a high-quality job,” Bolz said. “What we have heard and learned from economic development research in a number of places and ways is that Nebraska needs to focus on job quality—and wages are a part of that.”

Heartwell Sen. John Kuehn, chairperson of the Performance Audit Committee, supported the amendment.

“It helps further clarify and give guidance to the Performance Audit Committee in terms of how to assess these incentive programs,” he said.

Sen. Sue Crawford of Bellevue also spoke in favor of the change, saying it would help focus audit efforts on making sure that the $200 million the state invests annually in incentive programs is resulting in the kind of jobs that lawmakers intended.

“What you measure is what you get,” Crawford said. “We want to make sure that these jobs are also increasing our Nebraska wage.”

Following adoption of the Bolz amendment on a 33-0 vote, the bill advanced to final reading by voice vote.

**Lawmaker pay increase proposed**

The Executive Board considered a measure Feb. 21 that seeks to increase the pay of Nebraska lawmakers.

LR295CA, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Tony Vargas, would place a proposed amendment to the Nebraska Constitution on the 2018 general election ballot to increase state senators’ pay to 50 percent of the Nebraska median household income.

If approved, lawmakers’ salary would be adjusted every two years according to U.S. Bureau of the Census income data. Currently, the $12,000 annual salary earned by lawmakers is set in the state constitution and cannot be changed without a constitutional amendment and vote of the people. It was last increased in 1988.

Vargas said the current salary, which is augmented by a per diem or mileage when applicable, is significantly below that of states with similar costs of living. He noted that a 2017 National Conference of State Legislatures survey found that the average annual salary for a state lawmaker is approximately $35,500, excluding per diems and expenses.

Giving voters a chance to revisit the issue of state senator pay could lead to a broader range of representation in the Legislature, he said.

“Nebraska boasts [of a] citizen Legislature,” Vargas said. “But can we really say that honestly, when so many of our fellow Nebraskans are essentially precluded from serving in office due to this financial barrier?”

Testifying in support of the measure, John Hansen of the Nebraska Farmers Union agreed. Serving in the Legislature involves a significant, year-round time commitment, he said, and senators should be compensated at a rate that encourages a diverse membership.

“We are completely out of line with what other [elected] positions pay, with what other state’s pay and with what other positions in our state pay relative to the responsibilities and obligations that come with this very important job,” Hansen said.

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

**Legislative oversight sought for mental health facilities**

The Legislature would create a special committee to look into state-licensed care facilities under a measure considered by the Executive Board Feb. 21.

Fremont Sen. Lynne Walz, sponsor of LR296, said Nebraskans who struggle with persistent and severe mental illness deserve better treatment than they are receiving from facilities that are licensed by the state Department of Health and Human Services.

She said that many facilities across the state are not providing residents with the most basic medical and nutritional needs. However, she said, the DHHS licensure inspection system requires only that up to 25 percent of a random sample of facilities be
inspected at least every five years.

Walz said the result is that underperforming facilities can fly below the department’s radar for years. When violations are discovered, she said, the small fines incurred do not reflect the severity of the mistreatment.

This system has led to a crisis in which a resident at a state-licensed facility in Palmer died in September after three days of severe illness, she said.

“The [proposed] committee would investigate the systematic failures of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in ensuring people with mental illness receive the necessary services and supports in the most integrative setting,” Walz said.

The State-Licensed Care Facilities Investigative Committee would be composed of seven members of the Legislature. The committee would be supplied with staff and have the ability to hire outside legal counsel, consultants and investigators, as well as the authority to hold hearings and issue subpoenas.

Dianne DeLair, senior staff attorney at Disability Rights Nebraska, testified in support of the measure.

She said the department currently investigated the systematic failures of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in ensuring people with mental illness receive the necessary services and supports in the most integrative setting,” Walz said.

The Palmer facility remained open despite repeated violations dating back to 2012, she said, and the state’s actions have been insufficient given that vulnerable people’s lives are in danger.

“[That does not] help that veteran who spent the last hours of her life begging to go the hospital,” DeLair said. “When people start dying, we need to take action.”

Also testifying in support was volunteer Mark Munger, who described the living conditions of the mentally ill man he advocated for in Lincoln at a state-licensed facility. The smell from the communal bathroom was “overwhelming,” he said.

“No one, and I mean no one, should be expected to live like that,” Munger said, “It’s third-world conditions in the world’s richest country.”

Jenifer Roberts Acierno, deputy director of the DHHS division of public health, opposed the measure. She said the department currently receives oversight from several committees of the Legislature as well as the federal government.

Findings and recommendations made by those entities are taken seriously, she said.

In addition, Roberts Acierno said, the current inspection process allows time for issues to be corrected before a facility loses its license to operate. That process is especially important for residential facilities, she said, because of limited alternative housing options.

“While the concern resulting in LR296 is understood, the committee and the work called for would be duplicative,” Roberts Acierno said.

The board took no immediate action on the measure.

**Government, Military & Veterans Affairs**

Periodic review of occupational licensing laws discussed

Senators debated a bill on general file Feb. 20 that would require the Legislature to regularly review Nebraska’s occupational licensing laws.

As introduced by Sen. Laura Ebke of Crete, LB299 would create a legislative office responsible for reviewing proposed legislation that would enact or modify occupational licensing regulations to ensure that they are the least restrictive means of achieving the regulation’s ends. It also would require ongoing legislative review of occupational regulations and legislation.

Fifty years ago, Ebke said, only 5 percent of occupations required a license, compared to 25 percent today. It makes sense to require a license if it improves public health and safety, she said, but in other cases the Legislature should allow market-based competition to weed out bad practitioners.

LB299 would not alter any current licensing requirements, Ebke added, and any changes to those requirements would have to go through the regular Legislative process.

The bill also would accelerate the process by which those with criminal histories could determine whether their conviction would disqualify them from obtaining an occupational license, Ebke said.

“This is a bill that could help us chip away at recidivism in our prisons and stop the return-to-prison pipeline by increasing the opportunities for success for those who are being released,” she said.

A pending Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment would require legislative committee staff to evaluate the effects of proposed legislation on occupational licensing, compare it with policies enacted in other states and to issue a report on that legislation to the relevant committee. Staff could request that proponents of legislation that would enact or modify occupational regulations to submit evidence of present, significant and substantiated harm to Nebraska consumers.

Each standing committee also would be required to review and analyze one-fifth of the occupational regulations under the committee’s
jurisdiction every five years.

A person with a criminal conviction could petition an occupational board at any time for a determination as to whether the person’s conviction would disqualify him or her from obtaining a license. A person’s criminal history would be disqualifying only upon a felony conviction if it is listed as a disqualifying offense in the law governing the occupational regulation or if the board concludes that public safety outweighs the person’s right to pursue an occupation.

The board would be required to make its determination within 90 days of receiving a petition and could charge no more than $100 for each petition.

Sen. Sue Crawford of Bellevue agreed that the Legislature should periodically review its occupational licensing laws to remove barriers to employment. However, she filed an amendment that would exclude the approximately 100 health professions currently covered by the state Department of Health and Human Services’ credentialing review program—from most of the committee amendment’s provisions.

The 407 process reviews proposals for changes in scope of practice or for new credentialing of health professions. A technical review committee, the state Board of Health and the director of the Division of Public Health evaluate the proposals to determine whether they would benefit public health and welfare. They then submit reports to the Legislature’s Health and Human Services Committee to assist them in evaluating bills related to credentialing.

Crawford said neither the department nor the Health and Human Services Committee have the staff necessary to conduct the number of occupational licensing reviews that would be required under Ebke’s proposal.

“I don’t think it’s doable for our committee to review this many professions every five years,” she said.

The Crawford amendment failed on a 24-10 vote. The Legislature adjourned for the day before voting on the committee amendment or the bill.

Bill would send Cather, Chief Standing Bear to U.S. Capitol

Two different icons would represent Nebraska at the U.S. Capitol under a bill discussed by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 21.

The National Statuary Hall Collection, established by Congress in 1864, houses two statues that represent important historical figures from each state. Statues of Julius Sterling Morton and William Jennings Bryan currently represent Nebraska.

Federal legislation passed in 2000 authorized states to request that one or both statues be replaced by the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress.

LB807, introduced by Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, would direct the Nebraska secretary of state to submit a request to approve the replacement of the Morton statue with one of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Willa Cather.

Harr said Cather is an internationally renowned artist whose writing defined an important part of the state’s history.

“Her’s a great representation of what life was like when you had different immigrant communities coming together to build this great state,” he said.

A National Statuary Hall Selection Committee composed of members of the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission would be tasked with selecting a sculptor for the statue and securing funding.

Peg O’Dea Lippert of Papillion spoke in favor of the bill. She said Cather wrote about the struggles and triumphs of many immigrant communities without judgment and put Nebraska on the literary map.

“I think it’s time for women to be represented at the Capitol,” O’Dea Lippert said. “Let’s reclaim our literary heroine, honor the women of our state and place Willa Cather in the Capitol to proudly represent Nebraskans.”

Sen. Tom Brewer of Gordon filed an amendment to similarly replace the statue of William Jennings Bryan with one of Chief Standing Bear. His amendment also would clarify that the costs associated with replacing both statues would be paid for through private donations.

Brewer said the bravery of Chief Standing Bear suing the federal government for legal recognition of Native Americans’ humanity should be memorialized and celebrated as part of the state’s proud history.

“For the sake of those who come to our nation’s Capitol and to Statuary Hall, to see a diversity is critical to understanding the history of our state,” he said.

Also supporting the bill was Judi gaiaishkibos, executive director of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs. She said it is time that Nebraska’s diversity is accurately represented by the statues in the U.S. Capitol.

“Nebraska just recently celebrated our sesquicentennial, so it seems only appropriate to celebrate our first peoples,” gaiaishkibos said.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.
Judicial review proposed for contested procurement decisions

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 21 on a bill that would provide an appeal mechanism as part of the state contract procurement process.

Currently, if a company is not awarded a state agency contract for services, the company can protest the decision with the state Department of Administrative Services. That agency reviews the protest and makes a final determination regarding its validity.

Under LB814, introduced by Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher, a protest of a contract awarded in certain cases would be considered a contested case under the Administrative Procedure Act and could be subject to judicial review.

Schumacher brought an amendment to the hearing that would specify that only contracts of $1 million or greater would be subject to the bill’s provisions.

Schumacher said the process currently in place is inherently unfair because DAS is the same agency that awards contracts and reviews protests of those awards. Assembling a sophisticated bid is time consuming and expensive, he said, meaning large companies may not offer bids if they feel the process is unfair.

“It seems to have the consequence of having large national bidders, who normally would bid for state contracts, shying away from placing bids in small states like Nebraska,” Schumacher said. “This offers an expedited procedure in which provides for some review of the agency’s action.”

David Karnes supported the measure on behalf of IT Alliance for Public Sector, saying the bill would assure all vendors that the procurement process is open, transparent, fair and competitive.

“This would provide an important mechanism to ensure good business practices for the state and due process rights for vendors,” he said. “It would help protect all stakeholders and the taxpayers’ interest in Nebraska to get the most open, fair and competitive process.”

Doug Wilken, assistant general counsel to DAS, opposed the bill. He said a protracted appeal process could delay the execution of important contracts by at least 60 days. Additionally, Wilken said, appeals decisions by different judges could create confusion for state agencies.

“This could lead to conflicting rulings and perhaps bad legal precedent if the agencies do not have experience responding to bid protests,” he said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill would prohibit certain campaign finance donations

Candidates for public office would be subject to a new campaign finance restriction under a bill discussed by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 22.

LB817, introduced by Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers, would prevent a campaign committee from donating funds to another campaign committee. Chambers said when a person makes a political donation, it is with the intent that the money be spent in support of that specific candidate.

“When they give a candidate a donation, it’s for that candidate,” he said. “They’re not saying they trust that candidate to substitute his will for their will” by using the money to support a different candidate.

Jack Gould of Common Cause Nebraska supported the bill. Nebraska law originally prohibited such transfers, he said, but a bill passed in the 1980s carved out an exception for purchasing tickets to political campaign fundraisers.

“The original intent of the bill was that you would give that money to charity or keep it for your own use in a future campaign,” he said. “There was no thought to the fact that people would begin to buy tickets to political fundraisers.”

Also supporting the bill was Frank Daley, executive director of the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. He said the intent of the original Accountability and Disclosure Act was, in part, to prevent a sitting politician from donating to a candidate for the same legislative body who might then be beholden to him.

Some are taking advantage of the fundraiser exception to donate large sums of money to other candidates, Daley said.

“When more and more people have transferred large amounts of money but because it was for a fundraising event, it is within the confines of the statute,” he said. “Instead of buying a single ticket, people started sponsoring an entire table or buying ‘gold level’ tickets.”

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

Election communication disclosure bill considered

Certain election communications would be subject to disclosure under...
a bill heard by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 22.

Bellevue Sen. Sue Crawford, sponsor of LB839, said the bill was a revision of legislation she introduced last year. She said the bill would close a loophole in current law that allows groups to attempt to influence campaigns under the guise of providing educational materials.

“Electioneering communications are materials that are targeted at the electorate of a candidate that are distributed right before an election,” Crawford said. “These communications allude to a candidate without explicitly recognizing the election or their candidacy and therefore [currently] do not have to be reported.”

As introduced, the bill would define electioneering communications as those that are:

- publicly distributed 60 days immediately preceding an election;
- refer to a clearly identified candidate; and
- are directed at the electorate of the office sought by that candidate.

The definition would exclude voter guides, communications about pending legislation, candidate debates or communications by organizations to recognized members.

The bill would require an individual who makes an electioneering communication of more than $250 to file a report with the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission within two days.

Crawford said she would bring an amendment to raise the reporting amount to $1,000 and change the time frame to cover materials distributed within 30 days of an election.

Jack Gould of Common Cause Nebraska testified in favor of the bill, saying it could help protect candidates from “shadowy” organizations that run attack ads in the final days of a campaign when candidates lack the time or resources to respond.

“These kinds of organizations have deep pockets and can attack at any time and destroy someone’s character,” Gould said, adding that the bill would require reporting from these organizations without infringing on their free speech rights.

Also testifying in support was Frank Daley, executive director of the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. He said the bill would ensure that activity that is substantially the same under the state’s campaign laws.

For example, he said, a mailer about a candidate that mentions the upcoming election or suggests voting for the candidate must report to the commission. One that does not mention the election or suggest voting for the candidate—but contains all the same information otherwise—does not.

Currently, he said, there is nothing about the second mailer that is reportable under Nebraska law.

“The purpose [of LB839] is to disclose who’s talking, who they’re talking about and how much they spent,” Daley said.

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

**Bill would eliminate voting restrictions for felons**

Members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 22 on a bill that would more quickly restore voting rights for felons.

Currently, a person automatically regains his or her voting rights two years after completion of a felony sentence, including parole. LB1027, introduced by Omaha Sen. Justin Wayne, would eliminate this waiting period.

Wayne said people who participate in the political process are 30 percent less likely to reoffend in the future. Voting helps people become more engaged in their communities, he said, which benefits everyone.

“This is not a Republican or Democrat issue,” Wayne said. “When you’ve done your time, you should be able to participate.”

Supporting the bill was Karen Bell-Dancy, executive director of the YWCA of Lincoln. Voting is one way for released persons to reconnect to society, their community, family and neighbors, she said.

“Through decades of hard work, the right to vote has become more inclusive, however there is much yet to be done,” Bell-Dancy said. “We feel that eliminating the waiting period is in their best interests and that of our community.”

Jack Gould of Common Cause Nebraska also spoke in favor of the measure. The temporary revocation of voting rights is not part of a punitive sentence, he said, and should not continue to hang over someone’s head.

“When a judge sentences someone to a punishment, it’s not the place of the state to pile on and that’s what’s happened in the past,” Gould said.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.
Bill would prohibit certain state employee political activity

State employees would be limited in their political activities under a bill considered Feb. 22 by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Under LB1129, introduced by Heartwell Sen. John Kuehn, a state employee could not hold office in a political club or party. While on state time, in his or her official capacity or using government resources of any kind, a state employee also could not:

- campaign for or against a candidate;
- make a campaign speech;
- collect campaign contributions;
- wear political buttons;
- sell tickets to a political fund-raising function;
- develop or distribute campaign materials or communications;
- organize or manage a political rally or meeting;
- circulate petitions for a candidate or a ballot initiative;
- work to register voters for one party only; or
- use any digital medium to communicate about party politics, a candidate for office or a ballot initiative, unless required in the performance of his or her official duties.

Violations would be a Class I misdemeanor—which carries a maximum penalty of not more than one year in prison, a $1,000 fine or both—and would be reported to the state attorney general for investigation. A state employee convicted of such a violation would be removed from employment.

Kuehn said the provisions are based closely on the Hatch Act, which applies to executive branch employees at the federal level. Nebraska already has specific prohibitions on state employees participating in political activity on state time, he said, and the bill simply would enumerate and specify those prohibitions.

“There is not a nefarious attempt to stifle free speech—to somehow punish or silence someone’s political view,” Kuehn said. “A process that is clear and provides specific guidelines is always better than one that is less.”

Frank Daley, executive director of the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, testified in support of the bill, calling it a “clarifying piece of legislation.” Daley acknowledged, however, that use of the words “campaign” and “political” in the bill might be problematic as they currently are not defined under accountability and disclosure law.

Stephen Ramsay questioned the need for the bill. Testifying in opposition, he said current prohibitions on political activity by state employees are clear and known by those who work for state government. He said the addition of prohibitions on holding office in a political club is broad enough to encompass a local National Rifle Association chapter or a group promoting bike lanes.

“What state and federal employees do on their own time and with their own resources is their business,” he said. “To suggest otherwise is to deny them their most basic constitutional and civil rights—and this law goes much further by actively criminalizing such activity.”

Patricia Wonch Hill, testifying on behalf of the Nebraska State Conference of the American Association of University Professors, also opposed LB1129, which she called “excessively restrictive.”

For example, she said, university professors do not work traditional hours or have clear delineation between work and non-work time. One fear is that professors and others simply would not engage in any political activity out of fear of possibly spending a year in prison if found to be in violation of the bill.

“And this seems to be the point of this bill—to discourage political participation by the tens of thousands of state employees of Nebraska,” Wonch Hill said.

Sue Martin, a 26-year employee of the state of Nebraska, also opposed the bill. Restricting an individual’s ability to hold office in a club outside of their work time is a violation of the First Amendment right to free assembly, she said.

“What I do with my off-duty time should not be dictated by my employer,” Martin said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Regulations proposed for unmanned aircraft

Members of the Judiciary Committee heard testimony Feb. 23 on a bill that would regulate the use of unmanned aircraft systems in several areas of statute.

LB693, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Carol Blood, would broaden the legal definition of intrusion to include the viewing of another person in a state of undress directly or through electronic means.
Violation of this provision would be a Class I misdemeanor. Subsequent violations would be a Class IV felony.

Blood said the bill would make Nebraskans safer during a time when technology is advancing too quickly for people to keep up. The bill would bring Nebraska in line with the 41 other states that have passed similar legislation, she said.

“This won’t hamper the good things drones can do for us,” Blood said, “but it will ensure that if someone is using one of these devices to intentionally harass anyone, they will be held accountable.”

The sharing or distribution of video or images obtained through electronic means would be a Class IIA felony under the bill. If the defendant is 19 or older and the victim is less than 18, the defendant would be required to register under the Sex Offender Registration Act.

Any person who intentionally causes an electronic device—including an unmanned aircraft—to enter the property of another in order to secretly peep into the dwelling of another person would be guilty of a Class I misdemeanor.

The bill would prohibit operation of an unmanned aircraft within a horizontal distance of 500 feet or a vertical distance of 300 feet above any penal institution. Operation of an unmanned aircraft carrying a deadly weapon also would be prohibited. Violation of these provisions would be a Class I misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class IV felony for any subsequent offense.

The definition of interference with hunting, trapping, or fishing would be expanded to include using an unmanned aircraft to interfere with such activities. A person who engages in such interference would be charged with a Class III misdemeanor.

Additionally, LB693 would create the additional following offenses:
- unmanned aircraft harassment by a registered sex offender—a Class I misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class IV felony for a subsequent offense;
- first degree criminal trespass by unmanned aircraft—a Class I misdemeanor;
- second degree criminal trespass by unmanned aircraft—a Class III misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class II misdemeanor for a subsequent offense;
- flying an unmanned aircraft above a critical infrastructure facility or school—a Class I misdemeanor;
- interference with a police cordon—a Class II misdemeanor; and
- livestock harassment through the use of a motor vehicle, dog or unmanned aircraft—a Class II misdemeanor or a Class I misdemeanor if the harassment causes serious injury or death to the animal.

Duane Gangwish, representing the Nebraska Cattlemen Association, spoke in support of the measure. He said that livestock harassment can detrimentally impact the health of individual animals as well as entire herds.

“Emerging technologies hold the potential to revolutionize things affecting Nebraska agriculture,” Gangwish said. “However, these promising tools may cause significant harm to our animals when used with nefarious or reckless intent.”

Opposing the bill was Nathan Trail, representing the Consumer Technology Association. Federal regulations already in place would preempt and render statewide legislation unnecessary, he said.

“This would contribute to a confusing patchwork of regulations across the country,” Trail said. “We also already have current privacy and trespassing laws that would cover these issues in Nebraska.”

Dave Poole, representing Oracle Aviation, also spoke in opposition to the measure. He said it would significantly hamper a growing industry in Nebraska.

“Several universities and colleges in Nebraska are building drone training programs in an effort to really make Nebraska a national leader in the commercial drone operation space,” Poole said. “This bill would be a significant hindrance to that educational endeavor.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Cost-free consumer protections passed

Lawmakers passed a bill Feb. 23 that ensures free credit monitoring to consumers following a data security breach.

LB757, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld, prohibits a credit-monitoring agency from charging fees to place, temporarily lift or remove a security freeze following a data breach similar to the one experienced by Equifax in 2017.

A security freeze places a hold on a person’s credit report, preventing identity thieves from opening fraudulent credit accounts using stolen information.

Any individual or commercial entity conducting business in Nebraska that owns, licenses or maintains data including personal information will be required to implement reasonable security measures to safeguard that
Pay raise proposed for oil and gas commissioners

The Natural Resources Committee heard testimony Feb. 22 on a bill that would increase the pay of commissioners who serve on the Nebraska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, which regulates the oil and natural gas exploration and production industry in the state.

The three commissioners each receive $50 for each day devoted to the business of the commission. Their pay is capped at $2,000 per year. Each commissioner also is reimbursed for necessary travel and other expenses.

LB713, introduced by Sen. Steve Erdman of Bayard, would increase commissioners’ pay to $500 per day and no more than $6,000 per year. Beginning in December 2020, and every five years thereafter, the director of the commission could recommend to voting members an increase or decrease in their compensation.

Erdman said the commission should have the authority to increase commissioners’ pay because the body’s funding does not come from the state’s general fund. Additionally, he said, the commissioners’ per diem has not been increased in decades.

“My concern is that it’s been a long time since they’ve seen a compensation increase,” Erdman said.

The commissioners can meet up to 12 times per year. According to the commission, its expenses would increase by $16,200 per fiscal year, assuming that the commissioners meet each month.

Dana Wreath, president of the Nebraska Petroleum Producers Association, testified in support of the bill. Wreath, who is also vice president of Wichita-based Berexco, said that Nebraska has one of the best oil and gas regulatory systems of the eight states in which his company operates. The current $50 a day is not enough to compensate commissioners for their time, he said.

“I don’t think we want to disincentive people or—perhaps even worse—have a situation where the only people who want to be on the commission have some particular ideological axe to grind,” Wreath said.

John Rundel, a current commissioner, also testified in support. He said each commissioner is self-employed and must take time away from his business and family to work for the commission. Rundel said he drives approximately four hours from his home in Trenton to Sidney, where the commission holds hearings, which sometimes results in a 12- to 14-hour day.

Few people have the technical expertise required to be a commissioner, he added, and the low pay could further reduce the pool of applicants for any future openings.

“I think anything we can do to make it easier for someone to serve is in the benefit of the state of Nebraska and for the oil and gas commission,” Rundel said.

Bill Sydow, director of the commission, provided neutral testimony on the bill. He said the conservation tax levied on oil and gas producers to fund the commission’s operations could cover the proposed pay increase. While the commissioners can meet up to 12 times annually, Sydow said, six meetings a year is the average. Commissioners do not get paid if they do not attend or if the commission does not meet.

Sydow said that commissioners need a variety of technical knowledge and experience. The commission acts as a quasi-judicial body, he said, which means that it must conduct its public hearings under the same rules as a district court. The commission can approve applications for projects costing millions of dollars, and commissioners need a good grasp of Nebraska law, as well as state rules and regulations, he added.

“Our commission and our commissioners I would put against anybody in the United States,” Sydow said. “As a team, we’re that good.”

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

Renewable energy production standard proposed

Certain public power districts would be required to produce no less than 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources under a bill heard by the Natural Resources Committee Feb. 21.

Under LB722, introduced by Omaha Sen. Justin Wayne, a public power district having within its chartered
get 100 percent of its electricity from renewable energy sources.

“More renewable energy projects will bring more good jobs to Nebraska,” he said.

Testifying in opposition to the bill was John McClure, vice president of NPPD. The utility’s customers received 17 percent of their electricity from wind and solar generation in 2017, he said, and wind energy will make up a larger and larger portion of the electricity generated in the Southwest Power Pool, a group of utilities and power generation companies that oversees electricity infrastructure in 14 states, including Nebraska.

However, the SPP already has an excess supply of electricity generation, McClure said. Additionally, NPPD estimates that it would cost between $20 million and $30 million per year to meet the proposed requirement.

“We don’t think mandating NPPD to add more generation to its resource mix is in the best interest of our customers,” he said. “It does not save them money—it increases their cost.”

John Hoke, speaking on behalf of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, also testified in opposition to the bill. As manager of the Niobrara Valley Electric Membership Corporation, an NPPD wholesale customer, Hoke said the corporation is concerned that requiring NPPD to generate a set amount of electricity from renewables would increase costs for ratepayers.

“Forcing them to add unneeded generation is only going to increase the cost of power to every wholesale and retail customer of NPPD,” he said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

**Property tax offset for streamflow projects passed**

The Legislature gave final approval Feb. 23 to a bill that is meant to reduce the impact of streamflow augmentation projects on county tax rolls.

LB758, introduced by Venango County Sen. Dan Hughes, authorizes state natural resources districts and interlocal entities that buy land for the development of a streamflow augmentation project to make voluntary payments in lieu of property taxes to the county where the project is located.

The amount of the payments may not exceed the property taxes that would have been paid if the land were subject to taxation.

The bill addresses the loss of property tax revenue to counties under the Rock Creek Augmentation Project and the Nebraska Cooperative Republican Platte Enhancement project. Both projects help the state meet streamflow requirements under the 2003 Republican River Compact, which allocates the use of surface water between Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska.

The bill requires NRDs or joint entities that acquire private land for the purpose of developing and operating a streamflow augmentation project to give public notice of the project, including an estimate of the amount of water to be pumped and the project’s timeframe.

It also requires a public hearing on the project and the input of county officials and adjoining landowners on ways to mitigate the project’s effects on the county.

Additionally, NRDs and interlocal entities are required to publish an annual report on the project’s finances and activities, including the amount of revenue gained from land leases. NRDs and interlocal entities must
Sales tax exemption proposed for feminine hygiene products

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Feb. 21 on a bill that would create a state sales and use tax exemption for feminine hygiene products.

Omaha Sen. Mike McDonnell, sponsor of LB798, said tampons and menstrual pads, cups and sponges should be exempt from state sales and use taxes because they address a biological need. He said his proposal is an opportunity for a conversation about the state’s current tax exemptions, which include those for escort services, shoe shining, bail bonding, wedding planning and tattoo and body modification.

“If escort services and tattoo services are tax exempt, while other services such as pest control are not,” McDonnell said, “then exempting feminine hygiene products has merit.”

Megan Mikolajczyk, associate general counsel and senior political affairs manager of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, testified on the bill. She said no one should be financially burdened simply because of her reproductive functions. Period products are a necessity for women of child-bearing age, Mikolajczyk added, and necessities should not be taxed.

“Exempting period products from sales tax certainly does not destroy all the systems of oppression perpetuating gender inequity,” she said. “But passing this legislation would demonstrate that the Legislature recognizes the existence of those systems and is willing to work to dismantle them.”

Lillie Cox, a research fellow at the OpenSky Policy Institute, provided neutral testimony on the bill. She said eight other states have adopted similar exemptions on the grounds that tampons and menstrual pads are medical products and that states typically do not tax other items in that category, such as prescription drugs. Opponents say, however, that all consumer goods—both luxuries and necessities—should be taxed.

Cox said Nebraska’s tax structure is out of date because it exempts many services from sales tax, even though the economy has moved from primarily goods-based to primarily services-based.

“It is nonsensical that we have sales tax exemptions for candy and soda but not for tampons,” Cox said. “However, creating an exemption for feminine hygiene products probably makes more sense as part of a long-overdue comprehensive overhaul of sales tax exemptions than it does as one component of a piecemeal approach.”

No further testimony was provided, and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Increased TERC filing fee proposed

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Feb. 23 on a bill that would increase the filing fee for appeals and petitions to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission.

The three-member commission hears appeals of the decisions of county boards of equalization on taxation, valuation or assessment of real or personal property. The current filing fee for each appeal or petition is $25. LB937, sponsored by Gering Sen. John Stinner, would create a new fee structure. For each appeal or petition regarding the taxable value of real property, the fee would be $40 for a parcel with a taxable value of less than $250,000. The fee would increase in increments up to $100 for a parcel with a taxable value of at least $1 million. The fee for any other appeal or petition would be set at $40.

Stinner said that the filing fees currently cover only 5 percent of the commission’s operating budget, with the remainder coming from the state’s general funds. The fee structure proposed in LB937 would increase that to 10 percent, he said.

Raising filing fees for properties with higher taxable values would deter large corporations with multiple locations from filing annual valuation protests on those properties as part of a strategy to reduce costs, Stinner added. For example, he said, he easily could file a protest every year for each of the eight locations that his bank operates.

“Every year I could have a tax protest for 25 bucks—$200 is what I’ve got at risk,” Stinner said. “That doesn’t make a whole lot of sense to me.”

Rob Hotz, a TERC commissioner, testified in support of the bill, saying the current filing fee has been in place for more than 20 years. He said the base fee would be increased for inflation and that the new fee structure would be less regressive because parcels with lower values would have a lower filing fee than those with higher values. The change would generate an additional $50,000 in fees each year, Hotz added.

Also testifying in support of the bill was Tom Placzek, speaking on behalf of the Nebraska Association of County Officials. He said the current filing fee...
is so low that many property owners file a protest without a strong intention to follow through. In Platte County, Plazcek said, approximately 10 to 20 percent of those who file a protest do not show up at their TERC hearing.

“You just spend hours and hours on each one of these cases, and then to not have anybody show up is disheartening,” he said.

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

**TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Proposal to remove abandoned vehicles approved**

A bill expediting the removal of abandoned vehicles was passed by lawmakers Feb 23.

Under LB275, introduced by Venango Sen. Dan Hughes, a private property owner can have an abandoned vehicle removed from his or her property if the vehicle has been left for at least seven days.

The property owner can contact law enforcement, who then will contact a towing company to have the vehicle removed.

The private towing company will be responsible for notifying local law enforcement of a removal within 24 hours, if initiated by a private property owner.

The bill passed on a 45-0 vote.

**Bridge weight limit signage change approved**

Lawmakers passed a bill Feb. 23 requiring that the weight limitations of county bridges be posted only in certain situations.

Under LB310, introduced by Henderson Sen. Curt Friesen, a sign indicating the carrying capacity of a county-maintained bridge would be required only if its carrying capacity is less than the limit prescribed in state statute.

A person who drives an overweight vehicle over a bridge or a culvert wider than 60 inches cannot recover damages from the county for any resulting injury or accident.

The bill passed on a 45-0 vote.

**Bill would prevent internet content limitations**

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee heard testimony Feb. 20 on a bill that would prohibit broadband internet service providers from restricting legal internet activity.

LB856, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld, would protect net neutrality by prohibiting internet providers from blocking customers from accessing lawful content, applications, services or devices.

Morfeld said a December 2017 decision by the Federal Communications Commission to end net neutrality continues to negatively impact the hundreds of thousands of Nebraskans who use the internet each day.

“Whether Nebraskans utilize the internet to engage in online marketplaces or receive news, equal access to the internet is crucial as Nebraska continues to grow into the 21st century,” he said. “If we allow internet companies to limit access to products and ideas, we’re hurting all Nebraskans.”

The bill would prevent service providers from creating “fast lanes” for certain customers, which prioritize delivery of one customer’s data over another’s. Providers could not impair or degrade lawful internet traffic based on the content, application or service used or unreasonably interfere or disadvantage the ability of users to select, access or use broadband internet service or the ability of any third party to make and provide content to such users.

Finally, disclosure of an internet provider’s network management practices, performance and commercial terms of service would be made public so that users could determine if the provider is in compliance with the provisions of the bill.

In states with inconsistent internet availability like Nebraska, the decision to repeal net neutrality would have an even more disproportionate impact on some residents, said Common Cause Executive Director Gavin Geis. Some rural residents struggle just to access high-speed internet, he said.

“Without net neutrality, theoretically there could be tiered services for farmers, for accessing farm data,” Geis said. “Certain types of access could be served at a different rate or a certain pricing scheme.”

Echoing those concerns was John Hansen, representing the Nebraska Farmers Union. He said most rural residents have little to no competition for the services they receive. If an internet service provider decides to provide only tiered services or block certain websites, Hansen said, there would be little remedy available.

“You usually have one provider and
than good, Keegan said. “As people cross state borders, they will have different regulations placed upon them,” he said. “This patchwork of state laws would be untenable for mobile broadband users.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Opposing the bill was Gerry Keegan of CTIA, representing the wireless communication industry. He said regulations enacted by the FCC in 2015 to protect net neutrality actually hurt the telecommunications industry’s ability to invest in and maintain networks in rural America.

Adopting the provisions of LB856 would create an inconsistent legislative framework that would do more harm than good, Keegan said.

“As people cross state borders, they will have different regulations placed upon them,” he said. “This patchwork of state laws would be untenable for mobile broadband users.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

### COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

#### Monday, February 26

**Business & Labor**

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1096 (Hilgers) Change provisions relating to state vehicles and workers’ compensation claims, tort claims, and other claims against the state
- LB950 (Albrecht) Provide for payment of claims against the state
- LB951 (Albrecht) Deny claims against the state
- LB991 (Boz) Create the Nebraska Integrated Education and Training Grant Program
- LB1134 (Vargas) Adopt the Nebraska Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act
- LB1109 (Harr) Create the Grow Nebraska Through Quality Employment Strategic Partnership

**Education**

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1033 (Murante) Eliminate learning communities
- LB1125 (Groene) Change school finance base limitation and local effort rate provisions

**General Affairs**

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB747 (Thibodeau) Provide for bottle clubs under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
- LB679 (Krist) Change the distribution of taxes remitted to the Charitable Gaming Operations Fund

#### Tuesday, February 27

**Government, Military & Veterans Affairs**

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

- Appointment: Roger Dixon - Nebraska Tourism Commission

#### Tuesday, March 6

**Health & Human Services**

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

- Appointment: Matthew J. DiVito - State Emergency Response Commission
- LB1115 (Murante) Provide population requirements for establishing district boundary lines for legislative districts, Supreme Court districts, and certain political subdivisions

**Judiciary**

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB680 (Krist) Adopt the Interstate Placement for Involuntarily Admitted Patients Agreement Act
- LB690 (Blood) Adopt the Counterfeit Airbag Prevention Act
- LB1126 (Boz) Adopt the Sexual Assault Survivors’ Bill of Rights Act

**Revenue**

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB759 (Hughes) Eliminate a sales and use tax exemption relating to zoos and aquariums
- LB996 (Crawford) Change defined terms and other provisions of the Nebraska Advantage Act
- LB1023 (Schumacher) Change sunset dates on certain tax incentive programs
- LB1021 (Schumacher) Eliminate certain sales and use tax exemptions
- LB941 (Wayne) Change the calculation of the tax on the average wholesale price of gasoline
- LB1026 (Wayne) Authorize issuance of highway bonds, create a fund, and change existing highway funding provisions

- LB1088 (Wayne) Adopt the Nebraska Education Formula and the Remote Seller Sales Tax Collection Act, terminate the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act and the Property Tax Credit Act, and eliminate certain tax exemptions

- Appointment: Roger Dixon - Nebraska Tourism Commission

- Appointment: Michael Aerni - Foster Care Advisory Committee
- Appointment: Noelle Petersen - Foster Care Advisory Committee

- Appointment: Matthew J. DiVito - State Emergency Response Commission

- LB1115 (Murante) Provide population requirements for establishing district boundary lines for legislative districts, Supreme Court districts, and certain political subdivisions

- LB680 (Krist) Adopt the Interstate Placement for Involuntarily Admitted Patients Agreement Act
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- LB1026 (Wayne) Authorize issuance of highway bonds, create a fund, and change existing highway funding provisions
Priority bills generally are scheduled for debate before other bills. Each senator may select one priority bill and each committee may select two priority bills. The speaker may select up to 25 priority bills per session.

### Senator Priority Bills

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<td>Bostelman</td>
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<td>Change provisions relating to hearings before the Nebraska Power Review Board and electric generation using wind</td>
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<td>Briese</td>
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<td>Chambers</td>
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<td>Clements</td>
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<td>Change intimidation by telephone call provisions and prohibit intimidation by electronic message</td>
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<td>Crawford</td>
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<td>Geist</td>
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<td>Groene</td>
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<td>Smith</td>
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<td>Stinner</td>
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<td>Thibodeau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watermeier</td>
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<td>Wayne</td>
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<td>Wayne</td>
<td>Create the offense of possession of a firearm by a prohibited juvenile offender</td>
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<td>Williams</td>
<td>LB496</td>
<td>Stinner</td>
<td>Define and redefine terms under the Community Development Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wishart</td>
<td>LB989</td>
<td>Wishart</td>
<td>Authorize testing of autonomous vehicles by a city of the primary class on its roadways</td>
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**Find Your Senator**

If you want to know which legislative district you live in, www.NebraskaLegislature.gov provides an easy tool for locating your district and senator.

Enter your full address into the “Find Your Senator” search field located on the right side of the home page. This opens a map that shows your legislative district and a picture of your senator, along with a link to that senator's web page. This page includes senators’ contact information and links to their biography and photos. It also provides a list of committees they serve on and the bills they’ve introduced.

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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, votes, transcripts and more.

You also can search current laws using the keyword search found below the bill search.
## COMMITTEE PRIORITY BILLS

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<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>LB477</td>
<td>McCollister</td>
<td>Prohibit certain unlawful acts as prescribed relating to the Weights and Measures Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>LB808</td>
<td>Harr</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to community gardens and seed libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations</td>
<td>LB775</td>
<td>Stinner</td>
<td>Adopt the State Park System Construction Alternatives Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations</td>
<td>LB861</td>
<td>Watermeier</td>
<td>Require that certain prosecution costs be paid by the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>LB743</td>
<td>Lindstrom</td>
<td>Adopt the Public Adjusters Licensing Act and change continuing education and preclicensing education provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>LB750</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to mortgage licensing, recording of real property instruments, and rights and duties of secured creditors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Insurance</td>
<td>LB955</td>
<td>Albrecht</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to lump-sum settlements under the Nebraska Workers’ Compensation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Labor LB791</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ebke</td>
<td>Change Nebraska State Patrol employees’ bargaining rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>LB778</td>
<td>Groene</td>
<td>Require voter approval for school district building fund levies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>LB1081</td>
<td>Education Committee</td>
<td>Change education provisions regarding reporting, penalties, residency, boundaries, priority schools, subpoena authority, poverty, and limited English proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Board</td>
<td>LB744</td>
<td>Executive Board</td>
<td>Adopt the Legislative Qualifications and Election Contests Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Board</td>
<td>LB1078</td>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>Require reporting of sexual abuse allegations as prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Affairs</td>
<td>LB921</td>
<td>Lowe</td>
<td>Create a licensing exception under the State Electrical Act for certain farm building construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Affairs</td>
<td>LB1120</td>
<td>Larson</td>
<td>Change provisions of the Nebraska Liquor Control Act and music licensing provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>LB1015</td>
<td>Briese</td>
<td>Allow withholding from public of reports of injury under the Nebraska Workers’ Compensation Act that reveal an employee’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military &amp; Veterans Affairs</td>
<td>LB1065</td>
<td>Murante</td>
<td>Permit use of electronic poll books and use of digital images for confirmation of the voter’s identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military &amp; Veterans Affairs</td>
<td>LB1091</td>
<td>Executive Board</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to tax incentive performance audits under the Legislative Performance Audit Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human Services</td>
<td>LB793</td>
<td>Riepe</td>
<td>Eliminate provisions relating to specialized services under the Developmental Disabilities Services Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Human Services</td>
<td>LB731</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Provide for licensure of remote dispensing pharmacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>LB841</td>
<td>Pansing Brooks</td>
<td>Provide duties relating to correctional overcrowding emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>LB670</td>
<td>Krist</td>
<td>Change membership, powers, and duties of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Audit</td>
<td>LB935</td>
<td>Performance Audit</td>
<td>Facilitate tax incentive performance audits by requiring certain application materials, reporting, and data retention for certain tax incentive programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Audit</td>
<td>LB936</td>
<td>Performance Audit</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to tax incentive performance audits under the Legislative Performance Audit Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources LB758</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Provide for voluntary payments in lieu of taxes on water augmentation project lands as prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources LB1008</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bostelman</td>
<td>Increase amounts of liquidated damages for certain violations of the Game Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>LB548</td>
<td>Lindstrom</td>
<td>Provide for the consolidation of the Class V school employees’ retirement system and the School Employees Retirement System of the State of Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>LB1005</td>
<td>Kolterman</td>
<td>Change county and school retirement provisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>LB1089</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to confidential tax information, refundable income tax credits, and homestead exemptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>LB1090</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to inflation adjustments, personal exemptions, and standard deductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-Tribal Relations</td>
<td>LB807</td>
<td>Harr</td>
<td>Provide for replacement of a statue in the United States Capitol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Telecomm</td>
<td>LB994</td>
<td>Friesen</td>
<td>Create the Rural Broadband Study Task Force, change provisions relating to the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund, and change powers and duties of the Public Service Commission as prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Telecomm</td>
<td>LB909</td>
<td>Bostelman</td>
<td>Change motor vehicle titling and registration provisions, assembled and kit vehicle provisions, and the branding of certificates of title as reconstructed or replica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Affairs</td>
<td>LB873</td>
<td>Urban Affairs</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to cities of particular classes and villages, correct and include references as prescribed, and eliminate obsolete provisions and repeal definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Affairs</td>
<td>LB874</td>
<td>Urban Affairs</td>
<td>Change the Community Development Law</td>
</tr>
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### SPEAKER PRIORITY BILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Introducer</th>
<th>One-line description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB104</td>
<td>Bolz</td>
<td>Provide for a surrogate to make health care decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB117</td>
<td>Hilkemann</td>
<td>Adopt the Investigational Drug Use Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB379</td>
<td>Harr</td>
<td>Create the Willa Cather Historical Building Cash Fund and provide for a transfer of funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB596</td>
<td>Groene</td>
<td>Exempt equine massage therapy from credentialing and regulation under the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB697</td>
<td>Ebke</td>
<td>Change certain district court judicial district boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB702</td>
<td>Kolterman</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to children’s health care coverage and Nebraska IV-D child support program modification procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB714</td>
<td>Howard</td>
<td>Provide a procedure for judicial emancipation of a minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB724</td>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>Provide for segregation of keno funds, electronic fund transfers, and deposit of gross proceeds by a sales outlet location as prescribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB729</td>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>Allow claims arising out of misrepresentation or deceit under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act and State Tort Claims Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB741</td>
<td>Lindstrom</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to real property appraisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB745</td>
<td>Watermeier</td>
<td>Require notice relating to certain refunds of local sales and use taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB751</td>
<td>Performance Audit</td>
<td>Change agency duties with respect to adoption of rules and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB760</td>
<td>Hughes</td>
<td>Change the Volunteer Emergency Responders Incentive Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB803</td>
<td>Stinner</td>
<td>Change provisions related to kindergarten, early childhood education, and the Step Up to Quality Childcare Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB827</td>
<td>Lowe</td>
<td>Provide for disposition of property of members of veterans' homes and change state personnel system exemptions for the Department of Veterans' Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB865</td>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to passage of ordinances by cities and villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB901</td>
<td>Bostelman</td>
<td>Require Director of Aeronautics to consult with the Military Department in certain structure permitting decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB903</td>
<td>Linehan</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB906</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Change provisions relating to Schedule I controlled substances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB923</td>
<td>Morfeld</td>
<td>Provide immunity for certain law enforcement employees administering naloxone and change provisions relating to immunity for persons reporting or experiencing alcohol overdoses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB940</td>
<td>Friesen</td>
<td>Change provisions of the Civic and Community Center Financing Act relating to fund use, grant request limits, property sale restrictions, and grant application priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB957</td>
<td>Lowe</td>
<td>Provide procedures for choosing a method of payment for payments under the Nebraska Workers’ Compensation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB1091</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Update references to the Internal Revenue Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB1098</td>
<td>Hilgers</td>
<td>Change dollar threshold for certain purchasing requirements under the County Purchasing Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Scheer</td>
<td>LB1121</td>
<td>Larson</td>
<td>Adopt the Nebraska Uniform Protected Series Act</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
High school students visited the Nebraska Capitol from Syracuse and observed the Unicameral from the south balcony of the legislative chamber.