

Legalization of medical cannabis considered



Sen. Anna Wishart said there is broad support across the state, regardless of age or political affiliation, for legalized medical cannabis.

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Jan. 25 on a bill that would approve certain forms of cannabis for medical use.

LB110, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Anna Wishart, would create a framework for legalizing medical cannabis use in Nebraska. Wishart introduced an amendment that, if adopted, would replace the original bill. As amended,

it would create a new state regulatory agency—the Cannabis Enforcement Department—that would be tasked with reviewing and approving applications for medical cannabis use.

Wishart said a 2017 study shows that over 70 percent of Nebraskans support legalizing medical cannabis. While supporters span the political, age and geographic spectrums, she said, they all

share a common desire to help those struggling with chronic illnesses who could be helped by medical cannabis.

At one time cannabis was used in 27 different legally available medicines in the U.S., Wishart said, before an outright prohibition movement began in the 1920s. While cocaine can legally

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Public hearing, vote proposed on property tax hikes

Political subdivisions such as counties and schools would be required to hold a public hearing and vote before collecting additional property taxes generated by valuation increases under a bill heard Jan. 24 by the Revenue Committee.

Under LB103, introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Lou Ann Linehan, if the annual assessment of property within a political subdivision would result in an increase of total taxes levied, the political subdivision would be required to reduce its levy for the current tax year



Sen. Lou Ann Linehan

so that the amount of taxes raised is no more than in the previous year.

The bill would apply to community colleges, counties, educational service units, learning communities, municipalities, natural resources districts, sanitary and improvement districts and school districts.

If a governing body decides that a levy increase and an additional property tax request are necessary, it would be required to hold a public hearing on the issue. After the hearing, it could raise the levy by passing a resolution or ordinance.

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Public hearing, vote proposed on property tax hikes

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At least 30 days' notice of the hearing would be required, and notices would include the proposed tax rate and budget increase.

Linehan said the requirements would ensure that political subdivisions cannot collect more in property taxes from one year to the next without public input and action by governing boards.

"It does not keep any taxing entity from raising taxes or raising the levy back up," she said. "It's just [that] they have to vote to do it."

Testifying in support of the bill was Bruce Rieker, who spoke on behalf of seven agriculture organizations including the Nebraska Cattlemen, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and the Nebraska Farm Bureau. Rieker said the bill would help provide relief to the state's agricultural producers, who he said pay the highest property taxes in the country.

The bill would bring more transparency and accountability to local tax

collection while retaining the authority of elected boards to increase their property tax request, Rieker added.

Sarah Curry, policy director at the Platte Institute, also testified in support of the bill.

Nebraska has the seventh highest property taxes in the nation, she said, which a recent Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City report attributed in part to large valuation increases in both rural and urban areas of the state.

One of the most effective ways to substantially reduce property taxes is to limit local governments' property taxing authority, Curry added.

"While LB103 does not immediately reduce the amount of revenue collected at the local level," she said, "it does create an important limitation to prevent automatic tax increases without input from taxpayers."

Testifying in opposition to the bill was Kyle McGowan, speaking on behalf of several education organizations including the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska Association of School Boards and the Nebraska State Education Association.

He said school board budget processes already are transparent and that board members currently should be

discussing their property tax request at annual budget hearings. The separate hearing required under LB103 would be redundant, McGowan said.

"Any school board that's having a budget hearing, their board members should be talking about the revenue versus the levy," he said. "If that's not taking place, I think they're not doing their job."

Lynn Rex, speaking on behalf of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, also testified in opposition to the bill. Political subdivisions are required to certify their annual property tax request by Sept. 20, Rex said, but certified property valuations usually are not available from county assessors until Aug. 20, making it impossible to give 30 days' notice for a public hearing on a levy increase.

Placing hearing notices in local newspapers, as the bill would require, would be prohibitively expensive for many of Nebraska's small communities, she added.

"It's not going to break North Platte, but there are villages out there," Rex said. "This ... would be a big issue for them."

The committee took no immediate action on the bill. ■

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, twitter.com/UnicamUpdate and facebook.com/UnicameralUpdate.

Clerk of the Legislature: Patrick J. O'Donnell

Editor: Kate Heltzel; Writers: Kyle Harpster, Ami Johnson, Mike Malloy; Photographer: Bess Ghormley

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THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE'S OFFICIAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1977

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be prescribed for medical purposes today, cannabis cannot, she said.

“There is growing research and human experience across the world that proves its medical benefits,” Wishart said. “It would be unreasonable, arbitrary and capricious for the [federal] Drug Enforcement Agency to stand between sufferers and this substance.”

To qualify for a medical cannabis registration card under the bill, a person must receive written certification from a health care practitioner with whom they have an established, bonafide relationship. The certification would include a patient’s qualifying diagnosis, which could include:

- cancer;
- glaucoma;
- HIV or AIDS;
- seizures;
- severe and persistent muscle spasms;
- severe or chronic pain;
- Hepatitis C;
- Crohn’s disease or ulcerative colitis;
- opioid addiction;
- PTSD; and
- anxiety.

Registered medical cannabis users could purchase cannabis through regulated in-state dispensaries or home delivery from out-of-state suppliers. Patients would be limited to no more than three ounces of marijuana on their person, eight ounces at home and infused products with no more than 2,400 milligrams of THC.

LB110 would prohibit any registered user of medical cannabis from driving, operating a boat, train or aircraft, or undertaking any task that would be negligent or constitute malpractice while under the influence of cannabis. They also could not work on

transportation property, equipment or facilities.

Medical cannabis would not be covered by the medical assistance program under the bill and private insurers would not be required to cover its costs. Any registered user who sells their medical cannabis would suffer immediate revocation of their registration card.

Representing Nebraska Families 4 Medical Cannabis, Shelley Gillen spoke in support of the bill, saying the state is forcing families of sick children to make incomprehensible decisions to either purchase cannabis illegally or sit by and watch their children suffer.

She said arguments that the state should wait for approval by the Federal Drug Administration—or that medical cannabis is a gateway drug—are nothing short of insulting.

“For over five years now my family has been in the trenches, begging our legislators to help our child,” Gillen said. “Why are we more concerned with protecting the potential [drug] abusers than those who are sick and suffering?”

Retired Marine Carl Munford also spoke in support of LB110. He said exposure to nerve gas while serving in the first Gulf War has led to PTSD and chronic pain. One trip to Colorado proved to him that medical cannabis could replace the 20 medications he currently takes, Munford said.

“Over half of us who fought in that war are disabled due to [nerve gas] exposure,” he said. “The only effective treatment for me has been medical marijuana. During the few weeks I was [in Colorado], it made the biggest difference in the world.”

Opposing the measure was Mary Hilton, who said her daughter continues to experience 30 to 50 seizures

daily, despite medication. Medical cannabis is not the silver bullet desperate families are looking for, she said, adding that much more research is needed on the matter.

“[Physicians] haven’t been trained in marijuana issues in terms of chemical composition or how to counsel someone for use,” she said. “FDA approval would mean we could see all the side effects and know all the interactions with prescribed drugs.”

Col. John Bolduc, superintendent of the Nebraska State Patrol, also opposed the bill. During the time he served in the California State Patrol, he said legalized medical cannabis was diverted to an illegal black market, exacerbating public safety problems.

“The demand for high-grade marijuana, edibles and vape cartridges is extremely high,” Bolduc said. “I fear Nebraska will become a source state rather than just a destination state.”

John Massey, a pain physician testifying on behalf of the Nebraska Medical Association, provided neutral testimony. Massey said the NMA could support a more narrowly-tailored bill that better fits the most recent scientific evidence.

Data shows that medical marijuana can be beneficial for a narrow set of disorders including muscle spasms related to multiple sclerosis, he said, but cannabis often worsens depression, anxiety and PTSD.

“It’s pretty clear that a lot of the information that comes forward and the data and so forth—that the people who bring it forward start with their opinion and then they find their data to support that, and I think that’s a problem in this set of circumstances,” Massey said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill. ■

MEET THE SENATOR

Moser strikes the right note at the Capitol

Sometimes it can get a little loud at Sen. Mike Moser's place of business, but that's part of the deal. Moser, the former mayor of Columbus, has owned Columbus Music Company with his wife, Jan, for the past 42 years. The store has around 150 guitars in stock, and plenty of amps to go with them.

Moser always had a love of music, and still does, and was happy to leave his job selling appliances to take over the music store.

"The opportunity to call my own shots and run my own organization was too tempting to pass up," he said.

He had the drive and a plan, but what he didn't have in 1977 was cash. The previous owner of the store was ready to retire, and knowing that such an opportunity may not come around again, the Mosers decided to sell their home and move into an apartment.

"We'd just built a house, and we needed the equity to get the business loan," he said.

It was a gamble well worth taking. The store is still going strong four decades later, even in an era when online purchases have challenged many brick-and-mortar retailers.

"A lot of people buying a guitar like to have it in their hands," Moser said.

So, too, does Moser. His favorite is a 1982 Fender Stratocaster that he uses on stage with

Cruisin'—a four-piece band that plays about a half-dozen gigs a year. They cover Elvis, the Everly Brothers, some older country and a variety of other music.

"I like songs with harmony and pleasant lyrics," Moser said. "I like the variety of being able to play different genres."

Moser addressed a variety of infrastructure issues during his 12 years as Columbus' mayor. During his administration, the city built one viaduct and approved construction of a second over a mainline railroad track, expanded the water treatment plant and completed an arterial street on the city's north side.

"We tackled a lot of long-festering problems," he said.

He's hoping to bring that problem-solving ability to the Capitol.

Moser succeeds Sen. Paul Schumacher, who served District 22 for the past eight years. Schumacher supported Moser's candidacy, but their relationship predates politics. The two were on the debate team at Platte Junior College, now Central Community College, in Columbus and were part of a four-person squad that competed around the Midwest.

"We'd be gone 15 weekends a year. It was a lot of fun," Moser said.

That's a skillset that no doubt will serve the new senator well, but on one issue there's no debating Moser: anyone, regardless of talent and experience, can pick up a guitar.

"I think anybody can play well enough to have fun," Moser said. ■



Sen. Mike Moser and his wife, Jan, in their Columbus music store. The senator owns several guitars, including this 1982 Fender Stratocaster.

**BANKING, COMMERCE
& INSURANCE**



Real estate fee waiver advanced

Active duty military members and their spouses would not have to pay a fee to obtain a real estate license in Nebraska under a bill advanced from general file Jan. 25.

LB12, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Carol Blood, would waive the \$80 real estate license fee if a military member or their spouse has a valid real estate license from another state or regulatory jurisdiction.



Sen. Carol Blood

The bill was heard by the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee Jan. 22 and advanced to the floor on an 8-0 vote.

Blood said the proposal would remove unnecessary licensure barriers.

“Up to 90 percent of military spouses are either unemployed or underemployed, and that creates multiple problems,” Blood said. “That means our state is not collecting taxes on those individuals, those families have less disposable income to spend in our state and when a serviceman, or woman, is ready to retire and they have an unhappy spouse, they may not stay here in Nebraska because the spouse is unable to find appropriate employment.”

Sen. Sue Crawford of Bellevue spoke in favor of the bill, saying it would help military families that are often on the move.

“This is an important step to take to support our military families,” Crawford said.

Senators voted 43-0 to advance the bill to select file.

EDUCATION



Display of national motto in schools proposed

Nebraska schools would be required to display the national motto in each school building under a bill considered by the Education Committee Jan. 22.

Introduced by Bayard Sen. Steve Erdman, LB73 would require school boards to display the phrase “In God We Trust” in English in each classroom or other prominent place so that every student could see and read it each school day.



Sen. Steve Erdman

The bill would authorize schools to accept contributions to pay for the displays. It also would require the state attorney general to intervene on behalf of a school or other defendant if the bill’s provisions are challenged in court.

Erdman brought an amendment to the hearing that would eliminate that requirement and instead would authorize school districts to request that the attorney general represent them in any lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the displays.

Erdman said that 87 of the state’s 93 county courthouses display or plan to display the phrase, which was adopted as the national motto by a joint resolution of Congress in 1956 and reaffirmed most recently in 2011. LB73 would extend that display to public school buildings, he said, and is not intended to launch a debate about religion or the separation of church and state.

“The courts have ruled on several occasions ... that this is not a religious

statement,” Erdman said. “This is not a statement forming a national religion—this is the national motto.”

Zachary Wahab Cheek, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student, testified in support of the bill, saying that requiring schools to display the phrase would not violate the separation of church and state because Congress adopted it as the national motto.

“I don’t see any legal reasoning against this,” Wahab Cheek said. “I don’t see why this is not compliant with the federal government’s acts.”

Testifying in opposition to the bill was Gwendolen Hines of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln. She said the state should not indoctrinate students with belief in any particular god.

“Children should not be daily exposed to and expected to hold sacred the belief that the Christian God affects our daily lives,” Hines said. “Children should be allowed to make up their own minds about religion and God, and this decision should not be swayed by messages they receive at school.”

Marrienne Williams of Lincoln also testified in opposition, saying that the bill is part of a larger effort to instill Christianity in the state’s public schools. She said the U.S. Supreme Court has not ruled on the motto’s religious significance, meaning that its display in public buildings is not immune to future court challenges.

“‘In God We Trust’ is not a positive message for our schools, as it’s divisive and excludes all those that believe in no God at all,” Williams said.

Colby Coash, speaking on behalf of the Nebraska Association of School Boards, also testified in opposition to the bill. He said it does not provide school boards with practical details such as the number, size or location of the required displays.

Some schools may not be able to raise the needed funds through contri-

butions, Coash added, resulting in an unfunded mandate on public schools.

“There are probably some school boards across the state who would like to do this,” he said. “But as an organization, we feel that that decision should be left to those public school boards.”

The committee took no immediate action on LB73.



Bill would allow certain treatment centers to remain open

Alcohol treatment facilities that use locked rooms would be allowed to remain in business under a bill considered Jan. 24 by the Health and Human Services Committee.

Sen. Anna Wishart of Lincoln introduced LB200 after the state Department of Health and Human Services considered revoking the operating license of The Bridge Behavioral Health facility in Lincoln. Wishart said a new interpretation of state law threatened The Bridge because it locks clients into rooms when they are admitted into civil protective custody.



Sen. Anna Wishart

The Bridge currently is operating under a temporary license.

“This legislation, if enacted, would assure The Bridge and similar facilities would maintain their license moving forward,” Wishart said.

The Bridge’s executive director, Tammy Stevenson, spoke in favor of the bill. Stevenson said her facility admits about 3,600 people a year, all of whom are intoxicated and deemed by police to be dangerous. Removing

locked rooms would reduce the number of people The Bridge could admit, Stevenson said.

Forty percent of those admitted last year had a blood-alcohol level of 0.25 or higher, she said. By law, police cannot house someone with a blood-alcohol level higher than 0.25, she said, and instead must take that person to an emergency room.

“Our medically supervised program provides an alternative to jail,” Stevenson said. “We are caring for individuals who are acutely intoxicated and whose behavior is often unpredictable and hostile.”

Lincoln Police Chief Jeff Bliemeister also spoke in favor of the bill. He said taking intoxicated and dangerous people to The Bridge reduces the chances that they will hurt themselves or someone else.

“It reduces bookings into the Lancaster County Jail and it minimizes stress on emergency rooms,” he said.

Bliemeister said there were 75 assaults at The Bridge in the past 10 years, but that the number of assaults would be much higher without the use of locked rooms.

No one spoke in opposition to the bill, on which the committee took no immediate action.

Standards sought for surgical technicians

The Health and Human Services Committee heard testimony Jan. 23 on a bill that would establish a registry and a minimum standard of competence for surgical technicians.

Sen. Mark Kolterman of Seward said he introduced LB205 because surgical technicians are the only mem-



Sen. Mark Kolterman

bers of a surgical team without a certification of their competency. Kolterman said he found that “unnerving.”

Surgical technicians perform a variety of duties, including sterilizing equipment, preparing operating rooms and passing instruments to doctors during surgery. There are about 800 surgical technicians in Nebraska, Kolterman said.

“I believe there is a specific and significant need for surgical technologists to be regulated by the state for the safety of our citizens,” he said.

Beginning in 2020, the bill would require that surgical technicians:

- be at least 19 years old;
- have a high school or equivalent diploma; and
- be of good moral character.

A surgical technician also would be required to document any felony or misdemeanor convictions when applying to the registry.

Casey Glassburner, president of the Nebraska State Assembly of the Association of Surgical Technologists, spoke in favor of the bill. Unqualified technologists can harm patients, she said, and those who have done so can move from job to job without being tracked.

“There have been instances in other states, specifically Colorado, where there have been surgical technologists that have performed actions potentially harmful to patients and they have moved between facilities,” Glassburner said.

Glassburner, who has been a surgical technician since 2005, said the estimated \$50 annual fee would not be a barrier for technicians to enter the field. Fifteen states have such a registry administered by a board of medicine or a board of health, she said.

Crystal Livingston, an administrator at Doctors Outpatient Surgery Center in Lincoln, also spoke in favor

of LB205. Livingston said that when hiring staff, she's able to perform professional background checks on all medical professionals except for surgical technicians.

Most previous employers will not provide an evaluation of an employee's performance, she said, leaving her unaware if an applicant previously had been fired for misconduct or incompetence.

Maggie Summerfelt, testifying in opposition, said she was unaware of any incidents in Nebraska in which a surgical technician had harmed a patient. Summerfelt, an administrator at Advanced Surgery Center in Omaha, said the bill would make it more difficult to become a surgical technician, a profession that already has low numbers.

"It's not about safety," she said. "I asked my [surgical] techs, and they're all against it."

Tiffany Weeks also opposed the bill. Weeks said she's been looking to hire a surgical technician at Urology Surgical Center in Lincoln since December but has received less than five qualified applications. She added that when a surgical technician isn't available, a nurse is called in, taking him or her away from other duties.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



Study of issues facing Native American women proposed

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Jan. 24 on a bill that seeks to increase investigative resources dedicated to the state's Native American community.

Native American women go miss-

ing at a higher rate nationally than any other demographic, according to Gordon Sen. Tom Brewer, who sponsored LB154.

As introduced, the bill would direct the Nebraska State Patrol to conduct a study focusing on the scope of the problem, identifying barriers and creating partnerships to increase the reporting and investigation of missing Native American women.

Brewer said Native American women are in a unique position because often there is little to no coordination between tribal, county and state law enforcement.

"This failure to communicate between these agencies has left a 'no man's land' where people fall through the cracks and there's no ability to track the numbers," he said.

An amendment to the bill proposed by Brewer would expand the study to include missing Native American children.

The study would be conducted in conjunction with the state Commission on Indian Affairs, tribal and local law enforcement, federally-recognized tribes and urban Indian organizations. The Nebraska State Patrol would be required to submit a final report of its findings to the Executive Board of the Legislature by June 1, 2020.

April Satchell of Lincoln spoke in support of the bill. She said the 2013 Violence Against Women Act gave tribal police criminal jurisdiction over non-indigenous people for crimes committed on tribal land. However, she said, this provision only applies if that perpetrator remains on tribal land, which rarely happens.

"A non-Native man can rape us, murder us, and as long as we don't



Sen. Tom Brewer

know who that person is, the law right now does not protect us," Satchell said. "Why aren't we given the same rights? Why am I standing before this committee and asking for this protection when I'm an American?"

Also speaking in support of the bill was Renee Sans Souci, a member of the Omaha tribe of Nebraska. She said there is an urgent need to gather data and develop a system that is coordinated between federal, state, tribal and urban organizations.

"I maintain a hypervigilance over my children and teach them how to protect themselves in any situation," she said. "I'm sure I'm not the only native mother who does this. It is exhausting."

Representing the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, Scott Shaffer said the state is in nothing short of a "data crisis."

"The issue of missing Native American women and children has long been perceived as a serious problem, but in far too many instances the information has been anecdotal," he said. "In short, it's hard to fix a problem if you don't have an adequate understanding of the problem."

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



Retirement plan revisions considered

The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee heard testimony Jan. 22 on a bill that would make a number of governance and administrative changes to the Public Employees Retirement Board (PERB), Nebraska

Public Employees Retirement System (NPERS), Nebraska Investment Council, Class V School Employees Retirement Plan and the Class V plan's board of trustees.

Introduced by Seward Sen. Mark Kolterman, LB33 would increase from one to two the number of three-year extensions on actuarial contracts that the PERB may issue. It also would exempt legal compliance audit contracts from bidding requirements.

Kolterman said the exemption would be consistent with all other state agencies that are allowed to exempt legal service contracts from bidding requirements.

Among other technical changes, the bill would increase the per diem for PERB members from \$50 to \$75. It also would change the date for presentation of the NPERS and Nebraska Investment Council annual reports to the committee from March 31 to April 10, beginning in 2020.

"The additional time ensures that the Nebraska Investment Council will have adequate time to receive the calendar year investment return data so this information can be included in the annual reports," Kolterman said.

Michael Walden-Newman, state investment officer for the Nebraska Investment Council, testified in support of extending the annual report deadline. The council has added internal audit procedures in recent years that make it difficult to meet existing deadlines, he said.

"This will buy us a couple of [additional] weeks to get that done," Walden-Newman said.

NPERS director Randy Gerke spoke in support of raising the PERB per diem to match that of the Nebras-

ka Investment Council. The per diem has not increased since 2008, he said.

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



Breast pump sales tax exemption proposed

Breast pumps and certain breastfeeding supplies would be exempt from state sales and use tax under a bill heard Jan. 25 by the Revenue Committee.

Introduced by Bellevue Sen. Carol Blood, LB13 would exempt breast pumps purchased for individual home use, breast pump repair and replacement parts, breast pump collection and storage supplies, and nursing pads from the state's 5.5 percent sales and use tax.

A breast pump kit also would qualify for the exemption if the sales price of taxable items of tangible personal property in a kit is 10 percent or less of the kit's total sales price.

Supplies included in the proposed exemption include breast shields, breast pump tubes and valves, backflow protectors, bottles and bottle caps specific to the breast pump, and milk storage bags.

LB13 also would exempt breastfeeding a child from the state's public indecency laws.

The state Department of Revenue estimates that LB13 would decrease state tax revenue by approximately \$203,000 in fiscal year 2019-20 and by approximately \$302,000 in FY2020-21.

Blood said that reducing the cost of breast pumps and breastfeeding supplies would help support Nebraska mothers. Health professionals and public health officials advocate for breastfeeding because it benefits both babies and mothers, she said.

"We need to be sure that our legislation supports this natural act because it is what is best for Nebraska's newest generation," Blood said.

Dr. Sofia Jawed-Wessel, an associate professor at the School of Health and Kinesiology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, testified in support of the bill on her own behalf. She said LB13 would make it easier for working mothers to afford the supplies needed to continue breastfeeding after their maternity leave ends.

Jawed-Wessel added that removing breastfeeding from the state's public indecency laws would help mothers overcome another significant barrier—the stigma and lack of social support for breastfeeding. Although no one in the U.S. has been prosecuted for indecent exposure while breastfeeding, she said, most mothers do not know that, and the fear of being cited can keep them from breastfeeding in public.

Also testifying in support was Andi Curry Grubb, state executive director for Planned Parenthood in Nebraska. She said the bill would ensure that a mother can feed her child in a way that is best for both.

Curry Grubb said that after choosing to breastfeed her child she was shocked to learn how expensive high-quality breast pumps and breastfeeding supplies can be.

"I was not able to purchase the most expensive [pump], and I personally believe that that did have an impact on my ability to breastfeed my child for the length of time I wanted to," she said. "Exempting these supplies from sales tax I do believe would



Sen. Mark Kolterman



Sen. Carol Blood

have helped in some measure when I was making these decisions.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

New upper tax bracket, additional taxes on high incomes proposed

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Jan. 23 on a bill that would create a fifth individual state income tax bracket and additional taxes on incomes of more than \$1 million.

The state’s highest individual income tax bracket, with a rate of 6.84 percent, applies to taxable income of \$29,000 and over for those filing as individuals and \$58,000 and over for those who are married filing jointly.

Introduced by Omaha Sen. Tony Vargas, LB50 would change existing brackets and create a new bracket with a rate of 7.84 percent for tax years beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2019. The new bracket would apply to income of \$100,000 and over for those who are filing as individuals and \$200,000 and over for those who are married filing jointly.

The bill also would impose a 1 percent tax on the portion of a taxpayer’s income that is in excess of \$1 million and a 2 percent tax on the portion that is in excess of \$2 million.

Vargas said the Legislature needs to raise revenue to avoid further budget cuts and to provide services to an aging, increasingly urban population in the coming decades. He said the state also needs to replenish its cash reserve, which has been cut in half over the past few years.

“A modest increase on our state’s top earners is the most fair and equi-

table way to get the revenue we need and provide the services and programs that Nebraskans rely on,” he said.

The bill also would require the state tax commissioner to adjust the income tax brackets and additional taxes on high incomes for inflation.

The state Department of Revenue estimates that LB50 would increase state tax revenue by approximately \$140 million in fiscal year 2019-20 and by approximately \$105 million in FY2020-21.

Renee Fry, executive director of the OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in support of the bill. She said it would reduce taxes on middle-income Nebraskans by expanding the income threshold of the state’s third bracket, which has a rate of 5.01 percent.

Fry said the Legislature could use the revenue raised by LB50 to offset property taxes and pay for other priorities at a time when high-income earners are receiving a tax cut from last year’s federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and related changes to the state tax code.

“It’s likely that the impact of the tax increases in LB50 won’t even be noticed by those high-income earners,” she said.

Joey Adler of the Holland Children’s Movement also testified in support. According to a Holland Children’s Institute survey conducted last September, 78 percent of Nebraskans believe the state’s economic policies have helped only the wealthiest Nebraskans, he said.

The same survey found that 58 percent support raising revenue by increasing some taxes and only 37 percent believe the state’s wealthiest residents are paying their fair share or more.

“There is an obvious disconnect that exists between the economic realities of Nebraska families and where they feel their government is focused,” Adler said.

Testifying in opposition to the bill was Sarah Curry, policy director at the Platte Institute. She said the bill would raise taxes on small businesses, many of which pay taxes on their owners’ individual income tax returns.

Raising income tax rates also could cause an exodus of high-income earners to states that have lower or no income taxes, Curry added. Other states have broadened their sales tax bases and eliminated sales tax exemptions to increase revenue instead of raising income tax rates because of that “sticker shock,” she said.

“I don’t disagree that there are some taxes in Nebraska that do need reforming,” Curry said. “I don’t think that imposing a millionaire’s tax is the appropriate course of action if we want to reduce our barriers to economic growth.”

Also testifying in opposition was Ron Sedlacek, speaking on behalf of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce and the Nebraska Bankers Association. He said increased income tax rates on high-income earners could discourage highly mobile professionals from locating their businesses in Nebraska.

“People expanding old businesses or creating new ones will incorporate the higher costs of doing business into their decision making and steer clear of the state,” he said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Sales tax exemption proposed for menstrual hygiene products

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Jan. 25 on a bill that would exempt tampons and other menstrual hygiene products from state sales and use tax.

LB170, introduced by Omaha



Sen. Tony Vargas

Sen. Megan Hunt, would exempt tampons, panty liners, menstrual cups and sanitary napkins from sales and use tax.



Sen. Megan Hunt

Hunt brought an amendment to the hearing intended to clarify that the exemption would apply only to menstrual hygiene products and not feminine hygiene products such as soap or shampoo.

The state Department of Revenue estimates that LB170 would decrease state tax revenue by approximately \$1 million in fiscal year 2019-20 and by approximately \$1.6 million in FY2020-21.

Hunt said access to menstrual products is limited for vulnerable populations such as the homeless, and health insurance and flexible spending accounts do not cover the cost of those items.

“Menstrual products are indispensable, necessary and vital for the health, well-being and full participation of women and girls in all aspects of society,” she said. “These products are necessities, not luxuries, and I think it’s time our tax code reflected that reality in Nebraska.”

Jen Day of Omaha testified in support of the bill, saying that tampons and pads are essential for women and girls to live their lives with dignity. In the past, she said, she has had to go without tampons because she could not afford them.

“Rushing to the restroom in the middle of the day because you have bled through your pants is not only disruptive but terribly embarrassing,” she said.

Under current law, Day added, Nebraska women and girls have to pay a tax that men do not.

“To categorize menstrual products

as a non-necessity is unfairly shifting economic burden in a clearly gendered way,” she said.

Meg Mikolajczyk, deputy director of Planned Parenthood in Nebraska, also testified in support of the bill. She said one recent study found that nearly two-thirds of women were unable to afford menstrual hygiene products during the previous year.

“This issue disproportionately affects low-income people,” Mikolajczyk said. “Tampons and pads cannot be purchased through government assistance programs and are one of the most requested items at shelters and food banks.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

RULES



Lawmakers adopt new session rules

After considering several changes, senators adopted their permanent rules Jan. 23. The rules of the Legislature govern the legislative process and are adopted at the beginning of each biennium.

Among the changes brought forth by the Rules Committee was a proposal to give the Legislature’s Planning Committee authority to prioritize one bill per session within its jurisdiction. The rule change was adopted on a 25-17 vote.

The Rules Committee also advanced a proposal that would have formalized the amount of debate required before a cloture motion could be accepted by the presiding officer of the Legislature. A successful cloture motion ceases debate and forces a vote on a bill.

Under the proposal, a cloture

motion could be made only after six hours of debate on general file, three hours on select file and one and a half hours on final reading. These time limits reflect the current guidelines used by Speaker Jim Scheer of Norfolk.

Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz, who brought the proposal to the Rules Committee, urged its adoption.

“Having full and fair debate on this floor [allows] our ‘second house’ to follow the debate, understand and engage in the discussion that we’re having about important policy issues,” Bolz said.

Omaha Sen. Sara Howard spoke in support of the proposal, saying it is important to set a precedent for future legislators to follow once the current speaker is no longer in office.

“I do think future legislatures will look at changes we made in the rules and give them some sort of deference,” she said. “Codifying Speaker Scheer’s common practice would be an appropriate solution for how we’re handling cloture currently.”

Sen. Mike Hilgers of Lincoln opposed the measure. He said continuing to allow the speaker of the Legislature leeway in managing the legislative agenda is necessary.

“We have a limited amount of time in this body and a lot of work to do,” Hilgers said. “We should give discretion to the speaker on how to move things through the body.”

After extensive debate, Bolz withdrew her proposed rule change from consideration.

Finally, senators considered a proposal by North Platte Sen. Mike Groene that would have required public votes for election of the Speaker of the Legislature and chairpersons of all 14 standing committees.

Currently, these votes are conducted by secret ballot.

Groene said voters expect transparency from their representatives on all matters.

“You should be proud of who you vote for,” he said. “You should not only be able to defend it with your colleagues, but your constituents.”

Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha opposed the change. He said there is no compelling reason to change the process for electing legislative leadership.

“I look at the rules as the collective wisdom of the people who have served in this institution before us,” Lathrop said. “This system of choosing chairmen by secret ballot has worked for this institution for decades.”

The Groene proposal was defeated on a 22-25 vote. Following adoption of an additional technical change, the rules were adopted 36-9.

TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

More flexibility proposed for roads projects

Members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee heard testimony Jan. 22 on a bill that would allow the Nebraska Department of Transportation to complete roads projects more efficiently.

Under LB82, introduced by Henderson Sen. Curt Friesen, NDOT could apply for pre-approval to use practical road design standards that might not meet all current statutory design standards, but that would provide significant benefits to users at a reasonable cost.

NDOT Director Kyle Schneweis



Sen. Curt Friesen

spoke in support of the bill, saying there already is a system in place to apply for a one-time, project-specific relaxation of standards from the Nebraska Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards (NBCS).

The bill would allow the department, counties or municipalities to apply for programmatic pre-approvals, he said, which could apply to an entire category of roads projects that are materially similar.

“Practical design provides the Department of Transportation’s professional engineers the flexibility to safely and efficiently modernize our transportation system to best serve Nebraskans,” Schneweis said.

Roger Figard, NBCS chairman, also testified in support of LB82. He said it would not reduce or eliminate NDOT’s responsibility to meet statutory requirements.

“This continues and supports the major updates and changes the board has incorporated over the last 10 years,” Figard said. “Updating design standards would allow our dollars at the city and county levels to go much farther.”

The bill also would allow each county and municipality to electronically certify completion of one-year and six-year road improvement plans required annually by state law, rather than submitting hard copies of both plans to NBCS.

The certification must be included in the county or municipality’s public record and be adopted by its governing board.

No one testified in opposition to LB82. The committee voted 8-0 to advance the bill to general file.

URBAN AFFAIRS

Bill would mandate rental inspections

Rental properties in Omaha and Lincoln would be inspected regularly under a bill considered Jan. 22 by the Urban Affairs Committee.

Omaha Sen. Justin Wayne introduced LB85, which would require that most residential rental properties in metropolitan and primary class cities be registered with the city and inspected at least every three years. Omaha is the state’s only metropolitan class city and Lincoln is the only primary class city.



Sen. Justin Wayne

Properties owned or inspected by a housing agency would be exempt. Cities would be allowed to charge landlords a fee to cover the cost of the inspections, and levy fines on buildings that are not complying with local building codes. Unpaid fees and fines would become a lien on the applicable property.

Wayne said LaVista and South Sioux City have similar programs, while the state of Iowa requires regular inspections of rental properties in cities of at least 15,000.

Wayne said he introduced the bill after roughly 500 immigrants living at the Yale Park apartment complex in north Omaha were forced to evacuate last fall because of gas leaks, unsafe electrical circuits and rat and insect infestations.

Substandard housing is a common worry among the residents of north Omaha, Wayne said, some of whom are afraid to raise complaints. The bill

is necessary, he said, because landlords have failed to self-regulate.

“We have regulations on all types of things that get passed on and we do it in the name of health, safety and what we deem Nebraska values,” Wayne said. “That’s all this bill’s trying to do.”

Constance Jones testified in support of the bill, saying it would prevent situations like the one she experienced after renting an apartment in north Omaha last October. Jones said that her apartment had uneven stairs, no heating on the second floor and was infested with cockroaches. The city conducted an inspection at her request that revealed 29 code violations, she said. A month after the inspection, Jones said her landlord terminated her lease.

“Please help me to understand how that’s not retaliation?” Jones said.

Paw Htoo, who has served as an advocate and interpreter for the refugees from Myanmar who lived in Yale Park, said many residents there felt as if they were living in another refugee camp. Htoo said the most harrowing story she heard was of a man who awoke in the night when the ceiling of his apartment collapsed on him.

Htoo added that many resident felt ignored or taken advantage of because of the language barrier.

Kennetta Wainwright, who rents an apartment in Omaha, spoke in opposition to the bill, which she said would raise rents for all tenants.

“These charges will be passed on to the renter,” Wainwright said. “If

you do this, you’re going to have tent cities.”

Lynn Fisher, a landlord in Lincoln, also spoke against the bill. He said he had sympathy for those who have lived in substandard housing, but said the law should target negligent landlords rather than burdening all property owners.

“The challenge with the government trying to solve the problem is that is always costs more,” Fisher said.

Omaha Planning Director David Fanslau said the city is working to improve housing enforcement. Fanslau questioned the need for LB85, which he said could cost Omaha up to \$4 million per year to implement.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

NEW BILLS

Bill Introducer One-line description
January 22, 2019

LB479	Wishart	Prohibit sexual abuse of a detainee and change provisions relating to sexual abuse of an inmate or parolee
LB480	Quick	State intent relating to appropriations to local public health departments
LB481	Bolz	State intent relating to an appropriation to the Department of Health and Human Services
LB482	Erdman	Provide for an adjustment to the assessed value of destroyed real property
LB483	Erdman	Change the valuation of agricultural land and horticultural land
LB484	Lowe	Change provisions relating to assault on certain employees and officers
LB485	Lowe	State intent relating to an appropriation for the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center-Kearney
LB486	Lowe	Adopt the Veteran and Active Duty Supportive Postsecondary Institution Act
LB487	La Grone	Require the Nebraska Workers’ Compensation Court to adopt an evidence-based drug formulary
LB488	Howard	Adopt school district requirements for mental health education and change school district requirements for drug awareness and prevention
LB489	Howard	Require registration for the prescription drug monitoring system
LB490	Wayne	Consolidate offices of clerk of the district court and clerk magistrates
LB491	Wayne	Authorize punitive damages as prescribed
LB492	Wayne	Adopt the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act
LB493	Wayne	Change provisions relating to property tax exemptions under the Nebraska Housing Agency Act
LB494	Wayne	Appropriate funds to the Department of Transportation
LB495	Wayne	Provide for collection of data on student disciplinary actions
LB496	Wayne	Increase penalties for tampering with witnesses, informants, jurors, or physical evidence and change provisions relating to discovery in criminal cases

NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB497	Friesen	Adopt the School District Property Tax Authority Act and change revenue and taxation provisions
LB498	Wishart	Provide for medical assistance coverage of family planning services as prescribed
LB499	Morfeld	Provide requirements for services by psychologists
LB500	Morfeld	Prohibit participation in pretrial diversion programs for certain driving under the influence and driver's license offenses
LB501	Hunt	Require insurance coverage for in vitro fertilization procedures
LB502	Hunt	Adopt the Limited Immigration Inquiry Act
LB503	Hunt	Eliminate requirement that physician be physically present in same room when an abortion is performed
LB504	Hunt	Provide for enhanced penalties and a civil action for crimes committed because of a victim's gender identity or association with a person of a certain gender identity and include strangulation in the offenses eligible for enhancement
LB505	Brewer	Change provisions relating to support order payments and the State Disbursement Unit
LB506	Briese	Adopt the Property Tax Request Limitation Act
LB507	Briese	Impose sales tax on certain services and eliminate sales tax exemptions
LB508	Briese	Impose sales and use taxes on certain services, eliminate sales tax exemptions, and use the increased revenue for property tax credits.
LB509	McCollister	Redefine the terms net metering and qualified facility and change powers and duties of a local distribution utility
LB510	McCollister	Change applicability of Sex Offender Registration Act to certain out-of-state juvenile adjudications
LB511	Brewer	Authorize adjustments to state employee work schedules to participate in approved youth mentoring programs
LB512	Linehan	Change revenue and taxation provisions
LB513	Briese	Change requirements for the issuance of certain school district bonds
LB514	Morfeld	Change issuing a bad check provisions to include obtaining child support credit and spousal support credit
LB515	Vargas	Change provisions relating to the Student Discipline Act
LB516	Pansing Brooks	Change provisions relating to child abuse, the Child Protection and Family Safety Act, human trafficking, and child welfare services
LB517	Pansing Brooks	Change human trafficking civil damage provisions
LB518	Linehan	Adopt the Support for Trafficking Survivors Act
LB519	Slama	Change statutes of limitations for certain sexual and trafficking offenses and authorize interception of communications relating to such offenses
LB520	McDonnell	Provide requirements for safety standards and operating procedures for road construction and maintenance in cities of the metropolitan class
LB521	McDonnell	Change and eliminate provisions relating to automated vehicles
LB522	Linehan	Name and change the purpose of the County Civil Service Commission Act, change provisions relating to commission membership and duties, and provide for appointment of a human resources director
LB523	Linehan	Provide a documentary stamp tax exemption for certain deeds and a property tax exemption for certain charitable organizations
LB524	Dorn	Change provisions relating to annexations under the Nebraska Budget Act
LB525	Dorn	Change provisions relating to the sale of county land in fee simple
LB526	McDonnell	Change provisions relating to compensation for temporary disability under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
LB527	Bolz	Adopt the Customized Job Training Act
LB528	Hilkemann	Change provisions relating to use of pharmaceutical agents and use of certain treatments and procedures by optometrists

NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB529	Groene	Change provisions relating to a property tax exemption for hospitals
LB530	Groene	Change the valuation of agricultural land and horticultural land for property tax purposes
LB531	Vargas	Create a fund and provide for a transfer of funds
LB532	Cavanaugh	Change provisions relating to harassment protection orders, sexual assault protection orders, and domestic abuse protection orders
LB533	Cavanaugh	Change terminology related to marriage
LB534	Cavanaugh	Require public postsecondary educational institutions to conduct an annual sexual assault climate survey
LB535	Cavanaugh	Prohibit employment discrimination by qualified businesses under the Nebraska Advantage Act
LB536	Pansing Brooks	Adopt the Nebraska Uniform Directed Trust Act
LB537	Lathrop	Change provisions relating to actions with regard to the performance or conduct of a certificated school district employee
LB538	Lathrop	Change provisions relating to possession of a gambling device and provide for approval of certain mechanical amusement devices by the Department of Revenue
LB539	Walz	Redefine abuse under the Adult Protective Services Act
LB540	Walz	Eliminate the termination date of a developmental disability service
LB541	Walz	Provide a duty for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to bone marrow
LB542	Lowe	Adopt the Firearm Safety Act and provide a tax credit
LB543	Lowe	Change provisions relating to state contracts, state vehicles, and state personnel
LB544	Linehan	Adopt the Meadowlark Scholarship Act
LB545	Wayne	Change income tax provisions relating to the Nebraska educational savings plan trust and authorize employer contributions to the trust
LB546	Wishart	Create Spay and Neuter Awareness license plates and a low-income spay and neuter grant program
LB547	Wishart	Create the College Savings Plan Matching Grant Program
LB548	Howard	Prohibit restraining animals during certain disasters or weather events
LB549	Brandt	Provide for creation and maintenance of a geographic information system map as prescribed under the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act
LB550	Vargas	Require voter approval of fees and taxes on wireless services and eliminate the Prepaid Wireless Surcharge Act
LB551	McDonnell	State intent relating to funding for development districts
LB552	McDonnell	Change appropriations relating to the Nebraska Tree Recovery Program
LB553	Clements	Require reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability to have an assistance animal in a dwelling as prescribed
LB554	Wishart	Change provisions relating to prescription drugs not on the preferred drug list under the Medical Assistance Act
LB555	Hunt	Adopt the Sexual Assault Emergency Care Act and provide for disciplinary action against hospitals
LB556	Howard	Change provisions relating to the prescription drug monitoring program
LB557	Lindstrom	Change provisions relating to prescriptions for controlled substances
LB558	Hilkemann	Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services
LB559	Arch	Change provisions relating to the State Anatomical Board
LB560	Geist	Change provisions relating to tax credits under the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act
LB561	Geist	Adopt updated audit standards under the Legislative Performance Audit Act
LB562	Stinner	State intent relating to University of Nebraska facilities and appropriations
LB563	Bolz	Adopt the Access College Early Tech Promise Program Act
LB564	Bolz	Change the Civic and Community Center Financing Act
LB565	Bolz	State legislative intent relating to a designated beneficiary determination under certain retirement systems

NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB566	Crawford	Provide for notice to the Legislature if the Department of Insurance applies for a 1332 waiver from requirements of federal law as prescribed
LB567	Morfeld	Adopt the Prescription Drug Cost Transparency Act
LB568	Morfeld	Provide for mental health first aid training for school districts and change provisions relating to the use of lottery funds
LB569	Morfeld	Adopt the Out-of-Network Consumer Protection, Transparency, and Accountability Act
LB570	Walz	Change provisions relating to an advisory committee and a strategic plan for services for persons with disabilities
LB571	Walz	Provide for a data base of grievance procedures from assisted-living facilities
LB572	Walz	Provide authority for the public counsel over an assisted-living facility
LB573	Brewer	Change provisions relating to agreements under the Intergovernmental Risk Management Act
LB574	Brewer	Change a provision relating to regular meetings of a metropolitan utilities district
LB575	Brewer	Require school district policies regarding the provision of information to and access by military recruiters
LB576	Lathrop	Change provisions relating to presumptions regarding causes of death or disability of certain firefighters and firefighter-paramedics
LB577	Vargas	Provide additional powers to the Commissioner of Labor related to investigations under and violations of the Employee Classification Act
LB578	La Grone	Provide for venue of legal proceedings challenging laws regarding redistricting
LB579	Quick	Authorize issuance of ignition interlock permits to persons who caused serious bodily injury while driving under the influence
LB580	Hilkemann	Change provisions relating to landfill disposal fees and rebates under the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act
LB581	Albrecht	Require the use of generally accepted accounting principles in preparing budgets under the Nebraska Budget Act
LB582	Brewer	Change provisions relating to possession of a stolen firearm
LB583	Hilgers	Provide powers for certain counties under the Transportation Innovation Act
LB584	Hilgers	Change farm winery provisions and provide for a promotional special designated license
LB585	Friesen	Create the Renewable Fuel Infrastructure Program, eliminate a sales tax exemption, and provide for grants
LB586	Stinner	Change an appropriation
LB587	Stinner	Change a provision relating to the Cash Reserve Fund
LB588	Stinner	Change the local effort rate pursuant to the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
LR12CA	Vargas	Constitutional amendment to change legislators' salaries

January 23, 2019

LB589	Chambers	Prohibit peace officers from serving as school resource officers
LB590	Briese	Provide for reporting of staff training for early childhood education
LB591	Briese	Provide for alcohol impact zones and provide duties for the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission
LB592	Briese	Provide additional powers to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission to suspend sales of alcoholic liquor
LB593	Briese	Change and eliminate provisions relating to medical assistance reimbursement claims and liens and provide for retroactivity
LB594	Blood	Provide for a deceptive trade practice relating to meat under the Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act
LB595	Albrecht	Change Office of Dispute Resolution to Office of Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution and change powers and duties of the office

NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB596	Quick	Adopt the Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Public Health
LB597	Walz	Require reporting of incidents and development of policies for assisted-living facilities
LB598	Walz	Provide the Public Counsel with access to data from the Adult Protective Services Central Registry
LB599	Walz	Provide data to the Public Counsel from the Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services
LB600	Walz	Change a time limit relating to the authority of the deputy public counsel for institutions
LB601	Lindstrom	Change a property tax exemption relating to educational, religious, charitable, and cemetery organizations
LB602	Lindstrom	Adopt the Domestic Stock Insurance Company Division Act
LB603	Lindstrom	Change automatic teller machine fees
LB604	Lindstrom	Authorize High-Wage Jobs and Capital Investment Creation Fund entities and provide grants, loans, and economic assistance to such entities
LB605	Lindstrom	Adopt the Renewable Chemical Production Tax Credit Act
LB606	Groene	Provide for water augmentation projects and retention of water rights as prescribed
LB607	Kolterman	Change provisions relating to nail technology and body art
LB608	La Grone	Change and eliminate provisions regarding counting methods under the Election Act
LB609	La Grone	Provide for reimbursement of actual costs of a rental vehicle by county and local governments
LB610	Lindstrom	Adopt the College Savings Tax Credit Act
LB611	Brandt	Require train crews of at least two individuals
LB612	Erdman	Authorize the display of roadside memorials
LB613	Crawford	Change application deadlines under certain tax incentive programs
LB614	Crawford	Change revenue and taxation provisions
LB615	Hilgers	Reduce income tax rates and provide for certain transfers from the Cash Reserve Fund
LB616	Hilgers	Provide for build-finance projects under the Build Nebraska Act and the Transportation Innovation Act
LB617	Hilgers	Change provisions of the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act
LB618	Hilgers	Change provisions relating to electioneering
LB619	Kolowski	Require coverage under insurance policies for mental health services delivered in schools
LB620	Kolowski	Provide for enforcement of handheld wireless communication devices as a primary action
LB621	Kolowski	Change provisions relating to solar energy and wind energy, declare certain instruments void and unenforceable, and provide for a civil cause of action
LB622	Williams	Change provisions and provide for pooled collateral under the Public Funds Deposit Security Act
LB623	Williams	Change provisions relating to qualifications under the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act
LB624	Williams	Change terms of members of the Nebraska Craft Brewery Board
LB625	Pansing Brooks	Appropriate funds to the Department of Correctional Services
LB626	Pansing Brooks	Create the position of veterans' workforce development coordinator in the Department of Labor
LB627	Pansing Brooks	Prohibit discrimination based upon sexual orientation and gender identity
LB628	Pansing Brooks	Increase the earned income tax credit
LB629	Pansing Brooks	Provide criteria for recipients of Title X grant funds
LB630	Morfeld	Create the offense of sexual extortion and change elements and penalties for sexual offenses
LB631	Morfeld	Create the Medicaid Expansion Implementation Task Force
LB632	Hughes	Clarify a statutory reference relating to rural water districts
LB633	Wishart	Change provisions relating to real property owner information available to the public
LB634	Hilkemann	Require three-point safety belt systems for school vehicles as prescribed
LB635	Hilkemann	Change membership of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission
LB636	Stinner	Create the Financial Condition of Counties and Municipalities Task Force

NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB637	Stinner	Authorize sales of tourism promotional products by the Nebraska Tourism Commission
LB638	Stinner	Change provisions relating to the transfer of excess General Fund net receipts to the Cash Reserve Fund
LB639	Stinner	Adopt the H3 Careers Scholarship Act
LB640	Howard	Include study relative to the Holocaust and other genocides in provisions relating to multicultural education
LB641	McDonnell	Provide for grants under the Telecommunication Relay System Act for a 211 Information and Referral Network
LB642	McDonnell	Create the Brain Injury Trust Fund
LB643	McDonnell	Change death and disability-related prima facie evidence provisions relating to emergency responders
LB644	McDonnell	Adopt the Nebraska Workforce Diploma Act
LB645	McDonnell	Change provisions of the Medical Assistance Act
LB646	Chambers	Eliminate cash bail bonds, appearance bonds, and related provisions
LB647	Wayne	Include virtual school students in the state aid to schools formula
LB648	Wayne	Change the Community Development Law
LB649	Wayne	Eliminate a termination date relating to the Medical Cannabidiol Pilot Study
LB650	Wayne	Adopt the Teach for Nebraska Program Act and change provisions relating to the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund and the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund
LB651	Wayne	Change funding provisions for the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program
LB652	Wayne	Change a penalty for controlled substance possession as prescribed
LB653	Wayne	Adopt the Healthy Kids Act and require tests for lead-based hazards in housing
LB654	Wayne	Provide for a type 1 diabetes pilot study
LB655	Wayne	Change division fence provisions
LB656	Wayne	Adopt the Nebraska Education Formula, terminate the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act, and change levy limits and the base limitation for school districts
LB657	Wayne	Adopt the Nebraska Hemp Act
LB658	Wayne	Prohibit executive director of Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice from taking certain disciplinary actions
LB659	Wayne	Remove cannabidiol from list of controlled substances
LB660	Brewer	Change provisions relating to the executive director and chief investigator of the Nebraska Brand Committee
LB661	Friesen	Change income tax provisions and the distribution of certain income tax revenue
LB662	Friesen	Terminate the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
LB663	Friesen	Change provisions relating to Nebraska adjusted basis
LB664	Friesen	Provide for certain income tax deductions
LB665	Friesen	Authorize the use of electric foot scooters
LB666	Dorn	Change Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund provisions and provide for a transfer to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska for a program to train first responders and emergency medical technicians in rural areas
LB667	Vargas	Adopt the Youth Opportunities in Learning and Occupations Act
LB668	Vargas	Adopt the Alternative Certification for Quality Teachers Act
LB669	Kolterman	Change Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund provisions and state intent relating to an appropriation for pancreatic cancer research
LB670	Linehan	Adopt the Opportunity Scholarships Act and provide tax credits
LB671	Linehan	Provide for sparsity aid in the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act
LB672	Clements	Change provisions of the Motor Vehicle Registration Act relating to a named driver insurance policy
LB673	Hilkemann	Change Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund provisions and state intent relating to an appropriation for data collection and analysis on antimicrobial resistant bacteria

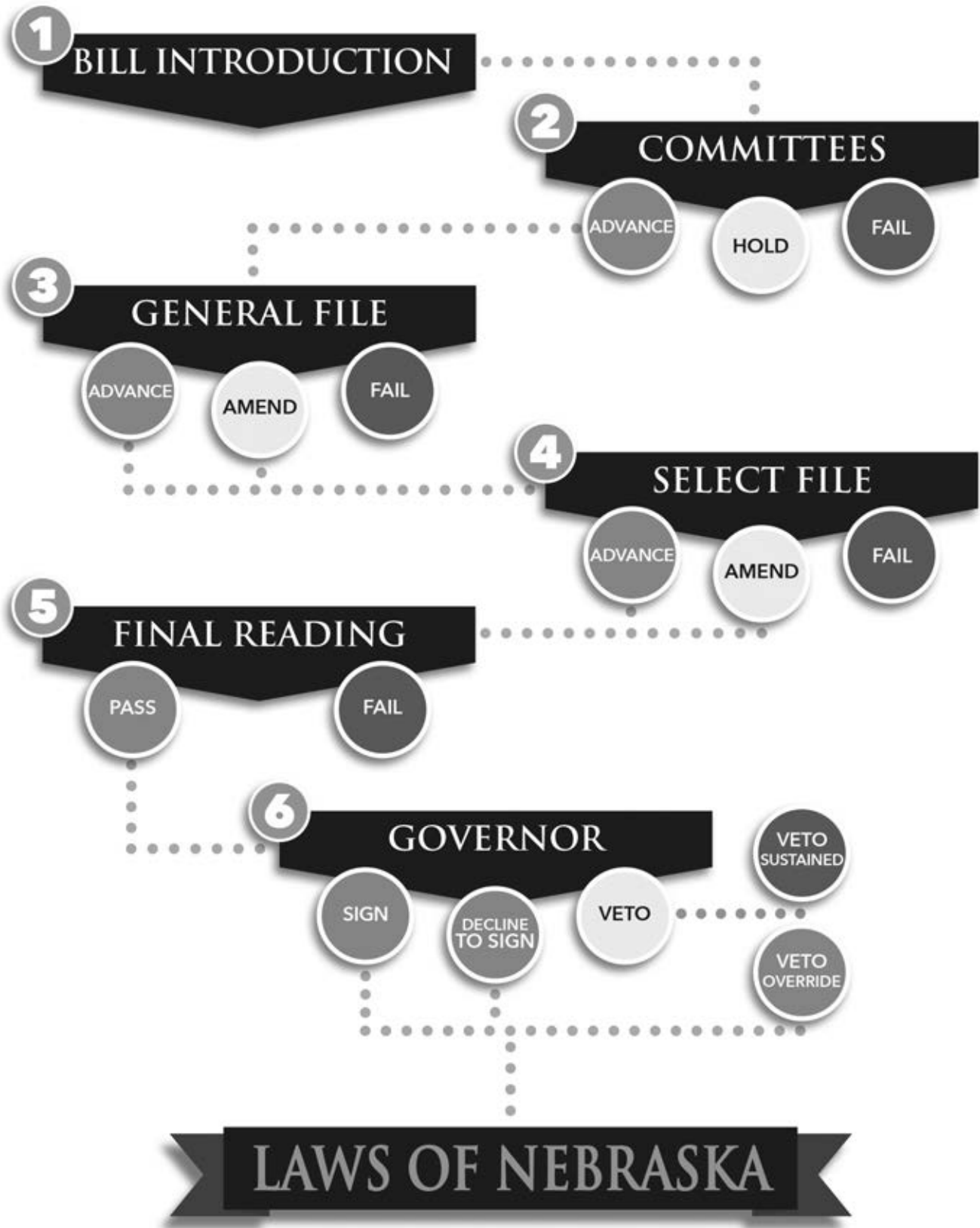
NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB674	Linehan	Change the base limitation for school districts
LB675	Groene	Change provisions relating to education
LB676	Groene	Change provisions relating to school districts and the reorganization of school districts
LB677	Groene	Change provisions of the Property Tax Credit Act and provide school district property tax relief aid
LB678	Vargas	Create the Volkswagen Settlement Cash Fund and provide duties for the Department of Environmental Quality
LB679	DeBoer	Create the School Financing Review Commission
LB680	DeBoer	Adopt the Uniform Civil Remedies for Unauthorized Disclosure of Intimate Images Act
LB681	Hilgers	Change provisions relating to legislative subpoenas
LB682	Vargas	Provide for taxing spirits as proof gallons
LB683	Kolterman	Provide for a work plan under the Class V School Employees Retirement Act relating to a one-time lump sum payment to certain retirement system members
LB684	Lathrop	Change provisions relating to post-release supervision for Class IV felonies
LB685	Lathrop	Prohibit the denial or delay of a remedy by due course of law as prescribed
LB686	Lathrop	Change provisions relating to correctional system emergencies
LB687	Vargas	Provide for voter registration of applicants for driver's licenses and state identification cards
LB688	Cavanaugh	Provide for contributions to the Nebraska educational savings plan trust from income tax refunds
LB689	Cavanaugh	Prohibit discrimination by a seller or landlord on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or citizenship status in any real estate transaction or lease
LB690	Cavanaugh	Adopt the Healthy Pregnancies for Incarcerated Women Act
LB691	Cavanaugh	Provide for Ornate Box Turtle Conservation license plates
LB692	Cavanaugh	Change provisions relating to commemorative certificates for a nonviable birth
LB693	Halloran	Prohibit the selling, renting, or conveying of telephone numbers
LB694	Vargas	Change matching fund requirements under the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act
LB695	Groene	Change provisions relating to the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act, the Property Tax Credit Act, levy limits, and the base limitation
LB696	Bostelman	Change provisions relating to Military Honor Plates
LB697	Bostelman	Eliminate a fee for issuance of military related license plates
LB698	Bostelman	Change load provisions and penalties for commercial motor vehicles and commercial trailers
LB699	Bostelman	Change provisions relating to transporter plates
LB700	Bostelman	Provide for decommissioning and reclamation of a wind energy conversion system
LB701	Bostelman	Require billing for emergency medical services
LB702	Cavanaugh	Adopt the Campus Safety Act
LB703	Vargas	Appropriate funds to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
LB704	McCollister	Provide for a request for proposals for renewable energy for state-owned buildings and a study regarding state vehicles
LB705	Murman	Provide for distribution of funds upon death from an achieve a better life experience account
LB706	Lindstrom	Authorize a one-year freeze of cost-of-living adjustments under the Class V School Employees Retirement Act
LB707	Erdman	Authorize the Tax Equalization and Review Commission to hold certain hearings by videoconference and telephone conference
LB708	Brandt	Adopt the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act
LB709	Cavanaugh	Provide for a place to express breast milk in the State Capitol
LB710	Cavanaugh	Change provisions relating to tobacco including sales, crimes, a tax increase, and distribution of funds
LB711	Cavanaugh	Change provisions relating to voting qualifications for any person convicted of a felony
LB712	Friesen	Prohibit joint entities and joint public agencies from taking action against representative for their speech

NEW BILLS

Bill	Introducer	One-line description
LB713	Vargas	Provide for long-term accountability from the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
LB714	Crawford	Adopt the Nebraska Industrial New Job-training Act and authorize the transfer of certain withholding taxes
LB715	Hilkemann	Appropriate funds to University of Nebraska for medicaid research center
LB716	Hilkemann	Create the Medicaid Cost and Quality Data and Analysis Center of Nebraska
LB717	Brewer	Provide requirements for state contracts regarding hours billed for computer services
LB718	Hunt	Require additional polling places prior to elections in certain counties
LB719	Hughes	Provide for reporting to the National Motor Vehicle Title Information system for wreckers and salvage dealers
LB720	Kolterman	Adopt the ImagiNE Nebraska Act and provide tax incentives
LB721	Lindstrom	Provide for insurance eligibility for spouses and dependents of deceased or disabled firefighters of cities of the first-class
LB722	Albrecht	Authorize seizure of gray devices under the Nebraska County and City Lottery Act
LB723	Vargas	Change taxes on manufacturers and wholesalers under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
LB724	Vargas	Provide requirements for boards of directors in order to qualify for incentives under the Nebraska Advantage Act
LB725	Walz	Provide for reimbursements to school districts and educational service units for mental health expenditures
LB726	Walz	Require a protocol for individuals eligible for medical parole to apply for medical assistance
LB727	Walz	Provide duties for school districts, the State Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services with respect to mental health services
LB728	Walz	Provide duties relating to school meals
LB729	Walz	Adopt the Soil Health and Productivity Incentive Act
LB730	Walz	Change, transfer, and eliminate provisions relating to advanced practice registered nurses
LB731	Hunt	Change provisions relating to new or updated comprehensive plans adopted by municipalities
LB732	Vargas	Adopt the Mobile Food Unit Act and change fees for a mobile food unit
LB733	Kolowski	Provide and change requirements for polling places
LB734	Hunt	Provide for licensure of charter bus services under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
LB735	Chambers	Provide a duty for the Department of Health and Human Services
LB736	Murman	Provide restrictions on occupation taxes, license fees, and regulation by counties and municipalities
LB737	Vargas	Change requirements for an annual status report relating to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund
LB738	Wayne	Change individual income tax brackets and rates
LB739	Vargas	Change procedures and requirements for use of restrictive housing of inmates
LR13	Murman	Urge federal agencies of the U.S. Government responsible for food labeling to establish and enforce standards for nomenclature of plant-based imitation milk and dairy food products
LR14CA	Wayne	Constitutional amendment to authorize municipalities to pledge property taxes for up to twenty years if more than one-half of the property in a redevelopment project is extremely blighted
LR15	Pansing Brooks	Provide the Executive Board of the Legislative Council appoint a special committee to be known as the Workforce Development Committee of the Legislature ■

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Monday, Jan. 28

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

LB221 (La Grone) Change provisions relating to limitations on powers under the Title Insurers Act

LB42 (Hilkemann) Provide certain responsibilities and a duty under the Condominium Property Act and a duty under the Nebraska Condominium Act

LB78 (Williams) Change provisions of the Nebraska Uniform Protected Series Act and the Nebraska Uniform Limited Liability Company Act

LB70 (M. Hansen) Adopt the Uniform Voidable Transactions Act and eliminate the Uniform Fraudulent Transfer Act

Business & Labor

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB102 (Wayne) Change references from Big Twelve to Big Ten Conference in provisions requiring a stipend or restricting hours of participation for intercollegiate athletes

LB139 (Kolterman) Change provisions relating to a data base of contractors under the Contractor Registration Act

LB301 (Lowe) Transfer duties under the Boiler Inspection Act, the Nebraska Amusement Ride Act, and the Conveyance Safety Act from the Department of Labor to the State Fire Marshal

LB306 (Crawford) Change provisions relating to good cause for voluntarily leaving employment under the Employment Security Law

LB359 (M. Hansen) Change provisions in the Employment Security Law and Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act and relating to appointment of the meatpacking industry worker rights coordinator

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

LB241 (Bolz) Provide for teacher mentoring program grants using income from solar and wind agreements on school lands

LB281 (McCollister) Provide for posting by public schools of a toll-free number set up to report child abuse or neglect

LB251 (Walz) Adopt the Child Hunger and Workforce Readiness Act

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

Appointment: Joyce Hasselbalch - Neb. Arts Council

Appointment: Mike Hunsberger - State Electrical Board

Appointment: Jeffrey Bomberger - Neb. Commission on Problem Gambling

Appointment: Sarah Peetz - Neb. Arts Council

LB65 (Groene) Authorize a licensing exception under the State Electrical Act

LB56 (Lowe) Change special designated licensure provisions under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act

LB75 (Williams) Change terms of members of the Nebraska Grape and Winery Board

Transportation & Telecommunications

Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB8 (Blood) Allow physician medical directors to display certain vehicle lights as prescribed

LB10 (Blood) Authorize the operation of lighted-billboard motor vehicles

LB80 (Friesen) Change motor vehicle identification inspection provisions

LB81 (Friesen) Change provisions relating to special stops at railroad grade crossings under the Nebraska Rules of the Road

Tuesday, Jan. 29

Agriculture

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB243 (Gragert) Create the Healthy Soils Task Force

LB321 (B. Hansen) Update certain standards and regulations and change Director of Agriculture duties and Department of Agriculture fee and permit provisions under the Weights and Measures Act

LB333 (Slama) Update federal references and redefine a term under the Nebraska Milk Act

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

LB355 (La Grone) Change provisions relating to money transmitters, installment sales, and mortgage loans

LB258 (Williams) Change provisions relating to banking and finance

LB259 (Lindstrom) Change consumer protection provisions under the Securities Act of Nebraska, the Commodity Code, and the Consumer Rental Purchase Agreement Act

LB188 (Lindstrom) Change the rate of interest charge on loans under the Nebraska Installment Loan Act

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

Appointment: Linda Poole - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment

Appointment: Jeffrey Nellhaus - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment

Appointment: Robert Henson - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment

LB399 (Slama) Change the name and provisions related to the committee on Americanism

LB256 (Arch) Authorize participation in insurance coverage for members of a community college board of governors

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1507 - 12:00 PM

Appointment: Allen Simpson - Public Employees Retirement Board

Appointment: Gail Werner-Robertson - Neb. Investment Council

LB32 (Kolterman) Change defined contribution benefit investment options as prescribed under the County Employees Retirement Act and State Employees Retirement Act

Transportation & Telecommunications

Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB111 (Howard) Change a certificate of title application signature requirement as prescribed

LB142 (Geist) Change provisions relating to driving automation systems and liability

LB156 (Brewer) Provide for the operation of former military vehicles

LB192 (McCollister) Change provisions relating to veteran designations on operators' licenses and state identification cards

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

LB57 (Morfeld) Prohibit regulation of short-term rentals and provide for taxation agreements

LB121 (Crawford) Change provisions on limits on indebtedness from direct borrowing by cities and villages

LB160 (Quick) Redefine terms under the Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act to include early childhood infrastructure development and quality early childhood care and education programs for certain cities and villages

LB66 (M. Hansen) Provide for an early childhood element in a comprehensive plan developed by a city

LB11 (Blood) Provide for interlocal agreements regarding nuisances

Wednesday, Jan. 30

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

LB152 (Brewer) State rights of Nebraska National Guard members and provide for confidentiality of member's residential addresses

LB214 (La Grone) Authorize cession of certain land to the federal government

LB223 (Albrecht) Provide a state-sponsored insurance program for members of the Nebraska National Guard

LB450 (Wishart) Change tuition assistance provisions for National Guard members, spouses, and children

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

LB25 (Kolterman) Provide for additional fees under the Uniform Credentialing Act and create the Patient Safety Cash Fund

LB37 (Hilkemann) Change the Podiatry Practice Act to authorize a physician assistant to assist a podiatrist

Judiciary

Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB113 (Blood) Require the Department of Correctional Services to disclose certain records

LB94 (Wayne) Designate Nebraska State Patrol as agency to investigate

criminal activity within Department of Correctional Services correctional facilities

LB233 (Wayne) Prohibit bringing a cell phone into a detention facility

LB340 (Lathrop) Change provisions related to female offenders in incarceration work camps

LB438 (Wishart) Designate Nebraska State Patrol as agency to investigate criminal activity within Department of Correctional Services facilities and the Lincoln Regional Center

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

LB302 (Hughes) Merge the State Energy Office with and rename the Department of Environmental Quality

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB134 (Stinner) Provide levy authority and duties for natural resources districts

LB185 (Friesen) Change provisions relating to the special valuation of agricultural and horticultural land

LB250 (Walz) Change provisions relating to agricultural land and horticultural land receiving special valuations

LB372 (Erdman) Change provisions relating to classes and subclasses of agricultural land and horticultural land

Thursday, Jan. 31

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

LB189 (Erdman) Change provisions relating to budget limitations for cities and villages

LB373 (Brewer) Provide setback and zoning requirements for wind energy generation projects

LB406 (Gragert) Change provisions relating to abandoned property reports and notices, disposition and transfer of funds, and duties of the State Treasurer under the Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act

LB505 (Brewer) Change provisions relating to support order payments and the State Disbursement Unit

Judiciary

Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB17 (Briese) State a right of juveniles who have a parent with a disability

LB92 (Wayne) Require application of Nebraska Evidence Rules at parental termination hearings

LB93 (Wayne) Provide for intervention by a biological parent in certain juvenile proceedings

LB219 (Wishart) Change requirements for foster care transition proposals and provide immunity from liability for caregivers

LB354 (Pansing Brooks) Change provisions relating to sealing of juvenile records

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

LB307 (Albrecht) Change provisions relating to certain Department of Environmental Quality Funds

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB18 (Briese) Adopt the Remote Seller Sales Tax Collection Act

LB284 (McCollister) Adopt the Remote Seller and Marketplace Facilitator Act

LB291 (Linehan) Change sales and use tax provisions

LB512 (Linehan) Change revenue and taxation provisions

Friday, Feb. 1

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

LR7 (Halloran) Resolution to Congress for convention of the states to propose amendments to the United States Constitution

LB451 (Halloran) Adopt the Faithful Delegate to Federal Article V Convention Act

Judiciary

Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB206 (Morfeld) Protect free speech rights of student journalists and student media advisers

LB247 (Bolz) Adopt the Advance Mental Health Care Directives Act

LB271 (Morfeld) Change provisions relating to releases, covenants not to

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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sue, or similar agreements on joint and several liability

LB318 (McCollister) Change provisions relating to petroleum products liens
 LB322 (Crawford) Change provisions relating to enforcement of certain tobacco restriction provisions

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB222 (Albrecht) Change the Volunteer Emergency Responders Incentive Act
 LB266 (Lindstrom) Change the School Readiness Tax Credit Act
 LB272 (Morfeld) Adopt the Apprenticeship Training Program Tax Credit Act
 LB288 (Linehan) Change income tax rates
 LB289 (Linehan) Change provisions relating to county assessor inspections of real property for property tax purposes
 LB290 (Linehan) Change the sales and use tax rate

Monday, Feb. 4

Transportation & Telecommunications Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB270 (Friesen) Change licensing, registration, and titling provisions for motor vehicles and other vehicles as prescribed
 LB184 (Friesen) Adopt the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act
 LB208 (Walz) Provide an exception for leasing dark fiber or providing certain telecommunications and related services by a state agency or political subdivision
 LB549 (Brandt) Provide for creation and maintenance of a geographic information system map as prescribed under the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act

Tuesday, Feb. 5

Nebraska Retirement Systems Room 1507 - 12:00 PM

LB34 (Kolterman) Eliminate provisions relating to benefits payable after the filing of a grievance or appeal and change provisions relating to employee reinstatement under the County

Employees Retirement Act and State Employees Retirement Act
 LB35 (Kolterman) Change provisions relating to reemployment, reinstatement, repayment, and age eligibility for certain members under the County Employees Retirement Act and State Employees Retirement Act

Transportation & Telecommunications Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB38 (Hilkemann) Provide for one license plate and In Transit decal per vehicle
 LB128 (Hughes) Provide for Wildlife Conservation Plates
 LB138 (Blood) Provide for additional Military Honor Plates and Support Our Troops Plates
 LB696 (Bostelman) Change provisions relating to Military Honor Plates
 LB697 (Bostelman) Eliminate a fee for issuance of military related license plates
 LB215 (Linehan) Provide for Prostate Cancer Awareness Plates
 LB356 (Scheer) Change fee distribution for certain specialty license plates
 LB546 (Wishart) Create Spay and Neuter Awareness license plates and

a low-income spay and neuter grant program
 LB691 (Cavanaugh) Provide for Ornate Box Turtle Conservation license plates
 LB699 (Bostelman) Change provisions relating to transporter plates

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

LB317 (Kolterman) Eliminate Public Service Commission inspection authority under the Nebraska Uniform Standards for Modular Housing Units Act and eliminate applicability and references to manufactured homes under the Uniform Standard Code for Manufactured Homes and Recreational Vehicles and rename the code
 LB23 (Kolterman) Change the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act
 LB124 (Crawford) Change provisions relating to jointly created clean energy assessment districts under the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act
 LB107 (Dorn) Change provisions relating to city and village plumbing boards and change a penalty
 LB195 (Urban Affairs) Committee Correct statutory references relating to the State Fire Code ■



Unicameral Information Office
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