

Full tax exclusion for military retirement income proposed



Sen. Tom Brewer said the tax benefit would help make Nebraska more competitive.

Nebraskans could exclude all of their military retirement benefit pay from state income tax under a bill heard Jan. 29 by the Revenue Committee.

Sen. Tom Brewer of Gordon, who introduced LB387 at the request of Gov. Pete Ricketts, said the bill would expand an exclusion the Legislature approved last year.

Beginning in taxable year 2022, individuals may exclude 50 percent of their military retirement benefit income to the extent it is included in federal adjusted gross income. LB387 would allow individuals to exclude 100 percent of that income.

The state Department of Revenue estimates that the bill would reduce state income tax revenue by approximately \$13 million in fiscal year 2022-23, \$13.7 million in FY23-24 and \$14.4 million in FY24-25.

Brewer said the change would make

Nebraska more attractive to military retirees, many of whom go on to second careers in the private sector. Any tax revenue loss would be offset by the economic benefits of retaining those highly trained and skilled workers, he said.

“The income tax exemption is not only an obvious way of expressing gratitude to our armed forces and veterans,” Brewer said. “This bill helps us keep pace with our neighbors and stop missing out on opportunities to attract these outstanding groups of individuals to grow and enrich Nebraska.”

Additionally, he said, the change would show the U.S. government that Nebraska is a military-friendly state as it determines the future of Offutt Air Force Base and the location of the new U.S. Space Command headquarters.

The governor testified in support of the bill. He said five of the six sur-

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Amendment would limit property tax revenue growth

Nebraska voters could choose to limit annual growth in local property tax revenue to 3 percent under a proposal heard Jan. 27 by the Revenue Committee.

LR22CA, introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Lou Ann Linehan at the request of Gov. Pete Ricketts, would, if passed, place the proposed amendment to Nebraska’s constitution on the November 2022 general election ballot.

The amendment would limit the amount of property tax revenue raised by a political subdivision in any fiscal year to 3 percent more than the amount raised in the prior year.

Linehan said LR22CA is a “critical” follow-up to LB1107, passed last year, which created an income tax credit based on the amount a Nebraska taxpayer paid in property taxes to their school district during the previous year.

She said levy and spending limits that the Legislature has imposed on local governments have failed to stop dramatic increases in the amount of property taxes those entities collect.

“LR22CA is necessary if we are going to get control over ever-escalating property taxes,” Linehan said. “I am convinced the only limit that will work



Sen. Lou Ann Linehan

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Full tax exclusion for military retirement income proposed

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rounding states do not tax military retirement pay, including Iowa and South Dakota, which have seen their military retiree populations grow at a much faster rate than Nebraska's.

Bryan Slone, president of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and

Industry, also testified in support. He said LB387 would help Nebraska address an acute skilled labor shortage, which he called the state's greatest economic challenge of the decade.

"There's no greater and more important group of skilled personnel

and future community leaders that we need to attract and retain to this state than our military personnel when they return to private life," Slone said.

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

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Redistricting is a process undertaken by the Nebraska Unicameral once every ten years, led by the work of a special legislative committee.

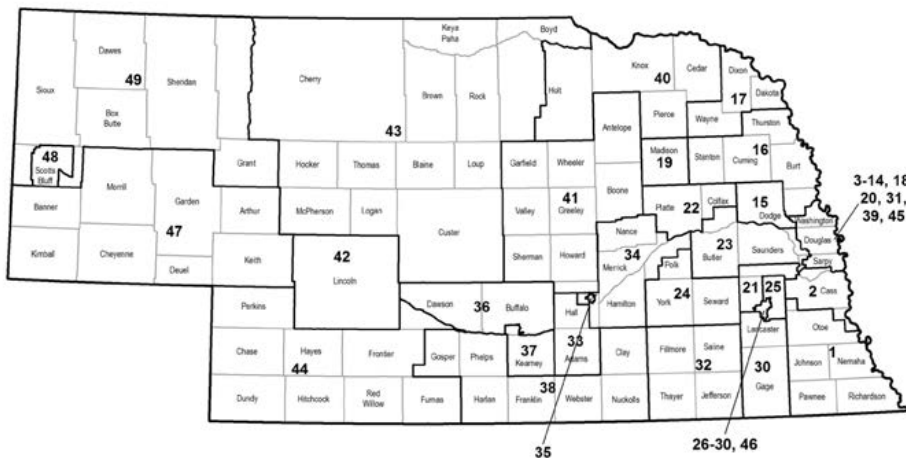
The Legislature is responsible for redrawing governmental boundaries after each decennial census. This year, population data from the 2020 census will be used to draw district lines that ensure fair and equal representation for Nebraska citizens.

The following entities will be affected by redistricting:

- U.S. House of Representatives
- Nebraska Legislature
- State Board of Education
- University of Nebraska Board of Regents
- Nebraska Supreme Court
- Public Service Commission

CURRENT LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:



- Sen. Carol Blood
- Sen. Tom Briese
- Sen. Tom Brewer
- Sen. Suzanne Geist
- Sen. Steve Lathrop
- Sen. Lou Ann Linehan
- Sen. John Lowe
- Sen. Adam Morfeld
- Sen. Justin Wayne

UNICAMERAL UPDATE

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Amendment would limit property tax revenue growth

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is a limit on the tax taking.”

Under the proposal, a political subdivision could override the limit after receiving the approval of a majority of legal voters at a special election called for that purpose.

The proposed cap would not apply to the amount of property tax revenue needed to pay the principal and interest on bonded indebtedness. Nor would it apply to the amount of property taxes raised by a political subdivision’s real growth value, defined as the increase in real property valuation due to improvements – such as new construction and additions to existing buildings – and the annexation of property.

The governor testified in support of the proposal, saying the 3 percent cap is “reasonable” and that some local governments and the state have limited their annual spending to around that amount.

In the past decade, Ricketts said, Nebraskans’ income has increased approximately 48 percent while inflation has increased by 18 percent and property taxes by around 52 percent.

“You can’t outstrip the ability of Nebraska families to pay these taxes by allowing property taxes to go up faster than inflation and faster than their income growth,” he said. “This is what makes people mad.”

Doug Kagan of Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom also testified in support of the resolution. He said the state’s high property taxes prevent young people and those on fixed incomes from keeping their homes or buying new ones.

“Although not every Nebraska property owner would benefit the same from this resolution,” Kagan said, “we believe that Nebraskans should have the opportunity to vote

on this crucial issue.”

Mark McHargue, president of the Nebraska Farm Bureau, testified in support of the proposal on behalf of his organization and several other groups representing agricultural producers.

He said LR22CA is a “great start” but should be combined with other legislation to more equitably distribute the cost of paying for education, health care and other state priorities. Right now, he said, local governments rely too heavily on property taxes, paid disproportionately by farmers and ranchers, to fund those services.

Bud Synhorst, president of the Lincoln Independent Business Association, also testified in support. He said the 3 percent cap would make it easier for local businesses owners to set their budgets and make Nebraska a more attractive place to live and work.

“If government spending continues to grow in this manner,” he said, “we will lose our competitive advantage in

attracting business to our state.”

Dennis Meyer, budget and fiscal officer for Lancaster County, testified in opposition to the proposal. He said counties already are constrained by levy and spending limits and have no way to raise revenue aside from property taxes.

The proposed cap would make it difficult for counties to budget for road and bridge repairs or increasing health insurance costs, Meyer said.

Lynn Rex of the League of Nebraska Municipalities also testified in opposition, saying the 3 percent cap is “not workable” for the state’s cities and villages, approximately half of which already are near their levy limits.

“From a local government standpoint,” she said, “putting something in the constitution like this is highly problematic because of the lack of flexibility.”

The committee took no immediate action on LR22CA. ■

Committee vice chairpersons selected

Agriculture	Sen. Tom Brandt
Appropriations.....	Sen. Anna Wishart
Banking, Commerce & Insurance	Sen. Brett Lindstrom
Business & Labor	Sen. Carol Blood
Education.....	Sen. Adam Morfeld
General Affairs.....	Sen. John Lowe
Government, Military & Veterans Affairs	Vacant
Health & Human Services	Sen. Matt Williams
Judiciary	Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks
Natural Resources	Sen. Mike Moser
Nebraska Retirement Systems	Sen. Brett Lindstrom
Revenue.....	Sen. Brett Lindstrom
Transportation & Telecommunications.....	Sen. Suzanne Geist
Urban Affairs	Sen. Megan Hunt
Executive Board	Sen. Tony Vargas
Committee on Committees.....	Sen. Adam Morfeld

MEET THE SENATOR

Legislative leader back in “marketplace of ideas”

When Norfolk Sen. Mike Flood last served in the Nebraska Legislature, his two sons were small enough to sit on his desk in the legislative chamber.

Now Brenden, 14, is a six-foot, 155-pound football player, and Blake, 11, is a gamer. They have few memories of their father’s prior service in the Legislature, where Flood served two terms between 2005 and 2013, six of those years as speaker.

“They remember seeing the pictures of the dinosaur in the Capitol rotunda, and they remember the big halls – but not much more,” he said.

Flood, an attorney who also has worked in radio broadcasting since high school, has spent the past few years growing his statewide media network, which now includes 10 radio stations and a TV news channel.

Around the time he left office, Flood traveled the state and heard from Nebraskans living in rural areas who get their news from Denver or Sioux City. Flood said he wanted his company to offer them a source of high-quality local news.

“Between radio and TV, it’s connecting people with their home state every single day in every single county,” he said.

But Flood, who became known as a skilled legislator and broker of compromise during his time in office, said he missed being in the “marketplace of ideas,” where people from across Nebraska come to share their ideas, hopes and dreams for the state.

“You can’t be in the Legislature and not like people,” he said. “You can’t be in the Legislature and not like creative ideas. And that’s what I missed the most from my service before and why I came back – I like being in the discussion.”

Flood said his district and others like it face a problem that should be part of that discussion: the lack of high-paying jobs and other factors leading to depopulation of the state’s rural areas. He wants to make northeast Nebraska a place where young people, including maybe someday his sons, want to stay.

Flood thinks the session has started well and said he was encouraged to see the relatively large number of bills introduced this year – new ideas for the marketplace. Despite the pandemic-imposed limits on interactions among senators, Flood said, he still has been able to meet and talk with other members.

“It couldn’t have started any better in terms of making new friendships and visiting with the other state senators,” he said.

“That has been exactly what I remember, and the best part.”

Flood said he sees the same openness to compromise that he remembers from his prior service in the Legislature, and he believes that the sometimes “difficult” tone of political debate over the past few years might be changing.

“I think and hope there’s a renewed interest in, you know, decorum,” he said. “I’m certainly going to do my part to be as positive as I can be and as nice as I can be while still representing the interests of my constituents.”

Flood stays in Lincoln while the Legislature is in session but returns to northeast Nebraska every weekend. He said he switches radio frequencies as he drives north – he might listen to his Fairbury country station, then his Omaha Spanish-language station and then his Norfolk stations as he gets close to home.

“I am a radio connoisseur,” Flood said. “I’m surrounded down here by signals.” ■



Above: Sen. Mike Flood’s son, Blake, on the first day of the 2012 legislative session. Below: Blake and his dad, on Blake’s first day as a cameraman in training.

BANKING, COMMERCE & INSURANCE



Bill seeks financial protections for seniors, vulnerable adults

Certain financial professionals would have authority to delay suspicious transactions under a bill considered Jan. 26 by the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee.

LB297, introduced by Sen. Brett Lindstrom of Omaha, would allow broker-dealers and investment advisers to hold transactions for up to 30 business days in suspected cases of exploitation of seniors and vulnerable adults.



Sen. Brett Lindstrom

Under the bill, broker-dealers and investment advisers would be required to notify the Adult Protective Services Division of the state Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Banking and Finance within two business days in order to delay a transaction and conduct an internal review.

Lindstrom said the bill would expand upon a bill passed in 2020 that enabled financial institutions to pause suspect transactions.

“There are some subtle changes from last year’s legislation, but I believe they strengthen the act,” he said.

Director Kelly Lammers of the Department of Banking and Finance testified in favor of the bill. He said his department has received numerous calls of suspected fraud or exploitation, but often those reports come too late.

“Once the money has left the account, we cannot get it back,” Lam-

mers said.

Andrea Lowe, testifying on behalf of DHHS, also supported LB297. She said 23 percent of the department’s investigations in 2020 involved financial exploitation. The bill would afford investigators extra time to gather evidence and protect Nebraskans, she said.

“Elder financial abuse is exceedingly common,” Lowe said. “Unfortunately, fewer than one-fourth of these incidents are ever reported to any agency.”

No one testified in opposition to LB297 and the committee voted 8-0 to advance it to general file.

BUSINESS & LABOR

Compensation proposed for first responders’ families

Families of Nebraska first responders killed in the line of duty would receive a one-time death benefit under a bill heard by the Business and Labor Committee Jan. 25.

LB255, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Matt Hansen, would provide monetary compensation to the family of a law enforcement officer, firefighter or public EMS ambulance squad member killed in the line of duty, including those who work on a voluntary basis.



Sen. Matt Hansen

This type of compensation program is common practice in other states, Hansen said, and is long overdue in Nebraska.

“I believe that it is time for Nebraska to join our neighbors in making sure that our first responders know

that we know the value of their work, their service and their lives,” he said.

Under the bill, a qualifying family member must file for compensation within one year of the death. For first responders killed in 2022, compensation provided would be \$50,000. For each following year, compensation would be equal to the previous year’s compensation increased by the percentage increase in the consumer price index for all urban consumers.

Robert Hallstrom, representing the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association, supported LB255. First responders are called to serve others and give back to their communities, he said.

“As volunteer members of local fire and rescue departments, these women and men put their lives on the line every time the page goes off,” Hallstrom said in written testimony. “They respond immediately to protect others and the property of others — shedding their own personal concerns and protective bubbles to help others.”

Representing the Nebraska Fraternal Order of Police, Julia Plucker also supported the bill. If it passes, Nebraska would join 30 other states that provide similar benefits to the families of first responders, she said.

“LB255 is a straightforward bill that provides much needed relief to the surviving members of the first responder decedent,” Plucker said in written testimony.

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

Expanded unemployment eligibility considered

Members of the Business and Labor Committee considered a proposal Jan. 25 to expand eligibility for unemployment benefits.

LB260, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Megan Hunt, would expand the list of “good cause” reasons to leave employment voluntarily to include caring for a family member with a serious health condition.



Sen. Megan Hunt

The bill would allow workers who have voluntarily left employment to care for a family member, but who are seeking to return to employment, to be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Current law does not allow workers who leave employment to care for a family member to receive unemployment benefits, Hunt said, despite the fact that their employers have paid into the unemployment insurance fund on their behalf.

“This is supporting folks who’ve likely worked the majority of their lives but are forced to have a temporary lapse in employment to care for [family],” she said. “Providing this temporary safety net will allow caregivers some security while they attempt to reenter the workforce.”

Scout Richters, representing the ACLU of Nebraska, spoke in support of LB260. The importance of family caregiving has become ever more apparent during the current pandemic, she said.

“Without the ability to get unemployment benefits for this necessary caretaking, women will lose income for themselves and their families that they rely on,” Richters said. “It is especially important because 64 percent of all families have women as the sole or primary breadwinner.”

Also supporting the bill was Jina Ragland, on behalf of AARP Nebraska. She said that, on average, family caregivers over 50 who leave to care for a parent lose \$304,000 in wages and

benefits over their lifetime.

“Nebraskans do want to work, and they are working, but often times they have no other choice but to quit and care for their loved one,” Ragland said.

No one testified in opposition to LB260 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

EDUCATION

Extracurricular activity policies for home-schoolers proposed

Home-schooled students could participate in a public school district’s extracurricular activities without also enrolling in the district’s classes under a bill heard Jan. 25 by the Education Committee.

Current state law requires public school boards to allow students enrolled in private, denominational, parochial or home schools to enroll part-time as long as they are residents of the district.

LB210, introduced by Sen. Dave Murman of Glenvil, would allow those students to enroll part-time for all courses selected by the students.

It also would require school boards to establish policies and procedures to allow home-schooled students to participate in extracurricular activities to the same extent and subject to the same requirements as students enrolled in the public school governed by the board.

The home-school would set academic performance standards for the student’s participation in extracur-

ricular activities and would “provide assurances of compliance” with those standards.

The policies could not require home-schooled students to be enrolled in for-credit courses offered by the school or allow any preference for selection in extracurricular activities based on the student’s status in the district.

Murman said the Nebraska School Activities Association, which governs inter-school extracurricular activities, requires home-schooled students to enroll in public school classes for a minimum of 10 credit hours per semester before they can participate in the school’s extracurricular activities.

Each district can impose more stringent requirements if it chooses, he said, and these varying requirements place an extra burden on home-schooled students and interrupt their home school schedules.

“A person’s lawful method of education should not preclude any Nebraska student from involvement in extracurricular activities within the school district in which they reside and pay taxes,” Murman said.

Under LB210, school boards could require home-schooled students to follow school policies that apply to other students when they are present on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

Home-schooled students would be entitled to transportation to and from practices and events to the same extent as public school students participating in those activities.

David Lostroh of the Nebraska Christian Home Educators Association testified in support of the bill, saying the NSAA requirement is arbitrary and that some schools require more than the 10-hour minimum.

LB210 also would prevent schools from limiting home-school student



Sen. Dave Murman

enrollment to only elective classes, he said.

Stephanie Shade of Hastings also testified in support of the bill. Shade and her husband home-school their eight children, she said, and have found that a split learning environment, in which a child attends public school classes for part of the day, can do more harm than good.

“Requiring home-educated students to attend any number of classes at a public school results in loss of learning time and carries the potential to cause harm to students emotionally and otherwise,” she said.

Since their 12-year-old son Micah was born, Shade said, their family has paid approximately \$74,000 in property taxes to their local school district, none of which has benefited Micah’s education.

“I don’t believe it is too much to ask for my son to play football at our local middle school without any course requirements,” she said.

Testifying in opposition to LB210 was Jay Bellar, executive director of the NSAA. He said that attending a public school for at least 10 credit hours per semester ties a home-school student to the public school academically — not just for activities — and allows administrators, teachers and coaches to get to know the student as a person.

“How do we ensure that student participants are truly representing the academic mission of the NSAA member school when the student isn’t enrolled at that school?” Bellar said.

Jon Cerny, superintendent of Bancroft-Rosalie Public Schools, testified in opposition to the bill on behalf of the school’s board. He said LB210 would jeopardize student safety by, in part, making it more difficult for school personnel to recognize and respond to students’ injuries, including concussions.

“If a student is not receiving an education at school ... the opportunity for the school to know and observe the student is greatly reduced,” Cerny said. “Thus, [the] student’s safety is reduced.”

He said the bill also could encourage the parents of an athletically talented but academically struggling student to pull their child out of public school to maintain their eligibility to play sports, undermining public schools’ principle of promoting academics over activities.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Aid proposed for college students in high-priority programs

Low-income college students enrolled in programs that lead to a certificate or degree in a high-demand field could apply for a new scholarship under a bill heard Jan. 26 by the Education Committee.

Under LB243, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Eliot Bostar, students who qualified for or received grants under the Access College Early program — which provides scholarships to low-income high school students who enroll in dual-credit courses while in high school — could qualify for the new Access College Early Tech Promise Program scholarships.

Among other requirements, students would have to attend a Nebraska community college, tribally controlled community college in Nebraska or the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis.

Students also would have to have received postsecondary education credit while in high school for at least two

courses in a single career program of study related to an in-demand occupation that is a high priority for the state, as determined by a grant committee.

Students would have to be enrolled full time in an approved program that offers a certificate, diploma or associate degree that qualifies them for employment in an in-demand occupation.

Approximately 2,500 students received ACE scholarships in fiscal year 2019-20, Bostar said, and more than 84 percent of those students went on to college, compared to 52 percent of their low-income peers who were not ACE recipients.

He said the new program would help those students complete their two-year degrees or certificate programs in nursing, information technology, biosciences, health services and transportation, among other fields. Those middle-skill jobs account for 56 percent of Nebraska’s labor market, Bostar said, but only 47 percent of the state’s workforce is trained to fill them.

“When we invest in technical education students,” he said, “it means we are investing in individuals that will likely live, work and pay taxes right here in our state after they graduate.”

Each scholarship, which could be used for education expenses, would not be less than \$1,500 for an academic year. An award for an academic year could not exceed the sum of tuition and fees plus \$1,500, minus any federal Pell Grant awarded to the student.

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, which would administer the program, estimates that LB243 would direct \$244,000 in aid to students in fiscal year 2021-22 and \$406,500 in FY2022-23.

Kathy Danek, president of the Lincoln Public Schools board, testified in support of the bill.

“A program to help students com-



Sen. Eliot Bostar

plete the degree or career certification after high school brings to fruition the community’s investment in early college career course opportunities in high schools and career academies and keeps skilled workers close to home,” she said.

Susan Martin, president of the Nebraska State AFL-CIO, also testified in support, saying that expanding access to community and technical college programs is essential to Nebraska’s economic competitiveness.

“With Nebraska businesses struggling to find skilled workers for current job openings,” she said, “it’s more important than ever for policymakers to identify effective strategies that will attract students to career opportunities beneficial to Nebraska and to those high-demand jobs.”

Mike Baumgartner, executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, also testified in support of LB243. He said the proposal would build on the “highly successful” ACE program and help recipients cover the additional expenses they will face in technical programs, such as tools, uniforms and equipment.

“The ACE Tech Promise Program leverages the investment that taxpayers and the students themselves have already made in their education success,” Baumgartner said.

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

GENERAL AFFAIRS

Regulation sought for kickboxing, bare-knuckle boxing

Fight fans in Nebraska would have more entertainment options under a bill considered Jan. 25 by the General

Affairs Committee.

LB70, introduced by Omaha Sen. Justin Wayne, would authorize the State Athletic Commissioner to regulate kickboxing and bare-knuckle boxing. The commissioner currently regulates professional mixed martial arts and boxing.



Sen. Justin Wayne

Allowing the additional sports in Nebraska would generate economic activity, Wayne said, adding that Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, Tennessee, New York and Indiana have adopted similar regulations.

“People who want to do these [sports] go to other states to fight,” he said.

Henry Ems, a combat sports trainer and promoter, testified in support of the bill. He said Nebraska mixed martial arts promoters have a track record of protecting athletes’ health – even during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – and he expects that would also be the case if kickboxing and bare-knuckle boxing were regulated.

“We have the ability to make these [sports] safe,” Ems said.

No one testified in opposition to LB70 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

GOVERNMENT, MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS

Bill would expand use of virtual meetings

City councils, county boards and other political subdivisions would have greater authority to meet virtually under a bill considered Jan. 27 by the Government, Military and Veterans

Affairs Committee.

Gov. Pete Ricketts issued an executive order in March of 2020 that waived aspects of the Open Meetings Act and allowed some government entities to meet virtually during the coronavirus pandemic. That order was lifted last summer.

LB83, introduced by Norfolk Sen. Mike Flood, would allow mayors, county board chairpersons and village board chairpersons to declare an emergency and hold meetings virtually. The bill defines virtual conferencing as a meeting conducted electronically or by phone.



Sen. Michael Flood

Political subdivisions currently subject to the state’s Open Meetings Act and allowed to conduct meetings by video conferencing and teleconferencing would be allowed to hold virtual meetings. The bill would expand the list of political subdivisions allowed to meet virtually to include natural resources districts and local public health districts.

Advanced public notice would be required for virtual meetings, with at least one physical site available for public participation. All documents related to a virtual meeting would need to be available online.

LB83 also would restrict the virtual meeting option to no more than half of an entity’s meetings during a calendar year.

“This is a way to modernize the way virtual meetings are dealt with by public bodies,” Flood said. “[In an emergency] the people closest to the problem have the best answers.”

Larry Ruth, testifying on behalf of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts and the Lower Platte South Resources District, spoke in support

of the bill. Ruth said the ongoing coronavirus pandemic has made in-person meetings more difficult. Many political subdivisions do not have a facility that would allow for public participation and social distancing, he said, forcing some individuals to choose between doing their job or staying safe.

“Being a member of a public body does not mean signing a suicide pact,” Ruth said.

Shelley Sahling-Zart, testifying on behalf of the Nebraska Power Association, also supported LB83. She said the bill would serve as a contingency plan that would enable political subdivisions to continue their work during a prolonged emergency.

“This is about being able to continue doing the public’s business in moments of extraordinary disruption,” Sahling-Zart said.

Also testifying in support was Kathy Hoell of Papillion. In written testimony, she said the expanded use of virtual meetings during the pandemic has enabled more people to participate in public meetings, particularly individuals with disabilities and those living in rural areas.

Matt Miltenberger, chief of staff for the governor, opposed LB83. Miltenberger said that while Ricketts believes the state’s open meetings laws can be modernized, he opposes extending power to waive public meeting requirements to local officials who declare emergencies.

In written testimony, he said the purpose of the Open Meetings Act is to ensure that citizens can, “exercise their democratic privilege of attending and speaking at a public meeting. A declared public emergency does not intrinsically mean it is unsafe for a public body to meet in person.”

Lance Molina of Gretna also testified against LB83. He said the bill

would enable organizations to ignore citizens with whom they disagree.

“Electronic conferencing allows a body of government to mute any member of the public,” Molina said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB83.

Review of state agencies sought

State agencies, boards, departments and councils would undergo an efficiency review under a bill considered Jan. 28 by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

LB213, introduced by Albion Sen. Tom Briese, would require the state Department of Administrative Services to contract with an outside firm to conduct the reviews, which would seek ways to reduce costs, identify potential new sources of funding other than tax increases and make government more accountable to Nebraskans.

According to the department’s fiscal note, such a review would cost an estimated \$4 million.

Briese said Nebraska currently has the 14th highest state spending rate in the country. Several other states have undergone similar audits and implemented changes that resulted in millions in savings, he said.

“The goal here isn’t to cut costs by eliminating programs or reducing the services that government in Nebraska is providing,” Briese said, “the core goal of this legislation is to make sure those programs and services are offering those taxpayers the most bang for their buck.”

David Nabity of Omaha spoke in support of the bill. He said across-the-board cuts in government spending

are “cruel,” but efficiency audits could reveal targeted savings.

“It’s the only kind way to look for government efficiency,” Nabity said.

DAS Director Jason Jackson testified against the bill. He said state government efficiency has greatly improved under the current administration and that LB213 would be redundant and unlikely to find significant savings.

“A successful government efficiency operation is one that’s imbued in our culture,” Jackson said. “That’s why we’ve invested so much in training.”

Nebraska Association of Public Employees Executive Director Justin Hubly also testified against LB213. Low wages and overtime restrictions have led to a high turnover rate among state employees, he said, increasing expenses due to training new employees and hiring contract workers.

“Cutting costs often doesn’t translate to efficiency and in fact often results in significantly higher costs,” Hubly said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Fines sought for late reports

Cities, counties and other political subdivisions in Nebraska could be fined for filing late reports with the state under a bill considered Jan. 29 by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Government entities that fail to file required reports with the state Auditor of Public Accounts could be fined \$20 a day – up to \$2,000 total per filing – under LB368, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Rita Sanders.

As introduced, the bill also would



Sen. Tom Briese



Sen. Rita Sanders

allow the office to conduct the audit at the subdivision's expense. Sanders provided an amendment to remove that provision, saying the auditor already has that authority under current state law.

Sanders said 309 reports were filed late in the 2019 fiscal year and 19 subdivisions have yet to file for that year making them late by anywhere from 120 to 394 days.

"Chasing these reports down can be frustrating and expensive for the auditor's office and prevents the public from seeing the results of the audit in a timely manner," she said.

Russ Karpisek of the auditor's office testified in support of the bill. On-time filing would increase transparency and save money, he said.

"There's no teeth [in statute] to make people get their audits and budgets and things in on time," Karpisek said. "There's nothing we can really do right now."

Karpisek added that the auditor's office could waive the fine if a government entity had a valid reason for filing late.

No one spoke in opposition to LB368 and the committee took no immediate action on it.



Bill would adopt occupational therapy interstate compact

Occupational therapists licensed in Nebraska would be able to practice in certain other states under a bill considered Jan. 28 by the Health and Human Services Committee.

LB15, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Carol Blood, would adopt the Occu-

pational Therapy Practice Interstate Compact. Once in effect, the compact would allow licensed therapists to practice in other member states without having to obtain a separate license as currently is required.



Sen. Carol Blood

The bill would address the rising need for occupational therapists in a more interconnected world in which state boundaries are less relevant, Blood said.

She added that while no states have yet enacted legislation to join the compact, several are considering it. Ten states are required to adopt the compact for it to take effect.

"We must account for industry-tailored reciprocity mechanisms like this compact," Blood said. "In fact, it's really irresponsible not to do so."

Dr. Melissa Kimmerling of the Nebraska Occupational Therapy Association testified in support of LB15. She said the compact would expand the use of telehealth, particularly in rural areas.

"The compact would therefore improve the continuity of care for citizens in Nebraska," Kimmerling said.

Dr. Cheryl Frickel, an occupational therapist, also testified in support, saying the bill would benefit military spouses.

"Military families move every three years on average," Frickel said. "The compact helps military spouses relocate and begin work without delay."

No one spoke in opposition to LB15 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

Bill would remove licensing for reflexologists

Reflexologists would no longer have to be licensed with the state of

Nebraska under a bill considered by the Health and Human Services Committee Jan. 27.

LB211, introduced by Sen. Dave Murman of Glenvil, would remove a current requirement that reflexologists be licensed under the Massage Therapy Practice Act. Instead, the bill would create a registry for reflexologists and require certification by a national board. Practicing reflexologists would have to register with the state by Oct. 1, 2021.



Sen. Dave Murman

Current law is onerous, Murman said, and creates an unnecessary burden.

"The practice of reflexology is different and distinct from the practice of massage therapy," he said. "Most of the country does not regulate reflexology."

The Platte Institute's Nicole Fox testified in support of the bill. She said reflexologists in Nebraska must adhere to the same licensing requirements as massage therapists even though much of the training does not apply to them.

"The state of Nebraska has the most burdensome licensing requirements for massage therapy in the country: 1,000 hours at a cost of nearly \$20,000," Fox said. "The curriculum provides very little, if any, instruction on reflexology."

Becky Ohlson, a reflexologist and president of the American Massage Therapy Association's Nebraska chapter, testified against LB211. She said her organization does not support what would be a change in scope of practice for reflexologists and disagreed with the bill's certification provision.

"[Licensing] is especially important in emerging professions gaining recog-

nition because the industry-accepted certification can change quickly,” Ohlson said.

Steve Carper of the Nebraska Massage Therapy Board also spoke in opposition to the bill. Reflexology is a modality that massage therapists use, he said, and not a separate practice.

“As a board, we don’t think there’s a need for the bill,” Carper said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB211.

JUDICIARY

Bill would repeal eviction postponement standard

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Jan. 27 on a proposal to give judges increased discretion during eviction court proceedings.

LB45, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Matt Hansen, would repeal a current state law that prohibits judges from granting a continuance in eviction proceedings unless extraordinary cause is shown and back rent is paid.



Sen. Matt Hansen

Hansen said that it is important to make sure the court system is not depriving people of their day in court due to circumstances outside of their control, especially when it involves the potential loss of their home.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has made the issue more urgent, he said.

“Throughout the summer and fall, officials pointed to this [statute] saying it tied their hands in doing what is right — what almost every other judge

could do — and pause proceedings as needed,” Hansen said. “Instead, eviction cases continued, even as courthouses closed to the public ... while COVID cases continued to rise.”

Robert Larsen of Lincoln spoke in favor of LB45. The extraordinary cause standard imposed upon tenants during eviction proceedings is a higher standard than what is required of any other litigant in any other civil proceeding in Nebraska, he said.

“I’m not advocating for anything that gives tenants a new, unfair advantage or a special exception for tenants within our legal system,” Larsen said. “I’m merely advocating for the repeal of a statute that is a clear, unique and illogical outlier in Nebraska law.”

Erin Olsen, representing Legal Aid of Nebraska, also supported the bill. The extraordinary cause standard has been applied inconsistently throughout the state, she said, especially during the ongoing pandemic.

“LB45 effectively repeals a law that either doesn’t get applied at all in practice or, if it does, is used inconsistently to the detriment of tenants’ rights,” she said.

Opposing the measure was Gene Eckel, representing the Nebraska Association of Commercial Property Owners. Eviction proceedings are not always initiated due to nonpayment of rent, he said, but also can stem from noncompliance with lease terms, including criminal conduct.

“If that person is allowed to call in to the court and just give a reason why [the case] should be continued, that allows that tenant to remain at the property for a longer period of time, which could also be a danger to the other residents,” Eckel said.

Dennis Tierney, representing the Metropolitan Omaha Property Owners Association also opposed LB45. It would be extremely unfair to a land-

lord for a tenant to ask for postponement of an eviction hearing without paying back rent as a bond, he said.

“The tenant would be allowed to continue living [rent-free] in the property,” Tierney said. “How long should the landlord have to continue without rent?”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Updates to mobile landlord and tenant act discussed

Mobile home tenants would have the same rights as residential tenants under a proposal considered by members of the Judiciary Committee Jan. 27.

In 2019, the Legislature approved changes to the Uniform Residential Landlord Tenant Act. LB277, sponsored this year by Omaha Sen. Megan Hunt, would update the Mobile Home Landlord and Tenant Act to mirror those changes.



Sen. Megan Hunt

Hunt said the bill would help tenants and landlords avoid unnecessary confusion and litigation.

“This bill does not make it harder for landlords who are already using best practices,” she said. “Those landlords who are rightfully returning deposits and lawfully handling evictions will not be affected.”

LB277 would require a landlord to provide the balance due on a security deposit automatically to a tenant within 14 days of termination of a rental agreement.

If a landlord fails to return the security deposit within 14 days, the tenant could recover any property or money due to him or her, as well as liquidated damages equal to one month’s rent

plus costs or twice the amount of the rental deposit — whichever is less — and reasonable attorney’s fees.

Landlords would be required to remit any unclaimed security deposit to the state treasurer for disposition under the Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act if returned undeliverable or if the deposit is outstanding 30 days after the initial mailing.

If a government entity deems a residence to be uninhabitable due to negligence, the tenant would not be liable for any damage as a direct result of forcible removal. Finally, the bill would extend the period of time for payment of rent after a notice of intent to terminate from five to seven days.

Supporting the bill was Ryan Sullivan of Lincoln. Currently, a person who rents a mobile home and a mobile home lot is governed by two different landlord and tenant acts, he said, which can create unnecessary confusion and litigation.

“Consistency between the two acts is of particular importance in situations when both acts are implicated,” Sullivan said. “Renters of mobile home lots deserve the same rights as renters of traditional homes.”

Scott Mertz, representing Legal Aid of Nebraska, also supported LB277. He said current discrepancies between the two acts create a tiered system of tenant rights in the state.

“Right now, a tenant in a residential property will have more days afforded to them to procure late rent than a tenant in a mobile home space,” Mertz said. “This is a difference of just two days, but when one is seeking rental assistance or waiting on unemployment benefits, those days can and do make a major difference to that tenant.”

Opposing the bill was Pierce Carpenter of Omaha. If a landlord discovers more extensive damage to a unit

after paying back a security deposit, he said, the landlord must absorb that additional cost.

“The thing that we’re getting away from is tenant responsibility and [instead] placing everything on the landlord,” Pierce said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill would speed some juvenile court transfers

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Jan. 28 on a bill to expedite certain juvenile cases.

LB354, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop, would require county and district courts to rule on motions to transfer jurisdiction of a minor to juvenile court within 30 days.



Sen. Steve Lathrop

Judicial expediency is especially important, Lathrop said, in cases when a young person may be just months from becoming an adult.

“In the event a judge determines a case would best be handled in juvenile court, it is in the interest of the accused and the public that the transfer be made in a timely fashion so that the youth can benefit from the services and structure provided by our juvenile courts,” he said.

Mark Hanna, representing the Office of the Douglas County Attorney, spoke in support of the bill. LB354 would allow more time to provide adjudicated juveniles the services they need, he said.

“It’s very difficult as a prosecutor to help rehabilitate juveniles who have engaged in serious activities in such a short period of time,” Hanna said. “If we have an individual who is 17 and a half years old, by the time they get

to juvenile court and we get them adjudicated, that gives us very little time to give them rehabilitative services.”

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

Bill of rights proposed for youth in state care

Nebraska foster youth in out-of-home placements and in Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers would have explicit, enumerated rights under a bill heard by the Judiciary Committee Jan. 28.

LB357, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Megan Hunt, would ensure youth are expressly informed of their rights at regular intervals, in age-appropriate language, by their respective caseworker.



Sen. Megan Hunt

Hunt said that making sure youth understand their rights upfront can help alleviate mistrust and reassure them that their development and well-being are important.

“When a system removes you from your home or puts you in an unfamiliar place, there is an inherent distrust of that system,” she said. “It’s essential that we’re doing everything we can as a state to ease these kinds of transitions.”

Under the bill, caseworkers would be required to provide written copies of a system-involved youth’s rights within 72 hours of their initial placement, again two weeks later and then on a quarterly basis.

The bill would ensure youth in placement have the right to attend or not attend religious services, be free from unreasonable search and seizure and be free from discrimination

based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, national origin, tribal membership, religion, mental or physical disability, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Youth would retain the right to a free education provided for by the state, in their original school if possible. Access to participation in developmentally and age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities – and access to trauma-informed health care – also would be ensured.

Among other provisions, the bill also seeks to protect a youth’s familial bonds, and a young person who is pregnant or parenting would retain the right to make appropriate decisions for their child.

Laura Opfer, representing the Nebraska Children’s Commission, spoke in support of LB357. The bill’s provisions build on progress toward normalcy for youth in Nebraska, she said, by providing a multi-disciplinary system to ensure youth rights are protected and their voices are heard.

“When we take time to build relationships with youth and explain the [placement] process, we build engagement,” Opfer said. “When youth are engaged and informed, we strengthen their self-efficacy and gain their trust.”

Also testifying in support of the bill was Jacob McKirdy, who was placed in the foster care system as a young person. He frequently felt unloved and unsafe while in foster care, he said, and was unsure where to turn for help.

“If the caseworkers took just one minute to actually spend time and get to know the kids, it would make a big difference,” McKirdy said.

No opponents were present at the hearing and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Constitutional amendment proposed to repeal marriage definition

Removal of a provision in the state constitution would be placed on the ballot for voter consideration under a proposal heard by the Judiciary Committee Jan. 29.

Currently, the constitution states that only marriage between a man and a woman shall be valid and recognized in Nebraska. If passed by the Legislature, LR20CA, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks, would place a proposed constitutional amendment on the November 2022 general election ballot to remove that provision.



Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks

Article I, section 29 of the state constitution was rendered obsolete with the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, Pansing Brooks said, which legalized same-sex marriage throughout the country.

“It’s become clear that we have reached something close to a national consensus of public opinion on this issue,” she said. “In light of this, the discriminatory language in our constitution banning marriage equality, as well as civil unions and domestic partnerships, feels archaic and even embarrassing.”

Supporting the proposal was Sara Rips, on behalf of the ACLU of Nebraska. She said it would bring the state constitution in line with the law of the land.

“Just like the last vestiges of slavery that haunted our constitution until last November, section 29 is an outdated relic that reflects poorly on our state,” Rips said. “Empowering our voters to remove this harmful consti-

tutional [language] sends a message to the entire nation that Nebraska is a welcoming, hospitable place for all.”

Marion Miner, representing the Nebraska Catholic Conference, spoke in opposition. The essential purpose of marriage is to attach mothers and fathers to their children and to one another, he said.

“Section 29 may be unenforceable as a practical matter as long as *Obergefell* remains authoritative, but its repeal would signal that Nebraska has abandoned the understanding of marriage as the singular institution for upholding the most basic natural right of children, after the right to life itself,” Miner said.

The committee took no immediate action on LR20CA.



Higher fees would help maintain two state recreation areas

Out-of-state visitors to Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area and Lake Ogallala State Recreation Area would pay a higher permit fee under a bill heard Jan. 28 by the Natural Resources Committee.

The state Game and Parks Commission currently issues annual, temporary and disabled veteran permits.

LB336, introduced by Venango Sen. Dan Hughes, would require the commission to create “regular” and “limited” annual and temporary nonresident motor vehicle permits.



Sen. Dan Hughes

The annual limited permit, which would grant access to all permit areas

except those at Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala, would cost no more than \$65, the same as the current annual nonresident motor vehicle permit. An annual regular permit for a nonresident motor vehicle, which would grant access to all areas, would cost \$80.

A temporary limited permit for a nonresident motor vehicle would cost no more than \$12, the same as the current temporary permit for a nonresident motor vehicle. The fee for a temporary regular nonresident motor vehicle permit would be \$15.

At least 95 percent of the additional funds from the new permits would be designated to help defray operational, maintenance and improvement costs at Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area and Lake Ogallala State Recreation Area.

Hughes said those recreation areas are top Nebraska tourist attractions every year but that the influx of visitors has caused problems for Game and Parks personnel and local law enforcement. He said the higher fees would allow the commission to hire more personnel and improve facilities to help alleviate crowding of public access areas at the two lakes.

On busy holiday weekends, such as Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day, Hughes said, approximately 90 percent of the 100,000 daily visitors are from other states.

“It only makes sense to allow the people utilizing that space to pay for the improvements,” he said.

Deb Schilz of the Keith County Visitors Committee testified in support of LB336, saying that Lake McConaughy’s infrastructure has been stressed for several years.

She said the proceeds from the new permits could help pay for road upgrades, improved beach access, campgrounds and shower and bath-

room facilities to serve the tens of thousands of visitors, many of them from outside Nebraska, who visit the lake on holiday weekends.

Timothy McCoy, deputy director of the state Game and Parks Commission, testified in opposition to the bill. Although the commission needs more resources to manage Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala, he said, the proposed annual regular permit fee could disqualify the state for certain federal funding used to develop those recreation areas because it is more than twice the cost of a resident permit, which is \$30.

McCoy said introducing two new types of nonresident permits also could delay park entry on busy weekends and confuse nonresident visitors and vendors who sell the permits.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



Employer tax credit for student loan repayments proposed

Nebraska employers would receive a tax credit for repaying qualified employees’ student loans under a proposal heard Jan. 28 by the Revenue Committee.

Under LB69, introduced by Omaha Sen. Jen Day, businesses could apply to the state Department of Revenue for the nonrefundable income tax credit, which would be available for tax years beginning Jan. 1, 2022.



Sen. Jen Day

The credit would equal 50 percent of the student loan repayment made by an employer on behalf of an em-

ployee, up to \$1,800 for each qualified employee. A business could earn credits for up to 20 employees each taxable year.

Day said the credit would encourage the pursuit of higher education and help employers recruit and retain talented workers. A 2019 Blueprint Nebraska report found that approximately 3,000 Nebraskans with bachelor’s degrees leave the state each year, she said.

“Not only are we losing talented workforce, but we’re losing taxpayers to other states,” Day said. “In many cases, we’re making the expensive investment for youth on the education side and then watching the other states get the benefit.”

A qualified employee would be a college graduate who worked for the employer for at least 480 hours during the taxable year and who received a student loan to attend a postsecondary educational institution.

The department could approve up to \$1.5 million in credits each year. At least 25 percent would go to employers with no more than 30 employees or that are located in first- or second-class cities or villages in Nebraska.

The department estimates that LB69 would reduce state general fund revenue by \$1.4 million each year beginning in fiscal year 2022-23.

Mike Riordan of BenefitEd testified in support of the bill. He said businesses could use the proposed credit as a way to differentiate themselves from employers in other states when recruiting and retaining workers. Employers that already offer student loan repayment benefits have reported decreased turnover rates and quicker hiring, he said.

Mike Baumgartner, executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, also testified in support, saying that the

state continues to struggle with out-migration of college graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher.

As of September 2020, he said, more than 242,000 Nebraskans owed a total of \$7.7 billion in federal student loan debt, and the average graduate of a four-year public educational institution owes a median of \$20,000.

Baumgartner said several studies have found that student loan debt impacts where students settle and can inhibit homeownership, entrepreneurship and family formation. He said student borrowers from rural areas, especially those with high loan balances, are more likely to live and work in metro areas after graduation.

"The tax credit established by LB69 would be a helpful tool for addressing out-migration, in-migration and migration within the state to urban areas," Baumgartner said.

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

Tax credit scholarship program proposed

Individuals and businesses could claim a state income tax credit for contributions they make to nonprofit organizations that grant scholarships to students who attend private schools under a bill heard Jan. 28 by the Revenue Committee.

LB364, introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Lou Ann Linehan, would allow individuals, passthrough entities, estates or trusts and corporations to claim a nonrefundable income tax credit of up to 50 percent of the taxpayer's state income tax liability for the tax year on contributions they



Sen. Lou Ann Linehan

make to certain scholarship-granting organizations.

Only Nebraska residents would be eligible for the scholarships, which could be used to pay tuition and fees at a qualifying privately operated elementary or secondary school in Nebraska.

Students would be eligible for the scholarships if, among other requirements, they are a dependent member of a household with a gross income that does not exceed the eligibility guidelines for reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program.

Linehan said children who currently are enrolled in a private school would not qualify for the scholarships, which are intended to go only to students whose family income does not exceed 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

"These are not wealthy students," she said. "These are not even middle-class students — these are low-income students."

LB364 would allow the state Department of Revenue to grant \$10 million in credits in 2022. After that, if at least 90 percent of the credits in any given year are claimed, the annual limit would increase by 25 percent.

Assuming that the limit would increase each year, the department estimates that the bill would reduce state general fund revenue by \$10 million in fiscal year 2022-23, \$12.5 million in FY2023-24 and \$15.6 in FY2024-25.

Suraya Wayne of Omaha testified in support of LB364. She said her son's education suffered after he was labeled disruptive as a kindergartner while enrolled in Omaha Public Schools. With help from family to pay the tuition, Wayne moved him to St. Cecilia Cathedral School, she said, where individualized instruction has helped him thrive.

"I have seen firsthand a difference

in the quality of education provided to my son," she said. "These are the improvements that can help when a parent has a choice."

Rick Bettger testified in support of the bill on behalf of three private Catholic schools in Omaha. He said the schools, which primarily serve inner-city students from low-income families, are funded primarily through private donations.

The tax credit scholarship proposed in LB364 could help secure the schools' financial future and help more students enroll there, Bettger said.

"This bill is about giving families the opportunity to place their children in a school that they feel gives their child a better chance at success," he said.

Renee Fry, executive director of OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in opposition to the bill, saying the credit would be much more generous than similar programs in other states as well as the existing state tax deduction for other types of charitable contributions.

Fry said the program would divert taxpayer dollars that could be used for public K-12 education to a second, private school system. A better way to help low-income students would be to direct more state funding to public schools in high-poverty areas, she said.

Anne Hunter-Pirtle, executive director of Stand for Schools, also testified in opposition. She said the bill would prohibit scholarship granting organizations from discriminating against students based on race but not religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other factors.

If the amount of credits grows by 25 percent per year as allowed under the bill, Hunter-Pirtle said, the program could reduce state revenue by approximately \$332 million over the

first 10 years.

“I don’t think anyone can seriously suggest that that amount of money will not impact public school funding and ... the funding of other state priorities like higher education, health care and public safety,” she said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

URBAN AFFAIRS

Bill would extend TIF repayment

The provisions of a constitutional amendment approved by Nebraska voters last November would be implemented under a bill considered Jan. 26 by the Urban Affairs Committee.

LB25, introduced by Omaha Sen. Justin Wayne, would extend the repayment period of tax-increment financing from 15 years to 20 if more than one half of the land in a project is designated as extremely blighted.



Sen. Justin Wayne

“LB25 would help incentivize the use of TIF where it is needed,” Wayne said. “Since the passage of Amendment 2, multiple developers have reached out to the city of Omaha to inquire about the possibility of using the extremely blighted provisions to build affordable housing.”

Jennifer Taylor, an Omaha city attorney, spoke in support of LB25. She said projects in extremely blighted areas often require new sewers, sidewalk repair, updated utilities and other infrastructure upgrades, making them more expensive and less profitable.

“[The bill] will go a long way to helping certain areas,” Taylor said.

“This will be the additional amount [of money] to fill that gap so that project now makes sense.”

Dan Marvin, Director of Urban Development for the city of Lincoln, also testified in support of the bill. He said extending the repayment period would enable Lincoln to build more affordable housing.

No one spoke in opposition to LB25. The committee advanced the bill to general file on a 7-0 vote.

Bill would remove percentage cap on extremely blighted designation

Nebraska cities would have greater flexibility in designating areas as extremely blighted under a bill considered Jan. 26 by the Urban Affairs Committee.

Introduced by Sen. Lynne Walz of Fremont, LB99 would exclude areas deemed extremely blighted from the percentage limitations currently placed on blighted areas under the state’s Community Development Law.



Sen. Lynne Walz

Walz said that metropolitan, primary and first class cities currently can deem only 35 percent of land as blighted or extremely blighted. Cities of the first class are impacted most significantly by the restriction, she said, with cities like South Sioux City, Kearney, Scottsbluff and Grand Island all near their limit.

Following a devastating flood in 2019, a significant area of Fremont is eligible to be designated as extremely blighted, Walz said, but doing so would put the city near the 35-percent limit, hindering future growth.

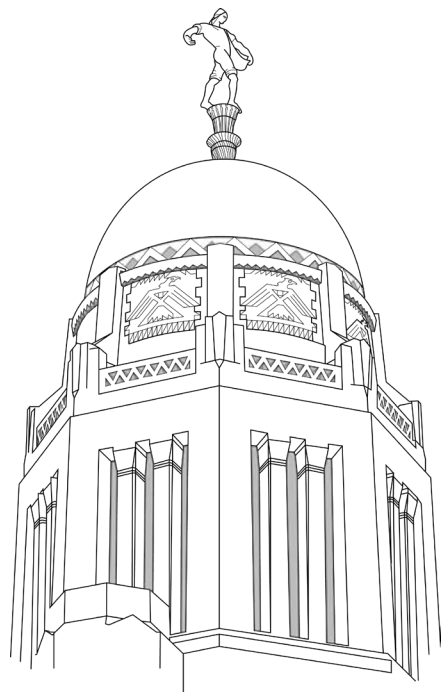
“Currently, if a developer were

to approach us, we would not have the ability to apply this designation to these areas and therefore the city would lose out on potential economic development opportunities,” Walz said.

Dan Marvin, Director of Urban Development for the city of Lincoln, spoke in favor of the bill. Lincoln would like to use the extremely blighted designation to enable homeowners to receive a federal tax credit available to people living in those areas, he said, without impacting the city’s ability to also use the designation elsewhere to promote development.

“To me, it’s a fairness issue,” Marvin said, adding that homeowners across the city should be eligible for such tax credits.

No one spoke in opposition to LB99 and the committee took no immediate action on the bill. ■



COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Further committee information is available at: NebraskaLegislature.gov/committees/standing-committees.php

Monday, Feb. 1

Banking, Commerce & Insurance Room 1507 - 9:30 a.m.

LB337 (Kolterman) Adopt the Step-Therapy Reform Act
LB487 (Arch) Change insurance coverage provisions for mental health conditions and serious mental illness
LB314 (Pahls) Change provisions related to insurance coverage of telehealth

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

Appointment: Kelly J. Lammers - Dept. of Banking and Finance
LB509 (Lindstrom) Change provisions relating to the State Treasurer and treasury management
LB532 (Lowe) Change provisions relating to property under the Uniform Disposition of Unclaimed Property Act and the School Employees Retirement Act and change a security deposit provision under the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act

Business & Labor Room 1524 - 9:30 a.m.

LB665 (Business & Labor) Deny claims against the state
LB666 (Business & Labor) Provide for payment of claims against the state
LB567 (Business & Labor) Change provisions relating to the maximum annual amount of benefits under the Employment Security Law
LB450 (McKinney) Adopt the Nebraska Innovation Hub Act
~~LB598 (Wishart) Adopt the Small-Business Stabilization Grant Program Act cancelled~~

Business & Labor Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB407 (McDonnell) Include certain county correctional officers in provisions governing mental injuries and mental illnesses under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
LB256 (M. Hansen) Change provisions relating to lump-sum settlement approval and the filing of releases under the Nebraska Workers'

Compensation Act
LB463 (Arch) Change provisions relating to physical examinations of injured employees under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
LB122 (Hunt) Change provisions relating to the minimum wage
LB660 (McDonnell) Change collective-bargaining provisions relating to the University of Nebraska and the Nebraska state colleges

Education Room 1525 - 9:30 a.m.

LB327 (Slama) Require a personal finance or financial literacy credit for high school graduation
LB452 (McKinney) Adopt the Financial Literacy Act
LB675 (Linehan) Adopt the Education Lobbyist Pay Transparency Act

Education Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Molly S. O'Holleran - Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
LB60 (Kolterman) Change provisions related to community college levies
LB587 (McDonnell) Adopt the Career Mentoring Grant Act
LB641 (Day) Change provisions regarding school district salaries during an epidemic

General Affairs Room 1510 - 9:30 a.m.

LB73 (Geist) Direct a portion of the proceeds from the Nebraska Racetrack Gaming Act to county agricultural societies
LB580 (Moser) Change provisions relating to the operation of games of chance under the Nebraska Racetrack Gaming Act
LB371 (Aguilar) Provide for games of chance under the Nebraska Racetrack Gaming Act at state, district, and county fair locations
LB536 (Aguilar) Change provisions relating to distribution and use of certain proceeds from horseracing

General Affairs Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB560 (Briese) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Racetrack Gaming Act
LB561 (Briese) Change provisions relating to the State Racing Commission and provide regulatory authority of the Nebraska Racetrack Gaming Act
LB608 (Hilgers) Eliminate obsolete provisions relating to the State Racing Commission
LR26CA (Lindstrom) Constitutional amendment to allow the Legislature to authorize, regulate, and tax sports wagering
LB545 (Wayne) Adopt the Games of Skill Act, provide for excise taxes, and use proceeds to reduce school district property tax levies

Transportation & Telecommunications Room 1113 - 9:30 a.m.

LB164 (Erdman) Change provisions relating to the establishment of speed limits by local authorities
LB226 (Hilkemann) Change motor vehicle tax exemptions as prescribed under the Motor Vehicle Registration Act

Transportation & Telecommunications Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB293 (Flood) Change the number of and qualifications for members of the Public Service Commission
LB619 (Sanders) Change excavation requirements under the One-Call Notification System Act
LB344 (Friesen) Change provisions of the One-Call Notification System Act and create the Underground Excavation Safety Committee

Tuesday, Feb. 2

Agriculture Room 1524 - 9:30 a.m.

Appointment: John E. Walvoord - Beginning Farmer Board
LR5 (Gragert) Accept the findings and recommendations of the Healthy Soils Task Force submitted to the Governor and the Agriculture Committee
LB584 (Vargas) Adopt the Mobile Food

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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Unit Act and change fees for a mobile food unit

Agriculture

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB235 (Brewer) State intent regarding implementation of a meat processing establishment inspection program
LB324 (Brandt) Change provisions of the Nebraska Meat and Poultry Inspection Law

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 9:30 a.m.

LB177 (Lindstrom) Change provisions relating to liens under the Uniform Commercial Code
LB234 (Flood) Change corporate reporting and occupation tax provisions
LB253 (Williams) Change provisions relating to series limited liability companies

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB535 (Kolterman) Provide for notice to life insurance assignees of default, lapse, and termination
LB503 (Flood) Authorize attorney's fees to be paid from trustee's sale proceeds for certain actions and judgments under the Nebraska Trust Deeds Act
LB510 (Lindstrom) Change provisions of the Nebraska Installment Loan Act

Education

Room 1525 - 9:30 a.m.

LB132 (DeBoer) Create the School Financing Review Commission
LB3 (Briese) Change notice requirements for school district budget hearings and require access to school district data
LB529 (Walz) Change provisions for the distribution of lottery funds used for education, transfer powers and duties, create new acts and funds, and change education provisions

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB607 (Hilgers) Correct references to a federally defined term relating to education

LB117 (M. Cavanaugh) Adopt the Hunger-Free Schools Act
LB528 (Walz) Provide, change, and eliminate provisions relating to education

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1525 - 12:00 p.m.

~~LB586 (Clements) Require an annual report regarding police and firefighter retirement plans in certain cities- cancelled~~

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 9:30 a.m.

LB343 (Friesen) Change identification inspection provisions under the Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title Act
LB581 (B. Hansen) Change motorcycle, moped, and autocycle helmet provisions

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB574 (Bostar) Change motor vehicle identification inspection requirements
LB534 (Day) Change provisions relating to renewal of operators' licenses while in the foreign service of the United States
LB448 (Morfeld) Impose a surcharge on operator's licenses and permits and state identification cards issued under the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act for the Nebraska State Patrol Retirement System
LB508 (Bostelman) Provide motor vehicle tax exemptions for certain veterans and spouses
LB616 (Hughes) Change abandoned motor vehicle provisions

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 9:30 a.m.

LB228 (Morfeld) Change the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act
LB265 (Blood) Change provisions of the Property Assessed Clean Energy Act
LB405 (Lowe) Change provisions relating to village boards of trustees

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB515 (McKinney) Adopt the Municipal Police Oversight Act
LB156 (Wayne) Adopt the Municipal

Inland Port Authority Act
LB332 (Wayne) Change provisions relating to the city council of a city of the metropolitan class

Wednesday, Feb. 3

Executive Board

Room 1524 - 12:00 p.m.

LB409 (Brewer) Provide a moratorium on construction of electric transmission lines and create the Electric Transmission Line Study Committee of the Legislature

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 9:30 a.m.

LB283 (Briese) Provide for year-round daylight saving time
LB59 (Stinner) Change provisions regarding sales of tourism promotional products by the Nebraska Tourism Commission and distribution of revenue
LB275 (Brewer) Create the Semiquincentennial Commission

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB263 (Briese) Require occupational boards to issue certain credentials based on credentials or work experience in another jurisdiction
LB250 (Hunt) Adopt the Interior Design Voluntary Registration Act
LB50 (Groene) Change voice analysis examiner and voice stress analyzer provisions under the Licensing of Truth and Deception Examiners Act

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 9:30 a.m.

LB143 (Kolterman) Require notice to school districts regarding changes in child placement
LB425 (Health & Human Services) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to complete a needs assessment and cost analysis for an inpatient adolescent psychiatric unit
LB427 (Health & Human Services) State intent that substance abuse and behavioral health treatment for juveniles by the Department of Health and Human Services not be delayed

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Further committee information is available at: NebraskaLegislature.gov/committees/standing-committees.php

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB428 (Health & Human Services) State that juveniles at youth rehabilitation and treatment centers are to receive an appropriate education equivalent to educational opportunities offered in public schools

LB429 (Health & Human Services) Require notification by the Department of Health and Human Services to the Legislature prior to implementation of substantial changes to facilities and programs under the Office of Juvenile Services

LB490 (M. Cavanaugh) Require youth rehabilitation and treatment centers to obtain a license from the Division of Public Health

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 9:30 a.m.

LB138 (Vargas) Require jails and law enforcement agencies to provide public notice before entering into agreements to enforce federal immigration law

LB151 (Morfeld) Adopt the Prosecutorial Transparency Act
LB663 (Geist) Require the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to create a mental health indicator in a criminal justice information system to alert emergency dispatch operators

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB51 (Lathrop) Change and provide qualifications for and duties relating to certification of law enforcement officers, require accreditation of law enforcement agencies, prohibit chokeholds in law enforcement, and require policies on excessive force
LB110 (Pansing Brooks) Change and provide duties relating to use of force in law enforcement

LB216 (Wayne) Prohibit certain public communications by a peace officer
LB217 (Wayne) Provide a penalty for filing a false report by a peace officer
LB472 (DeBoer) Require law enforcement officers to intervene when excessive force is used and require

policies on excessive force
LB551 (Wayne) Change and provide qualifications for and duties relating to certification of law enforcement officers, require accreditation of law enforcement agencies, prohibit chokeholds in law enforcement, require policies on excessive force, and create a public data base of law enforcement officer misconduct
LB601 (McKinney) Require law enforcement agencies to maintain records regarding officer discipline and create a public data base of law enforcement officer misconduct

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 9:30 a.m.

Appointments: Jim Hellbusch; Mark Quandahl - Neb. Environmental Trust Board

Appointment: Gregory Eugene Moen - Neb. Power Review Board

Appointment: Thomas L. Knutson - Neb. Natural Resources Commission
LB507 (Bostelman) Prohibit the use of treated seed corn in the production of agricultural ethyl alcohol in certain circumstances
LB615 (Erdman) Provide for the election of members of the Game and Parks Commission

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB513 (Brewer) Change qualifications and terms of public power district board members
LB627 (Morfeld) Change provisions relating to qualified voters for certain public power district elections

Revenue

Room 1524 - 9:30 a.m.

LB422 (Briese) Change the sales tax rate and impose sales tax on additional services

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB133 (Erdman) Adopt the Nebraska EPIC Consumption Tax Act and eliminate certain other taxes
LR11CA (Erdman) Constitutional

amendment to require enactment of a consumption tax and prohibit certain other forms of taxation

Thursday, Feb. 4

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 9:30 a.m.

LB414 (Wishart) Change provisions of the Political Subdivisions Construction Alternatives Act
LB242 (Brandt) Provide for county bridges under the Political Subdivisions Construction Alternatives Act
LB105 (Friesen) Change certification dates for unpaid county claims

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB41 (Dorn) Change provisions relating to certain payments of funds to townships
LB267 (McCollister) Change provisions relating to municipal counties
LB345 (Friesen) Provide a budget limitation exception as prescribed
LB303 (M. Hansen) Provide a budget limitation exception as prescribed

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 9:30 a.m.

LB645 (B. Hansen) Provide for enhanced penalties for violations of directed health measures committed by public officials
LB251 (M. Cavanaugh) Change the age for organ and tissue donation

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB569 (Pansing Brooks) Provide for certain treatment options for patients with Lyme disease
LB643 (B. Hansen) Protect an individual liberty right to accept or decline a vaccination under a mandatory directive
LB447 (M. Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to immunization under the Child Care Licensing Act

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 9:30 a.m.

LB348 (Morfeld) Change provisions relating to succession to real property by affidavit

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

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LB403 (Slama) Change provisions relating to recovery of medical assistance debt from an estate
LB470 (DeBoer) Adopt the Uniform Powers of Appointment Act
LB501 (Flood) Adopt the Uniform Easement Relocation Act
LB593 (Slama) Adopt the Uniform Foreign-Country Money Judgments Recognition Act and the Uniform Registration of Canadian Money Judgments Act

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB196 (Vargas) Prohibit discrimination based on lawful source of income under the Nebraska Fair Housing Act
LB309 (Clements) Adopt the Assistance Animal Integrity in Housing Act
LB394 (Morfeld) Adopt the Public Health Emergency Housing Protection Act and change deadlines for trials in actions for possession and forcible entry and detainer
LB402 (DeBoer) Require a report by the Supreme Court regarding eviction proceedings
LB419 (J. Cavanaugh) Require appointment of counsel in eviction proceedings and provide for a filing fee
LB453 (McKinney) Require landlords to comply with certain ordinances and change provisions relating to remedies under the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 9:30 a.m.

Appointment: Timothy E. Krause - Neb. Natural Resources Commission
LB562 (Erdman) Relocate the Game and Parks Commission headquarters to the city of Sidney, Nebraska
LB668 (Hughes) Relocate the headquarters of the Game and Parks Commission

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Bradley B. Dunbar - Neb. Natural Resources Commission
Appointment: Rodney R. Christen - Neb. Environmental Trust Board

LB305 (Erdman) Change appointment and removal provisions for the secretary of the Game and Parks Commission
LB589 (Groene) Change requirements for integrated management plans by natural resources districts

Revenue

Room 1524 - 9:30 a.m.

LB38 (Lindstrom) Change provisions relating to tax credits and retaliatory taxes
LB366 (Briese) Change the Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act
LB531 (Briese) Adopt the Nebraska Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Act

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB74 (Geist) Eliminate funding for the Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act and state intent regarding use of funds
LB176 (Lindstrom) Provide an income tax credit for certain agricultural producers
LB194 (Vargas) Change the Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Revitalization Act
LB254 (Williams) Extend the date for applications under the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act

Friday, Feb. 5

Appropriations

Room 1525 - 9:30 a.m.

Budget bills scheduled at this time for official record purposes. Testimony on the overall budget is appropriate, however testimony on specific issues and/or agencies should be presented at the date scheduled for the relevant agency

LB379 (Speaker Hilgers) Provide, change, and eliminate provisions relating to appropriations
LB380 (Speaker Hilgers) Appropriate funds for the expenses of Nebraska State Government for the biennium ending June 30, 2023
LB381 (Speaker Hilgers) Appropriate funds for salaries of members of the Legislature
LB382 (Speaker Hilgers) Appropriate funds for salaries of constitutional officers

LB383 (Speaker Hilgers) Appropriate funds for capital construction
LB384 (Speaker Hilgers) Provide for transfers of funds and change permitted use of a fund
LB385 (Speaker Hilgers) Change provisions relating to the Cash Reserve Fund

Appropriations

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Agency 18: Dept. of Agriculture
Agency 18: Dept. of Agriculture
Note: Potato Board & Poultry/Egg
Agency 39: Neb. Brand Committee
Agency 60: Neb. Ethanol Board
Agency 56: Neb. Wheat Board
Agency 61: Neb. Dairy Industry Development Board
Agency 86: Dry Bean Commission
Agency 88: Corn Development, Utilization and Marketing Board
Agency 92: Neb. Grain Sorghum Board
Agency 95: Dry Pea & Lentil Commission
Agency 97: Hemp Commission
Agency 45: Board of Barber Examiners
Agency 30: State Electrical Board
Agency 74: Neb. Power Review Board
Agency 41: State Real Estate Commission
Agency 53: Real Property Appraiser Board
Agency 57: Neb. Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
Agency 63: Neb. Board of Public Accountancy
Agency 58: Board of Engineers and Architects
Agency 59: Board of Geologists
Agency 62: State Board of Examiners for Land Surveyors
Agency 66: Abstracters Board of Examiners
Agency 73: State Board of Landscape Architects

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 9:30 a.m.

LB435 (B. Hansen) Require an official watermark on certain ballots under the Election Act
LB285 (Brewer) Change provisions relating to elections conducted pursuant to the Election Act
LB514 (Brewer) Change procedures for forming a new political party under the Election Act

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB362 (Halloran) Change provisions relating to ballots for early voting under the Election Act

LB11 (Blood) Change provisions regarding voter registration and requests for ballots for early voting

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 9:30 a.m.

LB413 (Wishart) Require coverage of medications for substance use disorder treatment and addiction medicine services under the Medical Assistance Act

LB400 (Arch) Change requirements related to coverage of telehealth by insurers and medicaid

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB592 (Stinner) Change provisions of the Automated Medication Systems Act

LB252 (Williams) Provide for refills of veterinary drug orders by veterinary drug distributors

LB583 (Murman) Require electronic prescriptions for controlled substances

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 9:30 a.m.

LB7 (Blood) Provide immunity from arrest and prosecution for witnesses and victims of violent crimes

LB118 (Morfeld) Change duration of harassment, sexual assault, and domestic abuse protection orders and change requirements for affidavits

LB372 (Day) Change provisions relating to applications under the Nebraska Crime Victim's Reparations Act

LB461 (Pansing Brooks) Require human trafficking informational posters in casinos

LB497 (DeBoer) Provide for compensation under the Nebraska Crime Victim's Reparations Act for health care providers examining or treating victims of sexual assault or domestic assault

LB519 (Morfeld) Provide immunity from arrest and prosecution for certain drug and alcohol offenses for witnesses and victims of sexual assaults

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB445 (M. Hansen) Change requirements for peace officers taking juveniles into custody or interrogating juveniles and prohibit use of statements taken in violation of such requirements

LB492 (M. Cavanaugh) Create the Nebraska Integrated Juvenile Data Governing Body and the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Information System

LB537 (Geist) Change provisions relating to placement and commitment of juveniles

LB568 (Pansing Brooks) Change provisions relating to truancy, juvenile courts, the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program, the Commission Grant Program, and compulsory education

LB638 (Health & Human Services) Require a report by the State Court Administrator regarding juveniles discharged from youth rehabilitation and treatment centers

Revenue

Room 1524 - 9:30 a.m.

LB272 (Morfeld) Adopt the Apprenticeship Training Program Tax Credit Act

LB318 (J. Cavanaugh) Increase the earned income tax credit

LB346 (Wishart) Adopt the Fueling Station Tax Credit Act

LB682 (Linehan) Change the New Markets Job Growth Investment Act

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB182 (Linehan) Exclude certain income from the definition of gross receipts

LB596 (Albrecht) Adopt the Nebraska Higher Blend Tax Credit Act

LB597 (Albrecht) Provide a tax credit for the parents of stillborn children

LB674 (Linehan) Change provisions relating to the allocation and use of credits under the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Act ■

As part of the Legislature's procedural modifications in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, four options have been approved for public input this year.

1. As always, individuals may testify in person at committee hearings. Hearing room capacity will be limited due to social distancing.
2. The public may submit written testimony in person on the day of a public hearing – between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. in the room in which the hearing will take place. These submissions will be included in the official committee hearing record.
3. Individuals wishing to provide public comment without appearing in person may submit a position letter by emailing the committee's account by 12:00 p.m. CST on the last work day prior to the public hearing. A list of committee email accounts is available on the Legislature's website at NebraskaLegislature.gov/committees/committee-emails.php.
4. Online comments may be submitted through a new feature on the Legislature's website, which is available on each individual bill page. Online written comments will not be included as part of the official legislative record.

For details, visit NebraskaLegislature.gov/committees/public-input.php ■

LEGISLATIVE GLOSSARY

“A” Bill - see Appropriation Bill.

Amendment On File - an amendment of 10 or more pages, not printed separately or in the Journal, that is available in the Clerk’s Office (Room 2018).

Amendment Printed Separate - an amendment of 10 or more pages, printed separately from the Journal, that is available in the Bill Room (Room 1102).

Appropriation Bill (“A” Bill) - a bill to appropriate funds to finance another bill bearing the same number.

Attorney General’s Opinion - a written analysis of a question of law prepared by the attorney general for the governor, the head of an executive department or any state senator.

Bill - see Legislative Bill.

Bracket - to delay consideration of a bill.

Call of the House - a procedure used to compel attendance of unexcused senators in the chamber.

Carry-over Legislation - bills and resolutions introduced during the regular session in an odd-numbered year and held over for consideration during the regular session in an even-numbered year.

Chair - the presiding officer.

Cloture - a parliamentary action to cease debate on a bill and vote immediately on its advancement. A motion for cloture may be made after eight hours of debate on most bills and after 12 hours on appropriation bills introduced by the Appropriations Committee.

Constitutional Amendment Resolution - a proposal to amend the state constitution, ratify or reject an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, or petition Congress about amending the U.S. Constitution. State CA resolutions have the suffix “CA” by the resolution number, and they must be approved by the voters as well as the Legislature.

Consent Calendar - a portion of the agenda in which relatively noncontroversial bills are considered and quickly advanced to the next legislative stage. Usually, a bill on consent calendar can be debated for no more than 15 minutes.

“E” Clause - see Emergency Clause.

E&R - see Enrollment and Review.

Emergency Clause (“E” Clause) - a provision that allows a bill or a portion of a bill to take effect immediately after the governor signs it or after the Legislature overrides the governor’s veto.

Engrossment - the process of preparing a bill for Final Reading by incorporating all adopted amendments.

Enrollment and Review (E&R) - the process of incorporating adopted amendments into a bill and reviewing the bill for technical and grammatical accuracy.

Executive Session - a closed meeting of a committee to discuss and act on bills and resolutions. An executive session is open only to committee members, committee staff and the media.

Final Reading - the third and last stage at which a bill is considered by the entire Legislature. The clerk reads the entire bill aloud, unless final reading is waived, and senators vote without debate on whether to submit the bill to the governor.

Fiscal Note - a statement prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office estimating the effect a bill would have on state and/or local expenditures and revenue.

Floor - the area of the legislative chamber where the senators sit. When a committee advances a bill “to the floor,” it means the bill is being sent to the full Legislature for consideration.

General File - the first stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature. Bills on General File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to Select File.

Hearing - a regularly scheduled committee meeting to receive public comment on proposed bills and resolutions.

House Under Call - the term used when all unexcused senators are required to be in their seats in the chamber and unauthorized personnel must leave the floor.

Indefinitely Postpone (IPP) - to kill a bill.

Interim - the period between regular legislative sessions.

Interim Study Resolution - a resolution authorizing a committee to study an issue following adjournment of a legislative session.

IPP - see Indefinitely Postpone.

Journal - see Legislative Journal.

Laws of Nebraska (Session Laws) - bound compilation of all laws and constitutional amendment resolutions passed in a legislative session, the state Constitution, and subject and section indexes.

Legislative Bill (LB) - a proposal to create, change or delete one or more laws.



Legislative History - the committee and floor debate records for any bill. A history includes transcripts of the bill's hearing and all floor debate.

Legislative Journal - official record of legislative floor action, including all motions, the number of yeas and nays on each vote, etc.

Legislative Resolution (LR) - a proposal to make a formal expression of opinion, intent or recognition; amend the state or federal constitution; or authorize a study of an issue during the interim. See also Constitutional Amendment Resolution, Interim Study Resolution.

Line-Item Veto - the power of the governor to make specific reductions in any part of a budget bill passed by the Legislature.

Machine Vote - a vote taken by electronic voting system. The voting board shows how each senator voted, but only vote totals are entered in the Legislative Journal.

Major Proposal - a bill or constitutional amendment resolution that the speaker designates as important enough for scheduling priority. Each session, up to five bills may be chosen as major proposals, all of which must be senator priority bills and must get the approval of two-thirds of the Executive Board.

One-liner - a one-line description of a bill or resolution.

Override a Veto - see Veto Override.

President of the Legislature - the lieutenant governor. While senators address whomever is in the chair as Mr. or Madam President, the lieutenant governor alone holds the official title.

Presiding Officer - the senator currently presiding over legislative proceedings.

Priority Bill - a bill that has priority status and generally is considered ahead of other bills in debate. Each senator may select one priority bill, each committee may select two priority bills, and the speaker may select up to 25 priority bills.

Record Vote - a vote on which a record is kept of how each senator voted. The vote is taken by electronic voting system and the senators' names and corresponding votes are then printed in the Legislative Journal.

Regular Session - the annual session that begins the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January.

Resolution - see Legislative Resolution.

Revisor Bill - a bill, prepared by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, proposing a technical correction or the repeal of an obsolete statute.

Roll Call Vote - a vote during which the senators vote one at a time as the clerk reads their names. Senators cast their votes verbally, and their names and corresponding votes

may be printed in the Legislative Journal.

Select Committee - a permanent committee with a subject-matter jurisdiction related to the administration of the Legislature.

Select File - the second stage at which a bill is considered by the entire Legislature. Bills on Select File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed or advanced to Final Reading.

Session - a period of time, usually a number of days, during which the Legislature meets and transacts business.

Session Laws - compilation of all laws and constitutional amendment resolutions passed in a session.

Sine Die - without setting a future date for reconvening. When the Legislature adjourns sine die, the legislative session is finished for the year.

Slip Law - a bill or constitutional amendment resolution printed individually in its approved form after being enacted into law or submitted to voters.

Speaker of the Legislature - the officer of the Legislature, elected from among the senators, who prepares the daily agenda and the session calendar and presides in the absence of the lieutenant governor.

Special Committee - a committee created by law for a specific reason. Except for the Executive Board, special committees have no jurisdiction over bills or resolutions.

Special Session - a limited legislative session called for a specific purpose by the governor or two-thirds (33 members) of the Legislature.

Standing Committee - a permanent committee with subject-matter jurisdiction related to an area of public policy. Almost all bills and resolutions are referred to one of the 14 standing committees.

Summary Sheet - a daily list of all legislative activity that has taken place in one legislative day, including action taken on bills and resolutions.

Veto - the power of the governor to reject bills passed by the Legislature. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to either sign or veto a bill. The Legislature then has an opportunity to override the veto.

Veto Override - the power of the Legislature to pass a bill over the governor's veto. A veto override requires the approval of three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature.

Voice Vote - a vote in which senators cast their votes orally and no totals are recorded.

Worksheet - a list, prepared daily, that indicates the status of all bills and resolutions at the end of that legislative day.



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