

## Bill would require inmates to earn early release



Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh said violent offenders should not automatically receive reduced sentences for good behavior.

Nebraska's most violent prison inmates would have to earn "good time" reductions to their sentences under legislation heard by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 12.

LB832, introduced by Omaha Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh, would require violent offenders to earn sentence reductions by participating in programs approved by the state Department of Correctional Services. The bill would apply only to inmates convicted of violent crimes such as murder, manslaughter, assault, kidnapping, sexual assault, robbery and using a deadly weapon to commit a felony.

Current law automatically awards all inmates a 50 percent sentence reduction based on good behavior. Under LB832, violent offenders instead would receive a 25 percent

sentence reduction for good behavior and an additional 25 percent reduction for participation in rehabilitation programs. That programming would include academic and vocational education, substance abuse treatment and mental health and psychiatric treatment, which includes criminal personality programming and work programs.

Lautenbaugh said the bill would simply shift more of the responsibility for sentence reductions to certain inmates.

"It's a philosophical approach for me, I think it just makes sense to have [good time] be earned," he said.

Mike Kenney, director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, testified in support of the bill, saying it would hold the most

(continued page 2)

## Priority designation proposed for low-performing schools

Senators gave first-round approval Feb. 13 to a bill that would provide special assistance to the state's lowest performing schools.

Under LB438, as originally introduced by York Sen. Greg Adams, an intervention team appointed by the State Board of Education would assist the school district and school staff in diagnosing issues and designing and implementing strategies to address them. A school would retain the priority designation until the State Board of Education determines it is no longer necessary.

Adams said the state currently has no way to intervene in failing school districts.

"We already collect the data but we don't have an accountability system," he said. "There is nothing in statute that gives the state board the authority to intervene and fix problems."

An Education Committee amendment, adopted 34-0, replaced the bill and decreased the number of eligible priority designation schools from five to three. Under the bill as amended, the intervention team — in conjunction with school district staff — would be required to develop a progress plan to include specific action by the school and district to remove the priority designation. Any priority school would be required to comply with the progress



Sen. Greg Adams

(continued page 3)

# Bill would require inmates to earn early release

(continued from front page)

violent offenders to a higher standard of conduct while in prison.

“Earned time would help to develop, in prison, a pattern of behavior that is considerate of others and in keeping with good conduct in society,” Kenney said.

“With our current system violent offenders have little motivation to work on individually crafted rehabilitation plans,” said John Freudenberg of the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office. “If we want rehabilitation programs to be effective, there has to be a reason for offenders to participate,” he said.

Chuck Freyermuth, uncle of murder victim Andrea Kruger, testified in support of LB832, saying the bill focuses on the inmates who need the most help before rejoining society.

“This demographic is the breeding ground which gives rise to violent career criminals and it is the exact population that you have a responsibility to protect us from,” he said.

Alan Peterson of American Civil Liberties Union Nebraska called LB832 an “illusory nonsolution.” Testifying in opposition to the bill, he said using the programs as incen-

tive for early release will not succeed because inmates currently do not have adequate access to rehabilitative

programming.

The committee took no immediate action on LB832. ■

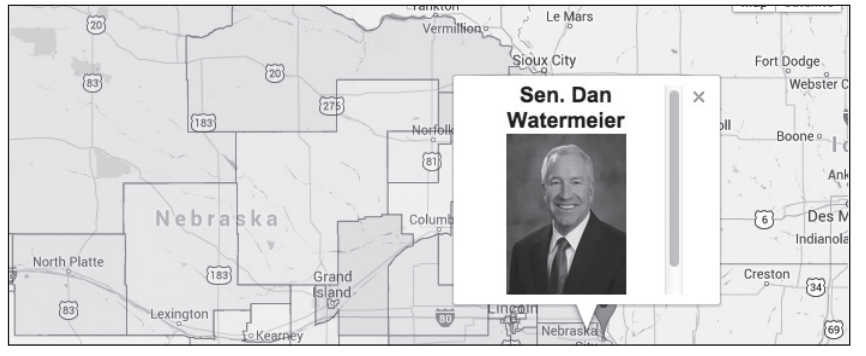
## FIND YOUR SENATOR

If you want to know which legislative district you live in, [www.NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://www.NebraskaLegislature.gov) provides an easy tool for locating your district and senator.

Clicking on the “Senators” ► “Find your senator” link on the left side of the home page will open a map that permits you to enter your address or click on the area in which you live.

Once you click the map in the area marked by the location pin, a picture of your senator will appear with a “More Info” link below the image. Clicking the “More Info” link will take you to the senator’s Web page.

This page contains senators’ contact information and links to their biography and photos. It also provides a list of committees they serve on and the bills they’ve introduced.



## UNICAMERAL UPDATE

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

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

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

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

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

THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE’S OFFICIAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1977

## Priority designation proposed for low-performing schools

(continued from front page)

plan for the school district to maintain accreditation.

The State Board of Education would annually review progress plans and suggest any modifications. If a school is designated as a priority school for five consecutive years, the board would be required to reevaluate the progress plan.

Sullivan said the current education system is good, but far from perfect.

“I know we have shortcomings, but we need to address them in a collective manner,” she said. “We often talk about the value of the resources we have in the state. Our most valuable resource is the human capital and the young people we have.”

Scottsbluff Sen. John Harms supported the bill, saying that investment in education, including early childhood education, is paramount.

“So many children come into our school systems with deficiencies,” he said. “If we don’t start to place dollars into early childhood education, many of those children are starting five years behind.”

Omaha Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh supported increased accountability but questioned whether the bill went far enough.

“This bill will create the potentiality of the state in-



From left: Sens. Greg Adams, Al Davis and Tom Carlson discuss LB438.

tervening in a couple of districts, but there are 90 to 150 schools that warrant our attention right now,” he said. “This is meant to bring accountability, but what happens on the back end if they don’t perform?”

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

## U.S. CONGRESS CONTACT INFORMATION

Senator Mike Johanns  
United States Senate  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-4224

Senator Deb Fischer  
United States Senate  
825 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-6551

Congressman Jeff Fortenberry  
(District 1)  
1514 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Tel. (202) 225-4806

Congressman Lee Terry  
(District 2)  
2266 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Tel. (202) 225-4155

Congressman Adrian Smith  
(District 3)  
2241 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Tel. (202) 225-6435

# AGRICULTURE

## BPA regulation proposed

The Agriculture Committee heard testimony Feb. 11 on a bill that would regulate Bisphenol A - commonly called BPA - in Nebraska.

LB696, introduced by Malcolm Sen. Ken Haar, would prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of a reusable food container containing BPA as of Jan. 1, 2015.



Sen. Ken Haar

After Jan. 1, 2016, the manufacture, sale or distribution of any food stored in packaging containing BPA that is marketed toward children would be prohibited and all food packaging containing BPA would be required to carry the following warning: "This package contains Bisphenol A, a chemical that may harm fetal development, which can leach into the food."

The state Department of Environmental Quality would be responsible for enforcing the ban and violators would be subject to a civil penalty of \$10,000.

Haar said the federal government already bans BPA in baby bottles, sippy cups and baby formula containers out of concern for the chemical's toxic effects. Nebraska should consider extending those protections to older children by clearly labeling products that contain BPA, he said.

"The purpose of this bill is to protect children," Haar said.

Bob Rauner of the Nebraska Medical Association testified in support of the bill. Consumers should know what products contain BPA, he said, so they can weigh the evidence and

make choices for their families.

"I think it definitely should be labeled because there is enough of a concern," Rauner said.

April Segura also testified in support, saying research shows that BPA creates a number of negative effects on fetuses and newborns.

"Consumers should know if products are made with this harmful chemical," Segura said. "Not all of the effects of BPA are known but why should we have our children be the lab rats?"

Mick Mines, representing the Nebraska Grocery Industry Association, testified in opposition to the bill. He said the labeling required in LB696 would convey a threat to human health from BPA that research does not support.

Mines said a child would have to consume 527 servings of chicken soup per day to ingest BPA in excess of the level considered safe.

"Based on research, BPA in products is not toxic, even to children," he said.

Ron Sedlacek of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce also opposed the bill. If Nebraska were the only state in the country with additional BPA labeling laws it would adversely affect commerce, he said.

"We feel that this is truly more of a national issue," Sedlacek said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

LB891, introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, would appropriate funds to pay the state's past due and current membership dues to the Midwest Passenger Rail Compact.



Sen. Annette Dubas

Dubas said Nebraska has not paid its annual \$15,000 dues since 2009 but legally remains a member of the compact. The dues were eliminated from the state budget due to the economic downturn, she said, but continue to accrue whether Nebraska actively participates in the compact or not.

A negotiated amount to bring the state current on its dues was part of last session's budget package, but was line-item vetoed by the governor. An override attempt by Dubas failed.

"So we are basically back to square one with no resolution," Dubas said.

Milo Mumgaard of the city of Lincoln Mayor's Office testified in support of the bill, saying the state should be involved in planning discussions regarding the growth of passenger rail.

"There is a tremendous amount of activity already going on in the Midwest region," Mumgaard said.

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

## Bill would provide black history center matching funds

The Appropriations Committee heard testimony Feb. 13 on a bill that would provide state matching funds for a new black history center in Omaha.

LB904, introduced by Omaha Sen. Rick Kolowski, would



Sen. Rick Kolowski

# APPROPRIATIONS

## Funds sought for rail compact dues

The Appropriations Committee heard testimony Feb. 13 on a bill seeking funds to pay Nebraska's rail compact dues.

establish the Great Plains Black History Endowment Fund to support the design, development and construction of the Great Plains Black History Museum, Science and Technology Center in Omaha.

The bill would appropriate \$8 million in general funds to the new fund to be available as matching grants. The Nebraska State Historical Society would administer the fund and would make a \$1 million grant for each \$2 million in matching funds collected for the center, up to a total of \$8 million in state funds.

Kolowski said estimates indicate that a new center would draw 65,000 visitors a year and could have a significant economic impact on Omaha. The possibility of matching state funds would inspire more donors, he said.

“I believe it is important that the state join in support of this effort,” Kolowski said.

Jim Beatty, chairman and president of the Great Plains Black History Museum, testified in support of the bill. Beatty estimated that \$28 million would be needed to complete the envisioned center that would replace the museum’s previous physical location, which closed to the public in 1997.

Beatty said state support for the project would send a message that Nebraska values its citizens of color and their contributions.

“We, as African American, are often excluded in America and in history books,” he said.

Marty Bilek of the Omaha Mayor’s Office also testified in support of the bill, saying the museum’s collections contain valuable historical and education material about the contributions of African Americans to the city and the state.

“That history is valuable,” Bilek said. “Everyone growing up here should be aware of it.”

James L. Calloway, son of the Great Plains Black History Museum’s founder, testified in opposition to the bill. He said moving the museum out of North Omaha would be contrary to his mother’s vision for the institution.

Calloway said the museum’s collections could be made accessible to the public without spending large sums of money on a new building, which he said could be better spent addressing the needs of the African American community in Omaha. “We’re sitting here talking \$28 million for a monument?” he said. “This is ridiculous.”

The committee took no immediate action on LB904.

## BANKING, COMMERCE & INSURANCE



### Bill would ensure coverage for carbon monoxide

Homeowners would receive additional insurance protections under a bill heard by the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee Feb. 10.

LB876, introduced by Omaha Sen. Sara Howard, would prohibit homeowner insurance policies from excluding coverage for injury or damage resulting from carbon monoxide or other gases released from a heating unit or ventilation system.



Sen. Sara Howard

Currently, some homeowner insurance policies contain what is known as a “pollution exclusion,” which denies coverage for damage resulting from a carbon monoxide leak.

Howard said the issue is especially pressing in her district where older homes – and older furnaces – are

the norm.

“I disagree with the idea that carbon monoxide generated in the home should qualify as pollution,” she said. “I don’t believe that the policy of the state should deny coverage to a person who legitimately believes that their insurance protects them from the risk.”

Cheryl Green of Clay Center testified in support of the bill. She said she and her husband John were poisoned by carbon monoxide gas in their church-owned parsonage, which her husband did not survive. Green said the church’s insurance policy contained a pollution exclusion and her claim has been denied.

“Though I may appear fine on the outside, the poisoning has left me with reduced brain function, memory loss, decreased energy and increased levels of pain,” she said. “Consumers buy insurance to feel protected, to cover accidents and help recover and repair damage.”

No one testified in opposition to the bill. The committee voted to advance the bill to general file with amendments on a 8-0 vote.

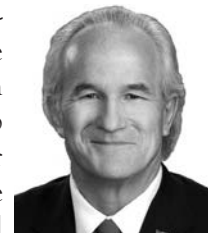
## BUSINESS & LABOR



### Veteran hiring incentive increase proposed

Businesses would receive additional incentives to hire and train veterans under legislation heard by the Business and Labor Committee Feb. 10.

LB1083, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Tommy Garrett, would increase the maximum amount of job training grants for employers who hire recently separated veterans. The state



Sen. Tommy Garrett

Department of Economic Development grants would be given only to businesses that hire veterans who have been honorably discharged within two years prior to the grant application.

Employers would receive an additional \$2,500 or \$5,000 to train each recently separated veteran.

Citing a Nebraska Chamber of Commerce study, Garrett said the bill addresses a lack of skilled labor in Nebraska and the high unemployment rate for veterans.

“Recruiting military veterans is seen as part of a comprehensive solution to resolve the impediment to business growth in Nebraska,” he said.

Richard Baier of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce testified in support of the bill, calling it a marketing effort to make veterans more attractive to employers. Additional funds should be offered to employers, he said, to compensate for skill-set transferability issues that are unique to veterans.

Lt. Col. James Stevenson of the National Guard Association of Nebraska said the bill is needed to help veterans adapt to civilian life.

“Anything that we can do to support those members as they transition to full-time, part-time or complete civilian employment is something that would be beneficial to the state,” Stevenson said.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB1083.

## EDUCATION

### Veterans would receive in-state tuition rates under residency bill

Recently separated veterans, their spouses and dependents would be eligible for in-state tuition under a bill

advanced from general file Feb. 13.

Under LB740, as originally introduced by Bellevue Sen. Sue Crawford, veterans who have separated from a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States within the past two years would be eligible for in-state tuition.



Sen. Sue Crawford

To receive residency status, a veteran must demonstrate intent to become a permanent resident of the state by registering to vote and obtaining a state driver’s license.

An Education Committee amendment, adopted 38-0, replaced the bill and clarified that it would not apply to veterans who qualify for benefits under the Yellow Ribbon Program, which pays the difference in tuition and fees not covered under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Spouses and dependents of Yellow Ribbon benefit recipients still would be eligible under the bill.

Omaha Sen. Bob Krist supported the bill, saying that in the event of an economic downturn, providing these benefits could keep Offutt Air Force Base open.

“This is absolutely critical,” he said. “One factor can be the difference in a base closure. This would tip the balance in our favor.”

Senators voted to advance the bill on a 39-0 vote.

### Later school aid certification date advanced

The deadline for certifying state aid under the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA) would be moved back one month under a bill advanced from general file Feb. 12.

LB838, introduced by Cedar Rapids Sen. Kate Sullivan, would delay

the deadline from March 1 to April 10 for certifying state aid, budget authority and applicable allowable reserve percentages under TEEOSA for 2014 only.



Sen. Kate Sullivan

Sullivan said the deadline change would provide flexibility to the state Department of Education.

“If we leave the March 1 date in place, the [department] would be required to certify the aid by that date,” she said. “Changing the deadline would provide some flexibility and is still ahead of the April 15 deadline to notify teachers of potential reductions in force.”

The change also would apply to the deadline for the department to report the necessary funding level to the governor, Appropriations Committee and Education Committee.

Senators voted to advance the bill on a 35-0 vote.

### Repeal of learning community common levy proposed

Members of the Omaha Learning Community would rely on individual levies for funding under a bill heard by the Education Committee Feb. 11.

Currently, the eleven member school districts receive revenue raised from a common 95-cent levy, which is distributed proportionally based upon each district’s formula need minus state aid and other receipts.

LB865, introduced by Papillion Sen. Jim Smith, would eliminate the common levy and return each district to an individual levy.



Sen. Jim Smith

Smith said the current system pits school districts

against each other and fails to deliver the funds where they are needed most. He said contrary to some speculation, the bill is not an attempt to abolish the learning community.

“Don’t buy into the thought that to eliminate the common levy, to address the funding deficiencies, that you would have to get rid of the learning community,” he said. “Let the learning community do what it does and let the Legislature find a method to adequately address the learning needs of children living in poverty in the member districts.”

LB865 also would change the calculation of state aid to schools under the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA). Currently, aid for the 11 member districts is calculated collectively. Under the bill, each member district’s aid would be calculated individually.

The current funding formula for the learning community produces \$461 million in property taxes. The bill would increase state aid to schools by an estimated \$3.8 million. The bill also would repeal the maximum 2-cent special building fund levy, which currently produces \$9.7 million in revenue.

Papillion-La Vista School District Superintendent Andrew Rikli testified in support of the bill. He said enrollment and student needs are increasing in his district, while funding has remained stagnant.

“Most of the member districts are already levying and taxing at the max,” he said. “[The common levy] produces less state aid for member districts than if they were funded individually. The distribution formula is sending the dollars in the wrong direction. Some of the districts with the most profound needs are getting some of the least resources.”

Ted Stillwell, chief executive officer of the Omaha Learning Community,

opposed the bill, saying another solution is possible.

“There is some commonality among these member districts. There are issues that affect all of them, even though they’re not the same in each district,” he said. “Further examination is well-warranted; it deserves more attention that just looking at it every five or six years.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

### Visioning process proposed for state education

A common statewide vision for education is the focus of a bill discussed during an Education Committee hearing Feb. 10.

LB1103, introduced by the Education Committee, would authorize members of the committee to conduct a strategic planning process to create the statewide vision. Committee chairperson Kate Sullivan of Cedar Rapids said the Legislature must begin the process to achieve the best possible results for all students in the state.

“I believe strongly that Nebraskans truly value and put a high priority on education,” she said. “With ever growing needs and challenges, we must not only be wise in the use of our resources but also leverage those resources to get the most out of them.”

Members of the committee could conduct meetings, work sessions and focus groups to discuss aspirational goals, visionary objectives, meaningful priorities and practical strategies. The committee also would be required to hold at least three public hearings throughout the state to receive testimony from the general public.

Lincoln East High School senior Imani Wilson spoke in support of the bill, saying there still is a significant achievement gap affecting minority students.

“The research and planning process recommended in this bill is necessary to ensure Nebraska’s educational system continues to be relevant and effective,” she said. “It will point us in a direction that will erase the achievement gap and initiate programs and policies that will help more of my classmates walk across the stage on graduation day.”

The committee would be required to submit a report to the clerk of the Legislature by Dec. 31, 2014.

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

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

### Committees proposed to investigate DHHS, Corrections

Two proposals to establish special investigative committees of the Legislature were discussed during an Executive Board hearing Feb. 10.

LR400, introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, would establish the ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature to study the ACCESSNebraska system. ACCESSNebraska is an online and call center system developed by the state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 2009 to determine public benefit eligibility and to deliver those benefits to clients.



Sen. Annette Dubas

Under the proposal, the scope of the investigation would include but not be limited to the:

- experiences of clients and their families;
- adequacy of the technology used within the ACCESSNe-

braska system; and

- adequacy of staffing and training of DHHS employees working within the system.

Dubas said the state has experienced a variety of problems with ACCESSNebraska since its inception, including long wait times for callers, high worker turnover and lost paperwork.

“This program needs a very comprehensive [examination] to determine where we are at and what we need to do at multiple levels to take corrective action,” she said.

The committee would consist of seven members of the Legislature appointed by the Executive Board. The committee would be authorized to hold hearings and issue subpoenas as deemed necessary and would issue a report with its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than Dec. 15, 2014.

James Goddard of Nebraska Appleseed supported the resolution. He said an investigative committee would provide an opportunity to thoroughly study the root problems with ACCESSNebraska and discover possible solutions.

“LR400 represents the best approach to improve the ACCESSNebraska system,” Goddard said.

Thomas Pristow, director of Children and Family Services at DHHS, testified in a neutral capacity.

Pristow said the department has worked hard to improve the system but acknowledged that problems persist. He said DHHS would be willing to work with an oversight committee to continue to improve the system.

“I’d be happy to come before this group or any other group to talk about ACCESSNebraska and how it’s doing,” he said.

The committee voted 9-0 to advance LR400 to general file.

Testimony also was heard on LR424, introduced by Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop, which would establish the Department of Correctional Services Special Investigative Committee in order to study the circumstances of Nikko Jenkins’ incarceration and release.



Sen. Steve Lathrop

Lathrop said the case – in which Jenkins allegedly committed four homicides in Omaha upon his release from prison – highlights issues in the state’s correctional services that the Legislature needs to examine.

“There are systemic problems in corrections that have to do with overcrowding, absence of programming [and] absence of mental health care,” Lathrop said.

As introduced, the resolution would establish an investigative committee composed of five members of the Legislature appointed by the Executive Board and would issue a report to the Legislature no later than Dec. 15, 2014.

Among other issues, the committee would study the following with respect to the state Department of Correctional Services:

- administration of good time laws;
- policies relating to the segregation of inmates;
- adequacy of programs designed to rehabilitate inmates;
- availability of mental health care and measures in place to ensure that inmates receive appropriate mental health care or confinement through the civil commitment process; and
- transition of inmates from incarceration to the community at large.

Marshall Lux, director of the state’s Ombudsman’s Office, testified in support of the resolution. Lux said his office issued an extensive report on the Jenkins case to the state Department of Corrections and received a three-sentence reply.

“Our report actually only scratches the surface in regard to what can be learned about our system from Mr. Jenkins’ case,” he said, noting that Jenkins had been involved in both the state’s child welfare and juvenile justice systems since the age of seven.

“What we’ll likely find out ... is that there were failures as well in the juvenile justice system and in the child welfare system in addressing this young man’s issues,” Lux said. “His case is not unique.”

No opposition testimony was given on either resolution.

After voting 9-0 to amend LR424 to increase membership of the investigative committee from five members to seven, the Executive Board voted 9-0 to advance the resolution to general file.

## GENERAL AFFAIRS

### Legalization of casino gambling proposed

The General Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 10 on a measure that would authorize local-option casino gaming in Nebraska.

LR416CA, introduced by Wilber Sen. Russ Karpisek, would place a proposed amendment to the Nebraska Constitution on the November 2014 general election ballot authorizing local-option casino gaming.



Sen. Russ Karpisek

If approved by voters, the amend-



ment would allow a local governing body to place a measure on a local ballot to authorize casino gaming within its jurisdiction. After regulatory expenses, revenue would be allocated according to the following percentages:

- 50 percent to reduce property taxes;
- 25 percent to elementary and secondary education;
- 12 percent to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission;
- 12 percent to the state Department of Natural Resources for water funding; and
- 1 percent to the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund.

Karpisek said the state is losing revenue to neighboring states that could be used to provide property tax relief and education funding in Nebraska.

“Here is an idea to fix some of these problems or at least help,” he said, adding that 70 percent of Nebraska’s population already lives within an hour’s drive of a casino.

David Nicholson, a retired investigator with the Nebraska State Patrol, testified in support of the measure, saying his research indicates that Nebraska gamblers cross the border to other states to visit casinos.

“In the two-year study, 38 percent of the vehicles at Council Bluffs [casino] were Nebraska vehicles,” he said.

Pat Loontjer of Gambling with the Good Life opposed the bill. She said research shows that casino gaming leads to increases in pathological gambling, alcohol and drug use, incidents of domestic violence and many other societal ills.

“This is not the quality of life that we need in Nebraska,” Loontjer said.

Loretta Fairchild, a retired economics professor, agreed.

“Casinos are a bridge to nowhere,” Fairchild said, “not the promised land

of low taxes forever that the proponents are promising.”

The committee took no immediate action on the proposal.



**Automatic advancement for write-in candidates passed**

Senators passed a bill Feb. 13 that allows for automatic advancement in the case of a small pool of candidates for county office.

If the number of county office candidates from each party in a primary election does not exceed the number of candidates that may be nominated by the party, those candidates automatically will advance to the general election under LB56, a bill introduced by O’Neill Sen. Tyson Larson.

The bill allows for a person to file as a write-in candidate in a partisan primary election within two days of the March 1 filing deadline.



Sen. Tyson Larson

Senators passed the bill on a 41-2 vote.

**Veteran job preference updates approved**

Senators gave final approval Feb. 13 to a bill that updates laws pertaining to preferences for veterans seeking employment.

LB588, introduced by Syracuse Sen. Dan Watermeier, requires that 5 percent be added to all parts of an examination or numerical



Sen. Dan Watermeier

scoring if a veteran receives a passing score and makes a claim for preference on the application.

If no examination or numerical scoring is used, preference will be given to a qualifying veteran if two or more equally qualified candidates are being considered for a position.

Notices of all positions of employment available for veteran preference are required to state that the position is subject to the preference. A veteran desiring to use the preference will be required to provide the hiring authority with a copy of his or her Defense Department Form 214.

The bill also allows the spouse of a veteran who has a 100 percent permanent disability to claim the preference.

LB588 passed on a 44-0 vote and takes effect Jan. 1, 2015.

**Lower residency requirement proposed for veterans’ homes**

More people would be eligible to live in veterans’ homes under a bill heard by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 13.

Currently, an applicant for residency must have been a resident of the state for at least two years. Under LB805, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Bill Avery, a person with Nebraska resident parents or children also would qualify.



Sen. Bill Avery

Avery said the bill would allow veterans to be near family members in their waning years.

“[This bill would] provide an opportunity for families in Nebraska to bring their parents or children back to the state,” he said. “They have served their country and it makes no sense to not allow them to have the comfort of living close to their loved ones.”

Terry Schifferns, the daughter of a veteran, supported the bill. She said the current residency requirements prevented her family from bringing her father back to Nebraska from a veterans' home in Iowa.

"I've lived here since 1974. We could have had someone visit him every day," she said. "My father didn't fight for Iowa or Nebraska. He went to Korea when he was asked and he fought for his country."

Dennis Schissel, state council vice president of the Vietnam Veterans of America, opposed the bill. He said if veterans want to live in a Nebraska veterans' home, they should become state residents and take their place on a waiting list.

"It is inequitable to the residents of this state who are qualified at the time of their application," he said. "Changing the requirements could displace current residents and lead to an influx of veterans from other states."

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

**Legislative approval proposed for moving state services**

The relocation of state services or agencies costing more than \$15 million would require legislative approval under a bill heard by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 13.

Under LB935, introduced by Grand Island Sen. Mike Gloor, the Legislature would have the authority to approve or deny a major relocation from one community to another. Gloor said the bill would add a layer of justification, validation and transparency to the process.

The bill would apply retroactively to any move of a state service or agency



Sen. Mike Gloor

proposed on or after Jan. 1, 2013.

"It's no secret that the impetus [for the bill] comes from the proposed relocation of the Grand Island Veterans' Home," he said. "I'm working to fix what I consider a flawed process. It would provide necessary oversight for a process with no public input from the residents of the Grand Island home."

A request for relocation would be submitted to the Legislature's Executive Board and must include:

- a description of the proposed relocation;
- justification for the relocation;
- a review of the long-term costs;
- measurable goals for improving the quality of the service;
- an assessment of the feasibility of alternatives within the state agency to moving the service;
- any known or foreseeable legal, environmental or other issues related to the proposed move; and
- a description of economic development efforts to use any facility abandoned by the move.

The approval process would not apply to the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska state colleges, the courts, the Legislature or any officer or state agency established by the state constitution.

Duane Hodge, a former administrator at the Grand Island Veterans Home, testified in support of the bill, saying there needs to be more strategic planning involved in a move of this magnitude.

"The economic consequences will have a ripple effect throughout the city and surrounding areas with the loss of jobs," he said. "Evoking authority at the executive level at the expense of our veterans is irresponsible."

Kearney Sen. Galen Hadley testified in opposition to the bill, saying the process used to determine the veterans'

home location was open and fair. He said each of the interested cities agreed to be scored in nine different categories, with Kearney scoring 16 percentage points higher than Grand Island.

"We have a responsibility to do the best we can for the people of Nebraska," he said. "If we're going to change the rules and go back and change the decision that was made, we're going to have to answer to citizens as to why the decision that was made was incorrect."

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



**Debt recovery program proposed**

Lottery winnings and other state-paid funds could be withheld to settle debts under legislation heard by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 13.

LB870, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz, would create the Public Debt Recovery Program, which would use state treasury funds to satisfy an individual's debt to a



Sen. Kate Bolz

public entity. The funds could include income tax refunds, lottery prizes, payroll, contract payments and unclaimed property and would be used to pay only debts owed to state agencies, courts and political subdivisions.

"My office has identified over \$8.7 million in debts owed to Nebraska municipalities," Bolz said. "I think it's only fair that people pay their debts and I think it's important that funds go to their intended purposes," she said.

Bolz said the bill would create a new centralized office within the

State Treasurer's Office and would be modeled after other states' successful programs.

Gary Krumland of the League of Nebraska Municipalities testified in support of LB870. He said Nebraska communities' largest area of past due debt is for utilities and it sometimes takes years to collect those debts through property liens.

"With utilities, if somebody doesn't pay, then everybody else has to pay little more—so having an extra tool to collect this money would be very helpful," he said.

State Treasurer Don Stenberg testified in opposition to the bill, saying the state already has laws permitting state agencies to use collection agencies to recover debts. He also questioned the cost effectiveness of the bill, saying it would create a "very large hearing agency" whose duties currently are carried out by each municipality.

The committee took no immediate action on LB870.

### Industrial hemp considered

Industrial hemp could be grown in Nebraska under a bill discussed in a Judiciary Committee hearing Feb. 12.

LB1001, introduced by Cortland Sen. Norm Wallman, would allow industrial hemp to be grown in Nebraska for commercial purposes. Only plants containing one percent or less of tetrahydrocannabinols (THC), the active ingredient of the cannabis plant, would be approved for use.



Sen. Norm Wallman

Those wishing to grow hemp would be required to obtain a license from the state Department of Agriculture and submit fingerprints and other information to the Nebraska State Patrol. A legal description of the land

to be used for production also would be required. Individuals with a prior criminal conviction would not be eligible.

LB1001 would direct the department to create regulations for licensing, testing for THC levels and documenting seed varieties.

Wallman said industrial hemp is a sustainable energy source that can be used in a wide variety of products, so Nebraska should join nine other states in investigating the plant's economic benefits.

"I believe there is a market for this product and I'd like to see Nebraska jump in at the beginning and start testing it to see if it would be good for our state," he said.

Wallman said the bill is not intended to begin the process of legalizing recreational use of marijuana.

"Yes, [hemp and marijuana] both come from the cannabis plant, but that is where the similarities end," he said.

Bill Hawkins, an organic farmer, testified in support of LB1001. He said growing and marketing industrial hemp would revitalize Nebraska communities by creating jobs and locally-produced goods. Hemp also has ecological benefits, he said.

"Industrial hemp is a drought-resistant, weed-suppressing, soil-building crop that will give our farmers a much needed rotation in their corn and soybeans," Hawkins said.

UNL student Jason Feldman said wall panels made from hemp are a durable, healthy and sustainable alternative to traditional building materials. Speaking in support of the bill, Feldman said it is expensive to import hemp to the United States and LB1001 would allow him to make the product locally.

"The market would be transformed if we can grow the material here in

Nebraska and build homes with this material," Feldman said.

Grant County Sheriff Shawn Hebbert provided neutral testimony on the bill. He said marijuana is a quickly spreading weed that may be difficult to control when grown in large amounts and may cause conflicts between neighboring landowners. He was also concerned about the potential health risks involved in fighting hemp field fires.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB1001.



### Changes to school retirement plans discussed

The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee heard testimony Feb. 12 on two bills that would make changes to the state's school retirement plans.

LB1041, introduced by Omaha Sen. Jeremy Nordquist, would change the length of service required for new employees of the School Employees Retirement Plan and the Class V (Omaha) School Employees Retirement Plan to be eligible to purchase additional service credit.



Sen. Jeremy Nordquist

Beginning July 1, 2014, new employees of the two plans would not be eligible to purchase service credit – also known as "air time" – until they have acquired 10 years of creditable service. Employees hired before the deadline still would be eligible to purchase air time after acquiring five

years of creditable service.

Nordquist said the change was necessary because the school retirement plans receive significant general fund dollars from the state.

“We really think that this is a fundamental fairness issue,” he said, adding that employees should be required to invest a meaningful amount of time in the system before they are able to purchase air time.

The bill also would make several technical changes to the Class V plan, including:

- inserting references to the Internal Revenue Code regarding the duties and responsibilities of the trustees who administer the plan;
- clarifying that school board or board of trustees members will not be personally liable for their actions related to retirement system duties except in cases of willful dishonesty, gross negligence or intentional violations of the law; and
- requiring annual presentation of a Class V school board’s most recent actuarial valuation report to the committee at a public hearing, beginning March 1, 2015.

David Kramer, outside counsel to Omaha Public Schools, testified in favor of the bill. He said the liability standard in the bill for the school board and board of trustees is the same as that which currently applies to the Public Employees Retirement Board and the Nebraska Investment Council.

“Those two entities serve the same functions for the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System that the Omaha board does for the Omaha Public Schools retirement system,” Kramer said.

No one testified in opposition to

the bill.

LB1042, also introduced by Nordquist, would change the cost for repurchase of relinquished creditable service in the School Employees Retirement Plan. He said the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System has calculated that the cost currently assessed is not adequately covering the cost of restoring the service credit.

Service credits are relinquished when a member terminates employment and withdraws all accumulated contributions, Nordquist said. If the person again becomes a school employee, he or she has the option to buy-back the relinquished service credits.

LB1042 would change the cost of repurchase to the actuarial cost to the school retirement system for restoration of the relinquished creditable service.

Nordquist said the committee would need to determine a date for the change to take effect, adding that approximately 2,400 employees had rejoined the school retirement system and would be eligible to buy back their service credits.

“So, where do we draw the line for those people?” he said. “That’s what we’re going to have to deliberate on.”

Jason Hayes of the Nebraska State Education Association testified in support of the bill, saying the few members of the retirement plan who leave the system and then return and purchase their service credits should not be subsidized by the rest of the members.

“LB1042 represents another common sense pension reform ... that will help ensure the continued financial soundness of the school employees retirement plan,” Hayes said.

No one testified in opposition to LB1042 and the committee took no immediate action on either bill.

## REVENUE

### Bill would provide grad school loan tax deduction

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Feb. 12 on a bill intended to encourage highly educated individuals to live in Nebraska.

Under LB787, introduced by Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher, federal adjusted gross income would be reduced by an amount equal to the principal paid by a taxpayer on any qualified education loan during a taxable year.



Sen. Paul Schumacher

A qualified education loan is defined as any indebtedness owed to a nonrelated entity that is incurred by a taxpayer solely to pay for costs necessary to obtain a graduate degree from an institution of higher education.

The reduction would be available for the first 10 taxable years after a taxpayer completes a course of study resulting in a graduate degree.

Schumacher said the idea came from a conversation he had with a young woman struggling with a six-figure student loan debt from law school.

“She had done all the right things and we were taxing her on the money she made to pay that student loan down,” he said. “It occurred to me that if she’d paid that six figures of debt researching and developing some computer program, we’d have let her write it off ... we’d have called it economic development.”

Schumacher said encouraging potential high-wage earners to put down roots in Nebraska would pay off in

greater tax revenue in the future.

Caryn Vincent, a University of Nebraska Medical Center graduate student, testified in support of the bill. Vincent said she will have significant loan debt when she graduates and that LB787 would provide an incentive for young professionals in similar situations to stay in the state.

“We have to be able to recruit the kind of talent necessary to grow Nebraska’s future economy,” she said.

Liz Neeley, executive director of the Nebraska State Bar Association, also supported the bill, saying it could be an important tool for attracting new lawyers to rural parts of the state. Law school debt has nearly doubled in the last 10 years, she said, with debt loads averaging \$150,000 to \$200,000.

As a result, Neeley said, most recent graduate cannot afford to practice in rural Nebraska where salaries are low.

“New lawyers are pressed instead to look for jobs in larger cities,” she said.

No one testified in opposition to LB787 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

**Bonds proposed for faster highway construction**

Bond financing would be employed to accelerate the completion of highway construction projects under a bill heard by the Revenue Committee Feb. 12.

LB1092, introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, would authorize the State Highway Commission to issue up to \$400 million of bonds to fund the accelerated completion of highway construction projects under the Build Nebraska Act. At least 25 percent of the bond proceeds would be dedicated to construction of feder-



Sen. Annette Dubas

ally designated high priority corridors and the expressway system through Chadron, Alliance and Scottsbluff.

Dubas said relying on revenue from the state’s gas tax is no longer a stable funding source for road improvements.

“Nebraska’s highway system plays a critical role in our citizens’ lives and our state’s economic development,” she said. “We’ve operated as a pay-as-you-go state for decades but because of changes in travel habits and more fuel-efficient vehicles, those revenues have been declining.”

The bonds would be repaid with revenue from the State Highway Capital Improvement Fund, which currently receives .25 percent of the state sales and use tax. LB1092 also would pledge the revenue from all fuel taxes, registration fees and other highway user fees for the purpose of bond repayment.

The bill would limit the annual debt service to \$30 million, not to exceed 19 years. No bonds could be issued after June 30, 2020, and all bonds must be paid off by June 30, 2033.

Nate Eckloff, managing director of RBC Capital Markets, testified in support of the bill, saying it would provide a more stable funding source for needed improvements.

“Bonding gives the option to the state of Nebraska to bond against an already existing revenue stream for already identified projects at a low interest rate,” he said. “There’s a strong multiplier effect for putting money into the economy through highway construction.”

State Department of Roads Director Randy Peters testified in opposition to the bill, saying the traditional pay-as-you-go funding system has served the state well.

“Bonding authority by itself would

not enable projects that have not been designed yet to be conveniently ready for construction years before they were ready,” he said. “It would be desirable to have state funds unfettered by debt service to maintain maximum flexibility.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



**Bill to repeal helmet law stalls**

A bill that would repeal Nebraska’s helmet law stalled on general file Feb. 11 after several days of debate.

LB393, introduced by Hoskins Sen. Dave Bloomfield, would give motorcycle riders

21 years old and older the option to not wear a protective helmet. Riders under 21 still would be required to wear a



Sen. Dave Bloomfield

helmet. The bill also would require motorcycle riders to use eye protection such as goggles, a windshield or a face shield attached to a helmet.

A pending Transportation and Telecommunications Committee amendment also would have prohibited motorcyclists from carrying passengers less than 48 inches tall unless the passenger is at least 16 years old.

Bloomfield said the bill would give Nebraska’s 92,000 motorcyclists the freedom to choose when it comes to wearing helmets.

“We as a state and as lawmakers in the state have a duty and an obligation to protect and not infringe on the principles of liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” he said.

Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop op-

posed the bill, saying traumatic brain injuries suffered in motorcycle accidents are particularly devastating to the people left to care for the victims.

"I cannot tell you the horrors we will unleash on so many families if this bill passes," he said.

Approximately 525 motorcycle accidents occur annually in Nebraska, Lathrop said, and the motorcyclists are rarely at fault. No rider plans to be in an accident, he said.

"If he did, he'd wear a helmet," Lathrop said. "He would put every protective device on imaginable to protect himself if he knew he was going to be in a wreck."

"Head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle accidents," said Lincoln Sen. Bill Avery, citing national Department of Transportation statistics. Speaking in opposition to LB393, Avery said that helmetless motorcyclists are 40 percent more likely to die in an accident.

Because insurance often does not cover long-term medical care, Avery said, motorcycle accidents cost Nebraska taxpayers nearly \$50 million in medical expenses in 2011.

"If you consider yourself a fiscal conservative, how can you vote to repeal the helmet law?" he asked.

Wilber Sen. Russ Karpisek spoke in favor of the bill.

"This bill is about personal choice, personal freedom. If someone wants to ride and splatter their head on the cement, they can," he said.

Karpisek said government should stop telling people what to do.

"There's all sorts of other things that people do that get themselves in a bad state of health—but we let them do it," he said.

On the second day of debate, Grand Island Sen. Mike Gloor offered a motion to bracket LB393 until April 17, saying continued debate likely would not sway the vote. The motion

failed on a 23-23 vote.

After eight hours of debate spanning four days, Bloomfield filed a motion to invoke cloture, which would cease debate and force a vote on the bill. The motion failed on a 25-22 vote, as 33 votes were needed.

A failed cloture motion results in debate on a bill ceasing for the day. LB393 remains on general file but is unlikely to be debated again this session.

### Farm equipment transportation rules discussed

Load limits would be expanded for farm equipment haulers under legislation heard by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee Feb 10.

LB1039, introduced by Fullerton Sen. Annette Dubas, would allow farm equipment dealers to designate commercial haulers as their agents when moving their equipment. Haulers would be required to carry documentation signed by the dealers identifying them as dealer representatives.

The bill also would permit commercial haulers to follow the same width, height and length restrictions reserved specifically for farm equipment dealers.

Dubas said she brought the bill because current regulations were created more than 50 years ago, when there were more farm implement dealers and only those dealerships had the equipment and expertise to move farm equipment.

"What the law did not consider was the instance where a farm equipment dealership enlists the help of a private hauler to move farm machinery," she said.



Sen. Annette Dubas

Bobby Hoest of Daws Trucking in Milford testified in support of the bill, saying the different sets of load regulations that apply to commercial carriers and farm implement dealers create unnecessary confusion and delays.

"We didn't really see why it would make any difference that a piece of equipment was on a truck owned by the equipment dealer or a truck owned by a commercial carrier," Hoest said.

Because fewer implement dealers are available to move equipment, Hoest said, the bill would benefit both the equipment dealers and the haulers during peak seasons when equipment repairs and deliveries are numerous.

"We are just asking that you would level the playing field for the commercial carrier and the equipment dealer so we can be of more service to them," he added.

State Department of Roads Director Randy Peters testified in a neutral capacity. He recommended that origin, destination and load description details also should be required on the authorization statement issued by the equipment dealer.

No one testified in opposition to the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB1039.

## URBAN AFFAIRS

### MUD district elections proposed

The Urban Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 11 on a bill that would authorize district elections for the metropolitan utilities district (MUD) board of directors.

LB1014, introduced by Omaha Sen. John Murante, would authorize the MUD board of directors to divide the district's territory into seven election subdivisions.

Under the bill, the board would have until Feb. 1, 2016, to establish districts composed of substantially equal population and compact and contiguous territory. The board would assign each member a numbered subdivision for the remainder of their current term of office.



Sen. John Murante

Assignments would be made so as to stagger elections to the new dis-

tricts until 2023. The board would be responsible for redistricting following each federal decennial census.

Murante said the MUD board sees the value that district elections have for providing voters with better representation, but they currently lack the authority to make the change. At-large districts tend to leave some populations without adequate representation, he said.

“There are hundreds of thousands of us who don’t have anyone from our community representing us,” Murante

said.

Ron Wanek, a current candidate for the MUD board, testified in support of the bill, saying district elections would promote greater accountability and transparency.

“When you live in the same district as your neighbors ... you’re certainly more accessible and people can reach out to you and talk to you,” Wanek said.

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



## QUALIFICATIONS TO RUN FOR THE LEGISLATURE

Constitutionally, a candidate for the Nebraska Legislature must meet the following qualifications:

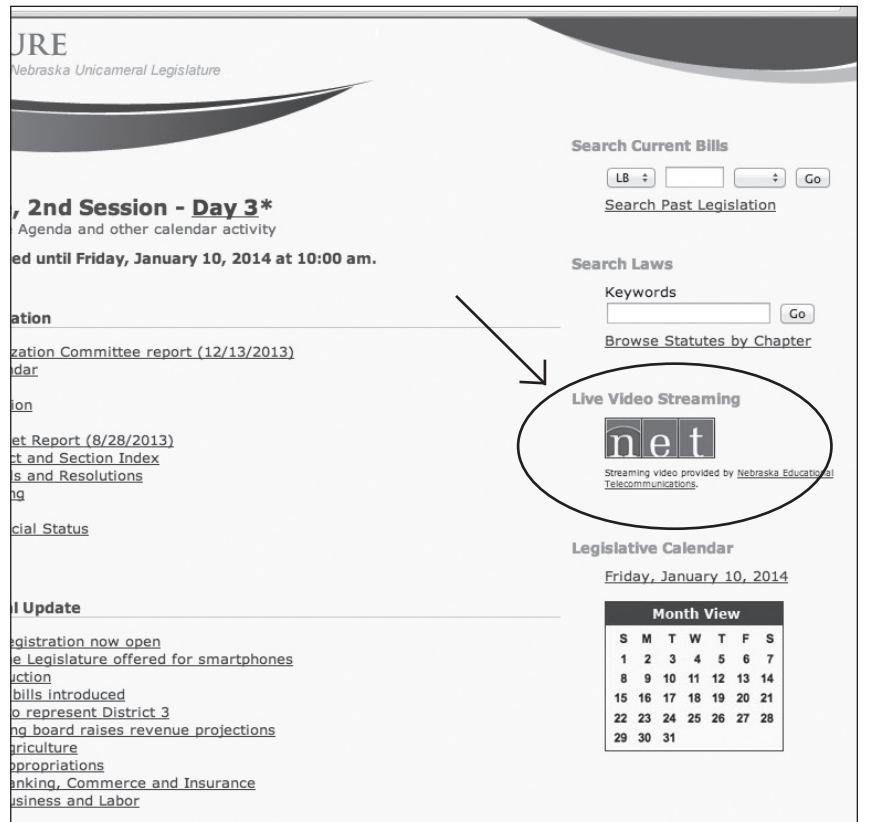
- be at least 21 years of age;
- be registered to vote; and
- be a resident of Nebraska -- specifically a resident of the legislative district he or she wishes to serve -- for at least one year prior to the general election.

For more detailed information on qualifications and filing for office, please contact your local county clerk or election commissioner, or visit the Nebraska Secretary of State’s website at [www.sos.ne.gov](http://www.sos.ne.gov).

## LIVE VIDEO STREAMING OF THE UNICAMERAL

Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) provides live video coverage of hearings and floor debate on the Legislature’s website.

To watch, click on the “Live Video Streaming” link on [www.NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://www.NebraskaLegislature.gov). Then click on the room you would like to observe.



The screenshot shows the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature website interface. At the top, it says "NJR Nebraska Unicameral Legislature". Below this, there are search boxes for "Search Current Bills" and "Search Past Legislation". A section titled "2nd Session - Day 3\*" indicates agenda and other calendar activity, with a note that it ends on Friday, January 10, 2014 at 10:00 am. There are also search boxes for "Search Laws" and "Browse Statutes by Chapter". A red circle highlights the "Live Video Streaming" link, which includes the NET logo and the text "Streaming video provided by Nebraska Educational Telecommunications". Below this is a "Legislative Calendar" for Friday, January 10, 2014, with a "Month View" calendar grid showing the days of the month.

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

\*Current hearing schedules are always available at: [nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar)

## Tuesday, February 18

### Agriculture

#### Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB942 (Schilz) Change provisions relating to packers under the Competitive Livestock Markets Act  
LB1080 (Bloomfield) Provide for nonprofit nursery stock distributors under the Plant Protection and Plant Pest Act  
LB941 (Schilz) Provide for a dairy growth study

### Appropriations

#### Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1091 (Conrad) Transfer funds from the Cash Reserve Fund to the Job Training Cash Fund and change job training grant provisions  
LB1094 (Davis) Change a fund transfer to the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund  
LB1086 (Pirsch) Transfer cash reserve funds to the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund  
LB669 (McCoy) Transfer cash reserve funds to the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund  
LB940 (Schilz) Create the Water Sustainability Fund and transfer cash reserve funds  
LB1046 (Carlson) Create the Water Sustainability Fund and transfer General Funds

### Banking, Commerce & Insurance

#### Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB831 (Christensen) Provide a requirement relating to coverage of medical equipment and prohibit unreasonable delays relating to preapproval of coverage  
LB858 (Howard) Provide requirements relating to pharmacists and health care services in health insurance  
LB883 (Nordquist) Eliminate a termination date on coverage requirements for anticancer medication  
LB953 (Howard) Adopt the Health Information Initiative Act and provide funding  
LB926 (Howard) Change provisions relating to rules and regulations of the Department of Insurance

### Education

#### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1106 (McGill) Change provisions relating to career academies  
LB826 (McCoy) Provide for a study relating to education incentives for high-need occupations  
LB754 (Smith) Provide funds for career

education programs  
LB1064 (Lautenbaugh) Adopt the Teach for Nebraska Program Act  
LB842 (Davis) Change provisions relating to allocations to the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund

### Nebraska Retirement Systems

#### Room 1525 - 9:00 a.m.

*Appointment:* Werner-Robertson, Gail - Neb. Investment Council  
*Appointment:* Leonard, Dennis W. - Public Employees Retirement Board

### Transportation & Telecommunications

#### Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB892 (Smith) Change enforcement provisions of the One-Call Notification System Act  
LB930 (Watermeier) Require an operator's presence at an excavation under the One-Call Notification System Act  
LB1045 (B. Harr) Redefine the term underground facility for purposes of the One-Call Notification System Act

### Urban Affairs

#### Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

LB823 (Lautenbaugh) Terminate metropolitan utilities districts on Jan. 1, 2015

## Wednesday, February 19

### Appropriations

#### Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

*Agency 23:* Dept. of Labor  
LB1023 (Mello) Change certain budgetary reports  
LB1047 (Carlson) Appropriate funds to the Department of Natural Resources  
LB1114 (Mello) Change and state intent relating to funding for economic development programs and change a termination date  
LB1019 (Schumacher) Adopt the Development and Venture Enterprise Act

### Banking, Commerce & Insurance

#### Room 2102 - 12:00 p.m.

*Appointment:* Booth, Patrick - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Buescher, Craig D. - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Flowers, Shari - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Green, James "JJ" - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission

*Appointment:* Groene, Michael - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Gyhra, Laura S. - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Kollmorgen, Kyle - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Thedinger, Britt A. - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission  
*Appointment:* Wupper, Sherry - Neb. Exchange Stakeholder Commission

### Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

#### Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

*Appointment:* Loudon, Andrew - Neb. Accountability and Disclosure Commission  
LB980 (Johnson) Change provisions relating to termination of a township board  
LB773 (Davis) Provide for partisan ballots for unaffiliated voters at primary elections  
LB1013 (Murante) Permit counties to regulate peddlers, hawkers, and solicitors by ordinance

### Health & Human Services

#### Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1054 (Karpisek) Redefine treatment under the Health Care Facility Licensure Act  
LB1107 (Conrad) Change medicaid payment provisions for federally qualified health centers as prescribed  
LB852 (Crawford) Change provisions relating to asbestos regulation

### Judiciary

#### Room 1113 - 11:00 a.m.

*Appointment:* Casmer, Esther - Board of Parole

### Judiciary

#### Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1089 (Conrad) Provide for disposition of residual funds in class action litigation and charitable trusts  
LB988 (Schumacher) Provide for certain access to decedent's safe deposit box  
LB1044 (Schilz) Provide procedures for abandoned mobile homes  
LB839 (Janssen) Extend the effective period for a continuing lien for a garnishment in aid of execution  
LB962 (Brasch) Change provisions relating to personal property exemptions in cases of attachment, execution, or sale



# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

\*Current hearing schedules are always available at: [nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar)

## Natural Resources

### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB840 (K. Haar) Require rules and regulations for mandatory water well permits in management areas  
LB959 (Carlson) Provide a permit application exemption for certain water storage reservoirs

## Revenue

### Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB723 (Christensen) Change property tax provisions relating to the valuation of irrigated cropland and comparable sales  
LB922 (Christensen) Change qualification provisions under the Beginning Farmer Tax Credit Act  
LB938 (Janssen) Provide an income tax credit to individuals who pay a federal health insurance penalty  
LB956 (Conrad) Increase the earned income tax credit

## Thursday, February 20

### Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

#### Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Blaha, Sherry - Emergency Response Commission  
LB1065 (Lautenbaugh) Eliminate secret ballot provisions under the Open Meetings Act  
LB1066 (Lautenbaugh) Require a recorded roll call vote by certain county boards  
LB1075 (B. Harr) Prohibit employment of certain persons leaving public positions

## Health & Human Services

### Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Piskorski, Noah L. - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission  
Appointment: Mlnarik, Lisa L. - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission  
Appointment: Hanus, Mary Beth - Neb. Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board  
Appointment: Hiemer, Troy - Board of Emergency Medical Services  
Appointment: Hoffman, Timothy - Board of Emergency Medical Services  
Appointment: LaFollette, Charles - Board of Emergency Medical Services  
Appointment: Moravec, Anthony - State Board of Health

## Judiciary

### Room 1113 - 1:30 PM

LB890 (Dubas) Change provisions

relating to procedures for acquiring private property for public use  
LB868 (Karpisek) Prohibit peace officers from using government-issued equipment for private employment  
LB1034 (McGill) Change provisions and penalties relating to unlawful intrusion  
LB1006 (McGill) Change a provision of the Private Prison Contracting Act and prohibit state agencies from entering into contracts that include certain provisions  
LB1105 (McGill) Create veterans and servicemembers court programs

## Natural Resources

### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Spurgin, Mark - Game & Parks Commission  
LB985 (Davis) Provide standing to natural resources districts and provide requirements for water appropriations  
LB1111 (Christensen) Provide duties relating to integrated management plans

## Revenue

### Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB812 (Hansen) Terminate the inheritance tax  
LB960 (Carlson) Change inheritance tax rates  
LB1053 (Karpisek) Provide state aid to municipalities, counties, and natural resources districts

## Friday, February 21

### Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

#### Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LR393CA (Murante) Constitutional amendment to change signature requirements for initiative petitions  
LR395 (Brasch) Recognize Feb. 10, 2014, as the 60th anniversary of the addition of the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance  
LR411CA (Karpisek) Authorize municipalities and counties to exercise powers in matters of local concern and to eliminate home rule charters

## Health & Human Services

### Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LR422 (Campbell) Provide the Health & Human Services Committee, in cooperation with the Banking, Commerce & Insurance Committee, be designated to develop policy recommendations

towards transformation of Nebraska's health care system

## Judiciary

### Room 1113 - 1:30 PM

LB808 (Conrad) Change provisions of the Legal Education for Public Service Loan Repayment Act and transfer funds from the State Settlement Cash Fund  
LB927 (Nordquist) Provide that judges retirement fees cannot be waived  
LB1015 (Kintner) Include certain fire and rescue departments under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act  
LB893 (Seiler) Change the amount recoverable under the Nebraska Hospital-Medical Liability Act  
LB862 (Lathrop) Change the amount recoverable under the Nebraska Hospital-Medical Liability Act

## Natural Resources

### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1003 (Kolowski) Provide for natural resources districts to issue general obligation bonds

## Monday, February 24

### Banking, Commerce & Insurance

#### Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

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

## Business & Labor

### Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Carlson, Joel - Commission of Industrial Relations  
LB949 (Business & Labor) Approve claims against the state  
LB950 (Business & Labor) Deny claims against the state  
LB955 (Dubas) Adopt the Paid Family Medical Leave Act  
LB1090 (Conrad) Adopt the Healthy Families and Workplaces Act  
LB1036 (Wallman) Provide for biennial

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

\*Current hearing schedules are always available at: [nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/calendar)

contracts for cities of the primary class under the Industrial Relations Act  
LB1073 (Lathrop) Require employers to e-verify immigration status of new employees

## Education

### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

*Appointment:* Harwood, Frank - Technical Advisory Committee for Statewide Assessment

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

## General Affairs

### Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

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

## Transportation & Telecommunications

### Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

*Appointment:* Keegan, Barbara J. - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards  
*Appointment:* Litchfield, James - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards  
*Appointment:* Syslo, Mick - Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards

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

## Tuesday, February 25

### Agriculture

#### Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1002 (Wallman) Add enforcement powers under the Commercial Dog and Cat Operator Inspection Act  
LR413 (Davis) Request the United States Department of Agriculture immediately withdraw its proposed rule entitled "Importation of Beef from a Region in Brazil"  
LR414 (Davis) Request the federal government to reject changes to the current law governing country of origin meat labeling

## Education

### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

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

## Wednesday, February 26

### Natural Resources

#### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

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

## Revenue

### Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB978 (B. Harr) Authorize funding for on-bill payment programs under

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

## Thursday, February 27

### Natural Resources

#### Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

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

## Revenue

### Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

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

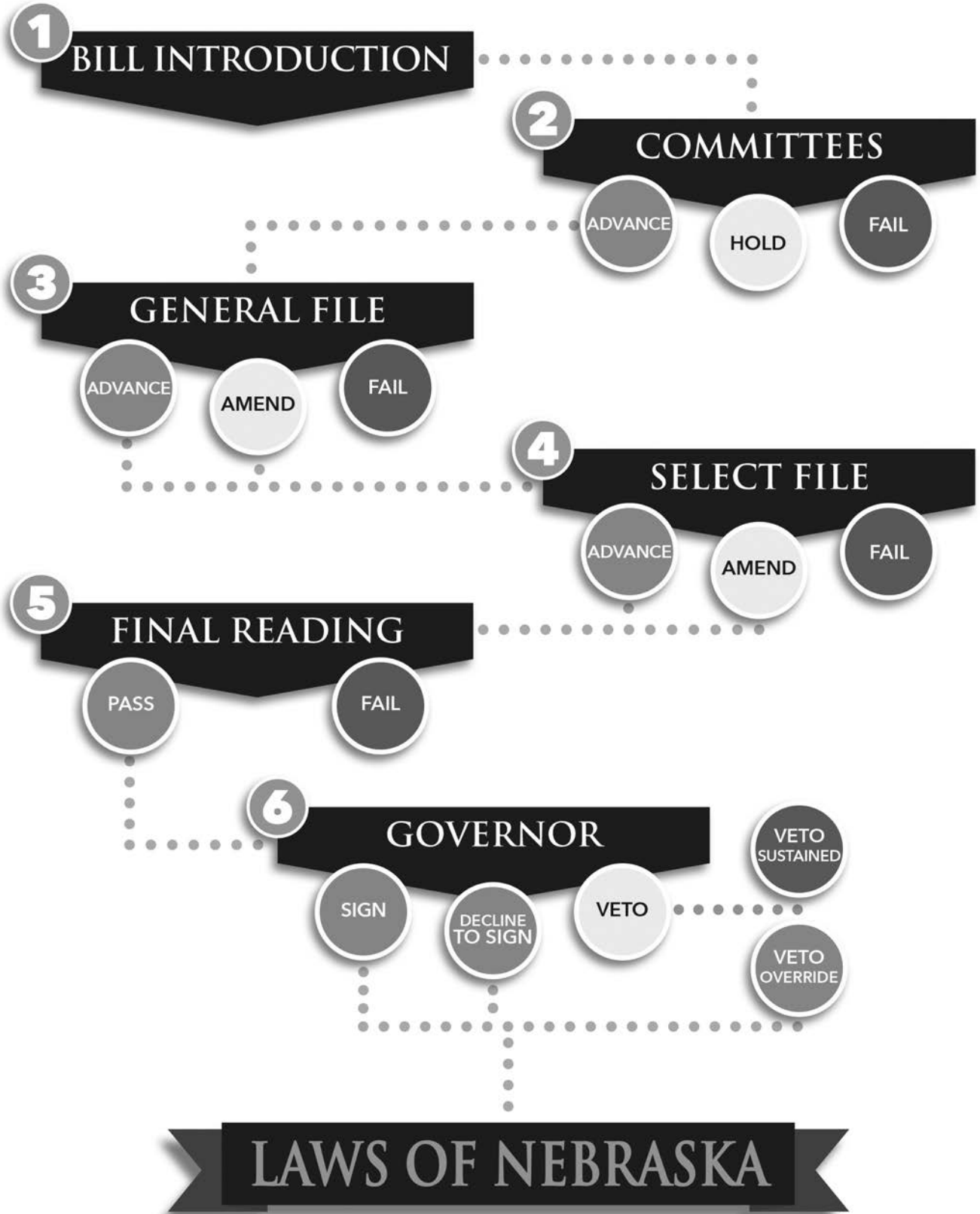
## Friday, February 28

### Revenue

#### Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

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

# HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



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

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



Located at the west entrance to the Nebraska State Capitol, the Lincoln Monument was created by architect Henry Bacon and sculptor Daniel Chester French in 1912. The monument predates the present Capitol building and is a symbol of Nebraska's pride in having its capital city named after the 16th president of the United States. Wednesday, Feb. 12 saw the commemoration of Lincoln's 205th birthday.