

## Session ends, 11 senators depart

The second session of the 104th Legislature adjourned sine die April 20.

Eleven senators are leaving the Legislature due to term limits, among them Kearney Sen. Galen Hadley, who has served as speaker for the last two sessions.

Hadley commended his fellow lawmakers for their work—particularly under the time constraints of a 60-day session—on issues such as prison reform, roads funding and property tax relief.

“It’s been a very quick 60 working days,” he said. “But we, I do believe, accomplished a lot.”

Hadley noted that not all of the senators’ priority bills were debated this year, but 76 priority bills were



Departing senators, from left: Sens. Heath Mello, Kate Sullivan, Beau McCoy, Galen Hadley, Ken Haar, Dave Bloomfield, Tanya Cook, Kathy Campbell, Ken Schilz, Colby Coash and Mike Gloor

passed into law. The Legislature passed 216 bills in total this session, he said.

“I regret very much the inability to meet my goal of hearing all the priority bills,” he said, noting that this session saw 24 cloture votes—nearly twice as

many as the year before—to cut off attempts to filibuster legislation.

However, Hadley encouraged senators to be patient in their legislative goals. He noted that some major policy priorities—such as the state’s

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## Lawmakers override veto; professional licenses approved for young immigrants

A governor’s veto of a bill that would make additional Nebraskans eligible for professional licensure was overridden by the Legislature April 20. Lawmakers voted 31-13 to override the veto. Thirty votes were needed.

Introduced by Omaha Sen. Heath Mello, LB947 allows Nebraska residents who are covered by the federal Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to apply for professional or commercial licenses in order to practice their professions. Eligible residents can apply for credentials under the Uniform Credentialing Act.



Sen. Heath Mello

Administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland

Security, the DACA program is designed to protect from deportation individuals who were brought into the country illegally as children. Those who meet DACA guidelines are eligible for a work permit and may request deferred action for two years, subject to renewal.

Senators had passed the bill April 13 on a 33-11 vote, but Gov. Pete Ricketts vetoed it April 15.

In his veto message to the Legislature, Ricketts said the bill is premature and exacerbates the uncertain future of DACA program recipients if their status were to be revoked.

“LB947 is an affront to the individuals who are observing our laws and navigating proper immigration channels to obtain jobs and legal status,” he wrote. “The enactment of this bill would unjustly allow individuals who are here

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# Session ends, 11 senators depart

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concealed carry law, which he said took a decade to enact—cannot be achieved in one session.

“We have to learn to take little bites of bills as we go along,” Hadley said.

In his remarks, Gov. Pete Ricketts also congratulated senators on their work this session, noting progress

on several major issues such as providing \$450 million to accelerate the state’s long-delayed expressway system and to address failing bridges and other infrastructure needs.

Ricketts praised lawmakers for working to successfully

control state spending while funding effective and efficient essential services for Nebraska residents.

“I know that you care about our state because you sacrifice so much to serve the people of Nebraska,” he told senators.

The governor also lauded the Legislature’s action on tax reform this session, including working with his office to provide \$20 million in additional property tax relief to farmers and ranchers.



Speaker Galen Hadley offered parting words of encouragement and advice to the Legislature.

“We can look back upon the work that we’ve done together this session and be very pleased with the progress we’ve made doing the people’s work,” he said.

The first session of the 105th Legislature is scheduled to convene Jan. 4, 2017. ■



Gov. Pete Ricketts greets senators after delivering his end of session remarks.

## UNICAMERAL UPDATE

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# Lawmakers override veto; professional licenses approved for young immigrants

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illegally to be ahead of those who have been waiting years to be granted a proper permanent or legal status in our country.”

Mello offered a motion the last day of the session to override the governor’s veto, saying that DACA residents have been educated and trained in the state and should now be allowed to work in the state.

“We run for office to make a difference, to improve our communities, to strengthen our economy and to give people a better shot at the American dream,” he said. “That is what we’re doing with LB947.”

Mello said the bill received no opposition testimony during its Feb. 11 committee hearing and was supported by a broad coalition including the Omaha and Lincoln chambers of commerce and the Nebraska Cattlemen.

Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks supported the override motion. She said DACA residents are a great asset to the state.

“We’re spending millions of dollars to attract people to Nebraska to work and make our economy vibrant,” she said, adding that LB947 will address crucial shortages in the state’s workforce. “We are talking about the strength of our economy, our state and our moral fiber.”

Sen. Kathy Campbell of Lincoln also supported the motion.

“We have a heritage of cultural diversity that our state is founded upon,” Campbell said. “Please do not deny these people the opportunity to be a part of that heritage.”



Sen. Heath Mello is congratulated by Sen. Rick Kolowski after the body’s successful vote to override the governor’s veto of LB947.

Opposing the motion, Omaha Sen. Beau McCoy said the country has a broken federal immigration system and it is not the state Legislature’s responsibility to address it.

“We are not encouraging the federal government to address the situation [if we override] the governor today,” McCoy said. “It only makes it easier for Congress to do nothing when state legislatures act as we’re being encouraged to act today.”

To qualify for the federal DACA program residents must have:

- lived in the U.S. continuously since June 15, 2007;
- been no older than 31 as of June 15, 2012;
- entered the country prior to their 16th birthday;
- attended school, earned a diploma or general education certificate or been honorably dis-

charged from the U.S. Armed Forces; and

- not been convicted of a felony or significant misdemeanors.

Any professional license granted under the bill will be rescinded if a person’s lawful status is rescinded. LB947 also ensures that recipients are ineligible for public benefits other than a professional license. ■



## DEPARTING SENATORS

This year marks the end of service for 11 senators due to term limits. Before adjournment, departing senators delivered speeches to their colleagues reflecting on their time in the Unicameral.



**SPEAKER GALEN HADLEY**

“When I stood before you two years ago, I said I would try to be two things: fair and truthful. I hope I met your expectations.”



**SEN. DAVE BLOOMFIELD**

“Thank God for the privilege to serve the state of Nebraska.”



**SEN. KATHY CAMPBELL**

“I’d like to thank the people of the 25th Legislative District who stood by me through some very tough issues and always said: We may not agree with you, but we will support you.”



**SEN. COLBY COASH**

“Those who seek this job are some of the best people Nebraska has to offer. I count it among the greatest privileges to serve along such great people, for we have made a difference.”



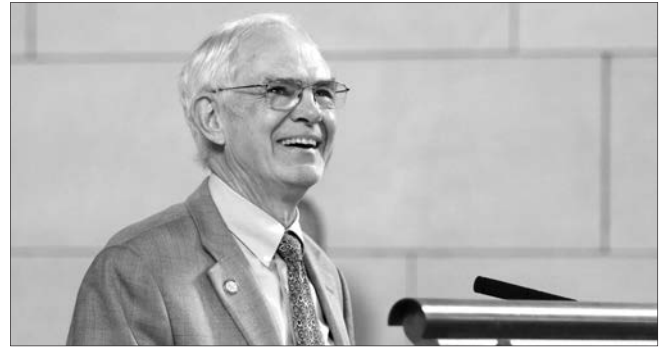
**SEN. TANYA COOK**

On her constituents: “I have been honored to represent each and every one of them—not perfectly, but with my whole heart.”



**SEN. MIKE GLOOR**

To current and future senators: “Don’t spend a lot of time thinking about policy in terms of the way it used to be. Make policy decisions according to your vision and your imagination of what we want this state to be.”



**SEN. KEN HAAR**

“We really do get better by working with people who don’t always agree with us.”



**SEN. BEAU MCCOY**

“It’s been an honor and a privilege to serve in our nation’s only unicameral. I get asked ... everywhere I travel around the country what it’s like to serve in this chamber, to be part of this body.”



**SEN. HEATH MELLO**

“I would be remiss not to thank my legislative staff. The success that we generate as elected officials really goes back to the work of the people around us.”



**SEN. KEN SCHILZ**

“I learned to work for the greater good—not to seek out the spotlight but to work with whomever was serious and willing to write good legislation.”



**SEN. KATE SULLIVAN**

“Gratitude is what I’m feeling today—gratitude as I say farewell to you and this great institution.”

## APPROPRIATIONS

### Transportation infrastructure bank established

Senators passed a bill April 12 creating a transportation infrastructure bank to fund new roads and bridges.

Introduced by Sen. Jim Smith of Papillion, LB960 creates an infrastructure bank fund composed of three programs overseen by the state Department of Roads. The first will accelerate capital improvement projects, including the state's expressway system and other high-priority roads projects.

The second program will provide funds to repair and replace deficient county bridges and the third will finance improvements to the state's transportation infrastructure that will support new and expanding businesses.

The bank fund will receive a one-time transfer of \$50 million from the state's cash reserve in July 2016. More than \$400 million in state motor fuel tax generated between July 2016 and June 2033 also will be directed to the fund.

The bill also authorizes the department to hire a construction manager who will advise the department on project scheduling and to enter into contracts in which a single contractor designs and builds a project.

The bill passed on a 48-0 vote.



Sen. Jim Smith

## BUSINESS & LABOR

### Workplace electronic privacy bill passed

Senators approved a bill April 13 that establishes workplace electronic privacy protections in Nebraska.

LB821, sponsored by O'Neill Sen. Tyson Larson, adopts the Workplace Privacy Act. The act prohibits an employer from requesting or requiring that an employee or applicant:

- disclose his or her user names or passwords to personal Internet accounts;
- log into a personal Internet account in the presence of an employer;
- add anyone to his or her personal Internet account; or
- change his or her personal Internet account settings.

An employer also is prevented from taking adverse action against, failing to hire, or otherwise penalizing an employee or applicant for failure to disclose his or her personal Internet account setting information.

An employer retains the right to promulgate rules governing Internet use and restrict an employee's access to certain websites. An employer also may take action against an employee for downloading or transferring proprietary information.

The bill allows for a civil suit if initiated within one year of an alleged violation of the act.

LB821 passed 46-0.



Sen. Tyson Larson

### State employee vacation bill passed

Lawmakers passed a bill April 12 that ensures state employees are compensated for unused vacation time.

Under LB830, introduced by Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, a state agency that denies an employee's reasonable request to use vacation leave before it is forfeited under the "use it or lose it" policy must pay the employee the cash equivalent of the forfeited leave that was denied.



Sen. Burke Harr

The employing agency has discretion in approving or denying vacation requests. The length of vacation leave requested, the number of days left before forfeiture and the prior notice given to management all are considered in determining what is and is not a reasonable request.

Employees of the Legislature and the state Department of Correctional Services are exempt from the bill's provisions.

Under the bill, cash payments made are considered compensation in state employees' defined contribution and cash benefit plans but are not considered compensation for state employees' defined benefit plans. Currently only judges, state patrol and public school employees have defined benefit retirement plans.

LB830 also incorporates provisions of LB972, another bill introduced by Harr. These provisions add major, nontenured policymaking positions under the definition of employment under the Employment Security Law, making them eligible for compensation under LB830. These provisions also require that any cash payment for forfeited vacation leave be paid by the

state agency within 30 days after the requested and denied leave is forfeited. The bill passed on a 48-0 vote.

## EDUCATION

### All high school students to take college admission test

All Nebraska 11th-graders will take a college admission test under a bill passed by lawmakers April 13.

Sponsored by Sen. Jim Scheer of Norfolk, LB930 requires public school students in the 11th grade to take a college admission test, such as the ACT or SAT, instead of current Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA) assessments.



Sen. Jim Scheer

The bill directs the State Board of Education to select the test and authorizes the state Department of Education to use lottery funds to pay for schools' expenses in administering the tests in the 2017-18 school year.

It also ends the requirement for a statewide writing assessment after the 2016-17 school year and instead requires that the statewide reading assessment contain a writing component.

The bill passed 46-1.

### School funding changes approved

Senators passed a bill April 12 that alters the state's school aid formula and limits the amount that school districts can levy to pay for certain projects.

Introduced by Cedar Rapids Sen. Kate Sullivan on behalf of Gov. Pete Ricketts, LB959 is intended to slow the increase in property taxes, which are the main source of funding for

Nebraska's K-12 schools.

The bill eliminates the minimum levy adjustment in the state's school aid formula at the end of the 2016-17 school fiscal year. The adjustment reduces state aid to schools with a levy below \$0.95 per \$100 of valuation.

It also changes an averaging adjustment that provides additional state aid to some school districts with more than 900 students. The adjustment, based on formula need per student and a district's levy has ranged from 50 percent to 90 percent. The bill calculates the adjustment at 90 percent for all qualifying districts.

LB959 also limits existing provisions of the Qualified Capital Projects Undertaking Fund to existing projects. School districts currently can levy an additional \$0.052 outside the \$1.05 levy limit to fund projects related to life safety, environmental hazards, accessibility barriers and mold in existing school buildings and grounds. New projects will be funded under a \$0.03 levy and the fund may not be used for new construction.

The bill passed 47-0.

### Learning community common levy eliminated

Senators passed a bill April 13 that ends the Omaha learning community's common levy and provides transition aid to member districts.

The Legislature created the learning community in 2007 to share resources among the students in the broader Omaha area to help address the achievement gap of children in the city center.

Introduced by



Sen. Kate Sullivan

Sen. Kate Sullivan of Cedar Rapids, LB1067 repeals the 95-cent common levy and 2-cent special building fund levy for the 11 school

districts in Douglas and Sarpy counties that make up the learning community.

Member districts instead will have an individual levy and will retain a 2-cent levy used for early childhood education. The bill increases the amount of state aid for school districts with a high percentage of students in poverty and phases in transition aid over two years.

Under the bill, learning communities will create a plan to address achievement equity and barriers to achievement such as poverty, mobility and truancy. Districts will be eligible for additional state aid after the State Board of Education approves the plans. Multidistrict educational service units also may create achievement plans to qualify for the additional aid.

The bill will provide \$5.7 million in community achievement plan aid, which will go predominantly to Omaha Public Schools. The proposal will cost approximately \$13.4 million, down from the original bill's estimated cost of \$17.3 million to \$20.7 million.

Senators voted 40-7 to pass the bill.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

### Independent redistricting commission vetoed, no override attempt offered

The governor vetoed a bill April 18 that would have added an independent commission to the Legislature's redistricting process.

The Legislature is responsible for drawing new governmental boundaries every 10 years after the decennial census for districts pertaining to the U.S. House of Representatives, the Legislature, Public Service Commission, University of Nebraska Board of Regents and the state Board of Education.

LB580, introduced by Gretna Sen. John Murante, would have created the Independent Redistricting Citizen's Advisory Commission to assist in the process beginning in 2021. The bill passed April 13 on a 29-15 vote.



Sen. John Murante

In his veto message, Gov. Pete Ricketts outlined several objections to the bill, including that it "improperly delegates" redistricting authority. The Legislature is constitutionally required to redraw district lines, he said, adding that an unelected advisory committee should not be tasked with drafting redistricting bills.

In a statement issued April 19, Murante said he would not offer a motion to override the governor's veto given the constitutional questions raised. He said that he remains committed to finding a way forward on the issue, however.

"Redistricting is too important. We must get it right," Murante said. "The good news is that we have time to do so."

**Appointments made to five special committees**

The Legislature's Executive Board announced appointments April 20 to special committees dealing with innovation, bioscience, tribal economic development, evidence testing and climate change.

LB1083, introduced by Gothenburg Sen. Matt Williams, creates a Venture Development and Innovation Task Force that will develop a statewide strategic



Sen. Matt Williams

plan by Dec. 1, 2016, to cultivate a climate of entrepreneurship and innovation in Nebraska.

Appointed to the committee are: Syracuse Sen. Dan Watermeier (chairperson) Gothenburg Sen. Matt Williams (vice-chairperson) Hyannis Sen. Al Davis Lincoln Sen. Mark Kolterman Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher Gering Sen. John Stinner

LB1093, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld, creates a bioscience steering committee that will study the impact of bioscience on the state's economy, identify ways to stimulate job growth in science, technology and engineering and encourage biotechnology companies to locate in Nebraska.



Sen. Adam Morfeld

Appointed to the committee are: Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld (chairperson) Heartwell Sen. John Kuehn (vice-chairperson) Wahoo Sen. Jerry Johnson Omaha Sen. Heath Mello Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher

Lawmakers established the Tribal Economic Development Committee on April 12 with the adoption of LR547. The committee will conduct a study on the Legislature's policy options to enhance economic development for the state's Native American population. The committee's policy recommendations are due to the Legislature by Dec. 15.

Appointed to the committee are: O'Neill Sen. Tyson Larson Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom Omaha Sen. Heath Mello Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz Papillion Sen. Jim Smith

A committee for determining the need and options for developing a regional certified crime laboratory in the Omaha area was established April 12 with the adoption of LR601.

Appointed to the committee are: Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers Omaha Sen. Robert Hilkemann Omaha Sen. Rick Kolowski Omaha Sen. John McCollister Omaha Sen. Heath Mello Hastings Sen. Les Seiler Gothenburg Sen. Matt Williams

With the adoption of LR455 on April 13, senators also established a committee to examine issues related to the impact of climate change on Nebraska.

Appointed to the committee are: Malcolm Sen. Ken Haar Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks Heartwell Sen. John Kuehn O'Neill Sen. Tyson Larson Omaha Sen. Heath Mello Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz Gering Sen. John Stinner

The committee will deliver its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by Dec. 31.

**GENERAL AFFAIRS**

**Omnibus liquor bill approved**

A bill that makes a variety of changes to the state's Liquor Control Act passed April 12.

LB1105, introduced by O'Neill Sen. Tyson Larson, establishes the Nebraska Craft Brewery Board. The board will include seven governor-appointed members who have been involved in the beer industry.



Sen. Tyson Larson

The bill also creates the Nebraska



Beer Industry Promotional Fund to advance, market and promote the beer brewing process in Nebraska and the agricultural products grown and produced in the state for use in the beer industry. The fund will consist of money credited from beer manufacturer shipping licenses and a \$250 annual fee for craft brewery licensees.

In addition, the bill makes the following changes to the Liquor Control Act:

- removes the requirement that a club must have a kitchen;
- harmonizes the excise tax rate and makes the statute applicable to wholesale and manufacturing licensees, not just retail licensees;
- removes the prohibition on “other fruit product nor any artificial product which imparts a fruit flavor other than apple” in the hard cider definition;
- establishes a liquor license class for small boutiques to sell a limited amount of alcohol;
- eliminates the requirement that a licensee must reapply for a license if the licensee’s location is annexed by an adjacent municipality;
- increases the penalty for the illegal manufacturing of spirits;
- repeals the prohibition on pull tab or pull tops on soda and beer cans;
- clarifies that a craft brewery licensee, who has held the license for a minimum of three years and operates a brewpub or microbrewery, must obtain a manufacturer’s license once the licensee exceeds 20,000 barrels; and
- allows an employee who is at least 16 years old to ring up tickets that include alcohol pur-

chases as long as the employee does not handle alcohol.

The bill incorporated provisions of two additional bills.

LB748, originally introduced by Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom, allows an individual to import alcohol—up to 108 liters per calendar year—for personal use from a holder of a retail direct sales shipping license or its equivalent.



Sen. Brett Lindstrom

LB1046, originally introduced by Crete Sen. Laura Ebke, allows a Nebraska resident who is legally able to work in the state to be eligible for a liquor license regardless of U.S. citizenship.



Sen. Laura Ebke

The bill passed on a vote of 45-2.



### Cloture attempt on winner-take-all electoral bill fails

Senators rejected a cloture motion April 12 that would have forced a vote on final passage of a bill to reinstate the winner-take-all system for allocating Nebraska’s presidential electoral votes.

Currently, the winner of Nebraska’s statewide popular vote receives two Electoral College votes. The state’s three congressional districts also award one electoral vote each based on the popular vote winner in each district. Maine is the only other state to use this system.

LB10, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Beau McCoy, would reinstate a win-

ner-take-all system and award all five electoral votes to the winner of the state’s popular vote.

Omaha Sen. Tanya Cook offered a motion to return the bill to select file for consideration of an amendment that would submit the proposal to voters at the upcoming May primary election.

Cook said a winner-take-all system “squashes the voice” of voters who are in the racial and political minority in the state.

“I oppose LB10 as drafted because, simply put, it is not fair or inclusive to Nebraska voters—particularly the wide range of voters that I have the privilege of representing,” Cook said. “Although splitting electoral votes fails to reach the full ideal of one person/one vote, it reflects some semblance of making each person’s vote count.”

Sen. Sue Crawford of Bellevue supported the motion to return the bill to select file, saying Nebraskans have been clear in their rejection of a winner-take-all system.

“The percent of Nebraskans in 2008 who said that they would like to see a statewide winner-take-all system, as we have proposed here in LB10, was only 13 percent,” she said, adding that a 2011 poll yielded similar results.

McCoy opposed the motion, saying the U.S. Constitution gives state legislatures, not voters, the power to choose a method for allocating Electoral College votes.

“I don’t believe that this amendment is the right direction to go because I believe that it would be found to be constitutionally suspect,” he said.

After two hours of debate, McCoy offered a motion to invoke cloture—or cease debate and force a vote on the bill. The motion failed on a vote of 32-17,



Sen. Beau McCoy

one vote short of the number required.

A failed cloture motion results in debate on a bill ceasing for the day. With only two days left in the legislative session, LB10 is unlikely to be debated again.

### Military commission approved

Lawmakers gave final approval April 12 to a bill that creates a commission designed to protect the state's military installations, attract new missions and serve Nebraska's military members and veterans.

LB754, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Sue Crawford, establishes the Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs. Among other duties, the governor-appointed commission is authorized to:



Sen. Sue Crawford

- receive and administer funds;
- address matters of military significance in Nebraska;
- conduct activities relating to economic development;
- conduct activities relating to the welfare of veterans; and
- advise the governor, Legislature, Nebraska's congressional delegation and other governmental officials where appropriate.

The bill also authorizes the Nebraska National Guard to utilize the Nebraska Code of Military Justice.

The bill passed 47-0.

### State entity financial disclosure broadened

A bill that broadens the scope of a financial transparency law aimed at state government was given final approval April 13.

LB851, sponsored by Omaha

Sen. John McCollister, modifies the Taxpayer Transparency Act to include quasi-public entities such as boards and commissions created by the Legislature.



Sen. John McCollister

Entities are required to submit all expenditures of state receipts to the state treasurer for inclusion on the state's spending transparency website.

The bill defines a state entity as any agency, board, commission or department of the state and any other body created by state statute that includes a person appointed by the governor, the head of any state agency or department, an employee of the state of Nebraska or any combination of such persons that is empowered to collect and disburse state receipts.

State receipts are limited under the bill to revenue or income received by a state entity used to pay the expenses necessary to perform the state entity's functions and reported to the state treasurer in total amounts by category of income.

Transfer of funds between two state entities, expenditure of pass-through funds and federal funds are not subject to the bill's provisions. Also exempted from the bill's disclosure requirements are contracts entered into by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority for the purpose of providing a specific service or financial assistance to a specifically named individual or his or her family.

Data collected will be available on the state spending website beginning in fiscal year 2016-17.

LB851 passed 48-0.

### Audit bill vetoed

Gov. Pete Ricketts vetoed a bill April 15 that proposed several changes

to the state's audit operations.

LB935, introduced by Ogallala Sen. Ken Schilz, was passed April 12 on a 37-8 vote.

The bill would have authorized a penalty for a political subdivision that fails to provide the



Sen. Ken Schilz

state auditor's office with annual information relating to interlocal agreements. The penalty for noncompliance would have been \$20 per day, not to exceed \$2,000 per delinquency.

At the auditor's discretion, a political subdivision that failed to provide the requested information could be subjected to an audit at the expense of the political subdivision. In addition, an interest rate of 14 percent per annum would be assessed on delinquent fees owed to the auditor's office.

In his veto message, Ricketts focused on provisions of the bill originally introduced by Omaha Sen. Bob Krist as LB1099. Those provisions would have changed reimbursement procedures for state employees to a per diem based on the federal rate.



Sen. Bob Krist

The governor said the change would increase costs to the state and create a potential for misuse of tax dollars. Ricketts said he and State Auditor Charlie Janssen have agreed to study the issue further and will present a new alternative next year.

LB935 included provisions from two additional bills:

LB993, originally introduced by Lincoln Sen. Colby Coash, would have allowed the state auditor to have his



Sen. Colby Coash

or her designee serve on the state Suggestion Award Board and would have allowed the auditor to share audit working papers with the Legislature, IRS, FBI, state tax commissioner, Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission and specified law enforcement agencies.

LB1084, originally introduced by Gering Sen. John Stinner, would have prevented state agencies and the state purchasing bureau from extending contracts for more than 50 percent of the initial contract term and would have prohibited more than one duration amendment per contract.

Schilz did not file a motion to attempt a veto override.



Sen. John Stinner

## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

### Eye care consumer protections approved

Lawmakers gave final approval April 13 to a bill that updates regulation of eyeglass kiosks and other devices.

LB235, introduced by Omaha Sen. Sara Howard, places restrictions on kiosks—defined as automated equipment or applications used to conduct an eye examination either in person or remotely.



Sen. Sara Howard

Under the bill, a kiosk must:

- be approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration;
- meet Americans With Disabilities Act requirements;

- carry liability insurance adequate to cover claims;
- comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act;
- have a recognized Current Procedural Terminology code; and
- display the name and state license number of the provider who will read and interpret the diagnostic data and information produced by the kiosk.

Violations may incur a civil penalty up to \$10,000 per violation and the attorney general may file a civil action at the request of the state Department of Health and Human Services. Investigation and complaint review will be done in accordance with the Uniform Credentialing Act.

The bill also limits the strength of over-the-counter eyeglasses to +3.25 diopters. LB235 passed on a 49-0 vote.

### Surgical first assistant licensure approved

Senators passed a bill April 13 that establishes a licensure process for surgical first assistants (SFA) in Nebraska.

Under LB721, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Roy Baker, the state Department of Health and Human Services will provide licensure for SFAs.



Sen. Roy Baker

The bill requires that an applicant:

- be certified as an SFA by an approved certifying body;
- successfully complete an SFA education or other experiential or training program approved by the state Board of Medicine and Surgery;
- pass a nationally recognized SFA examination adopted by the board; and

- have a high school diploma or equivalent as determined by the board.

An individual who submits evidence satisfactory to the board that he or she has been functioning primarily as an SFA in a licensed health care facility within the last five years prior to Sept. 1, 2016, will be exempt from the licensure requirements.

Also exempt are individuals who hold a current SFA certification issued by an approved certifying body or issued by another state that has standards substantially equivalent to Nebraska's.

LB721 passed 48-0.

### Statewide stroke response system approved

A bill that develops a statewide stroke system of care in Nebraska passed April 12.

LB722, sponsored by Sen. Roy Baker of Lincoln, requires the state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to designate Nebraska hospitals as comprehensive stroke centers, primary care stroke centers or acute stroke-ready hospitals based on nationally recognized standards.

DHHS will compile and maintain a list of such hospitals on the department's website. The department also will adopt and distribute a nationally recognized, standardized stroke triage assessment tool to each emergency medical service (EMS) licensed in the state. All EMS licensees will be required to use a triage tool and establish assessment, treatment and transport protocols.

In addition, a task force will be established by DHHS to address matters of triage, treatment and transport of stroke patients. The task force will provide advice and recommendations to the department regarding implementation of the Stroke System of Care Act.

The bill passed on a 45-2 vote and takes effect Jan. 1, 2017.

### Foster youth activities approved

A bill designed to normalize life for Nebraska's foster youth was approved April 12 by the Legislature.

LB746, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Kathy Campbell, implements a federal law designed to promote normalcy for foster youth and encourage their involvement in developmentally appropriate activities.



Sen. Kathy Campbell

Under the bill, a prudent parent standard will be developed for caregivers—whether in-home or in an institutional setting—that will allow caregivers to use their best judgment in making day-to-day decisions about participation in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities for youth in their care. To the extent possible, birth parents also will be involved in such decisions.

The bill requires the state Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to ensure that foster children age 14 and older are made aware of their rights and responsibilities before aging out of the system.

The department also must provide foster youth a copy of the individual's birth certificate, Social Security card, medical, financial and educational records, family contact information and a list of local community resources relevant to them.

Juvenile courts are required to ensure that children in foster care are able to engage in normal activities and to make certain findings part of a child's record. The bill also establishes the Normalcy Task Force, with members appointed by the Nebraska

Children's Commission.

The bill extends the termination date of the commission to June 30, 2019, and specifies that no member may have a private financial interest, profit or benefit from any of the commission's work. It also requires the commission to develop a system of care plan and analyze case management workforce issues.

LB746 passed on a 48-0 vote.

## JUDICIARY

### Personal privacy bill approved

Lawmakers passed a bill April 12 that automatically seals certain criminal proceeding records.

LB505, introduced by Omaha Sen. Bob Krist, ensures that arrest records are excluded from public record when criminal court charges are dismissed by mandating that state courts seal the records.



Sen. Bob Krist

The bill expands the types of arrests eligible for privacy protection to include those of individuals who are acquitted of criminal charges and offenders who successfully complete drug court or a similar problem-solving court.

When an arrest is removed from public record, a person is not required to disclose the arrest in response to a public inquiry.

The bill passed on a 48-0 vote and takes effect Jan. 1, 2017.

### Fiduciary access to digital assets approved

Lawmakers passed a bill April 13 that determines who has access to a

person's digital assets after death.

Introduced by Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, LB829 authorizes four types of fiduciaries—executors of estates, conservators of estates, agents appointed under power of attorney and trustees—to access a person's digital assets after they die or otherwise lose the ability to manage their own assets.



Sen. Burke Harr

The bill creates a tiered system of priorities for handling digital assets. If the custodian—the company that stores a person's assets on its servers—provides an online tool allowing the user to authorize another person to have access to the data, those instructions take priority.

If no such tool is available or the user chooses not to use it, a will, trust, power of attorney or other written record will be enforced. The custodian's terms of service will determine access if neither an online tool nor a legal document applies. If none of those situations apply, the bill provides default terms that govern access.

The bill passed 49-0.

### Administrative procedures clarified

State agencies will have more direction and clarity regarding the promulgation of rules and regulations under a bill passed April 12.

LB867, introduced by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, amends the Administrative Procedures Act (APA).

Among other provisions, the bill amends the definition of rule or regulation and clarifies that internal procedural documents used to guide agency staff on organization and operations, guidance documents and forms and instructions are not classified as rules under the APA.

The bill also exempts style, format and citation changes from public notice and hearing requirements. Security policies and procedures that, if released, would endanger public safety also are exempted.

The bill creates short-term emergency rules, which can be adopted outside of normal APA procedures and require the governor's approval. An emergency rule would remain in effect for 90 days and could be made permanent only through the full promulgation process.

Factors that an agency could consider in determining whether emergency rulemaking is necessary are limited to imminent peril to public health, safety or welfare or the unforeseen loss of federal funding for an agency program.

Rules and regulations made under the emergency rulemaking procedures will be filed with the secretary of state's office and published on the agency's website. Exemptions to the formal rule-making requirements outlined in the bill may not be used if a change would alter the rights or obligations of the public.

The bill also requires the state Department of Correctional Services to develop rules and regulations for circumstances in which an inmate is outside of a correctional facility.

LB867 passed on a 33-0 vote.

### **Additional problem-solving courts approved**

Problem-solving courts can be used in more cases under a bill passed by lawmakers April 12.

These court programs accommodate offenders already in the criminal justice system who have specific problems—including drug abuse and domestic violence—that cannot be addressed adequately in a traditional court setting. These programs are used only for offenders committing

low-level felonies and misdemeanors.

LB919, introduced by Gothenburg Sen. Matt Williams, allows new categories of problem-solving courts to address problems related to veterans, mental health, driving under the influence and reentry.

The bill passed on a 47-0 vote.

### **Staff increase, caseload limits approved for public guardians**

Additional staff will help manage public guardian cases under a bill passed April 12 by the Legislature.

LB934, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Colby Coash, removes a requirement that the public guardian hire up to 12 associate guardians. Instead, the director of the Office of Public Guardian will be charged with hiring a multidisciplinary team of up to 20 professionals and support staff, including at least one attorney licensed to practice law in Nebraska.

The bill also limits the number of cases the public guardian could accept to a ratio of 20 public wards or protected persons to each member of the multidisciplinary team.

Provisions of LB1008 and LB1007, both introduced by Coash, were added to the bill.

These require that a guardian ad litem be a licensed attorney in good standing, complete relevant training and advocate for the best interests of the individual whom they defend, including their social, economic and personal safety interests.

Each guardian ad litem is required



Sen. Matt Williams



Sen. Colby Coash

to make contact with the person he or she represents within two weeks of appointment and become familiar with that person's condition to the best of his or her ability.

The guardian ad litem is authorized to conduct discovery, present and cross-examine witnesses, file motions on behalf of the person they represent and request medical, psychological or other relevant examinations of the person to whom they are appointed.

He or she also is authorized to make recommendations to the court regarding a temporary or permanent guardianship, conservatorship or other protective order.

Provisions of LB1007 extend the statute of limitations to six years on cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable or senior adult from its current three-year limit.

The definition of exploitation under the Adult Protective Services Act also is clarified to include the wrongful withholding or control of a vulnerable or senior adult's financial assets through intimidation, threat of force or a breach of fiduciary duty by a guardian or conservator.

The bill passed on a 48-0 vote.

### **Criminal statutes updates, parole oversight approved**

Lawmakers passed a bill April 13 that updates the state's criminal statutes.

LB1094, introduced by the Judiciary Committee, clarifies several provisions of a bill pertaining to the state Department of Correctional Services passed last session. These were designed to slow Nebraska's prison population growth, ease prison overcrowding, contain department spending and reinvest a portion of savings in strategies to reduce offender recidivism and increase public safety.

The bill includes provisions of LB910 originally introduced by Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz. These require the parole administration office to provide access for public counsel and the Office of the Inspector General to all computerized records, reports and documents maintained by the office in connection with the administration of parole. Release of medical or mental health records are subject to a parolee's consent.



Sen. Kate Bolz

The department director is required to annually submit a report detailing the race, gender and age of all inmates held in restrictive housing as well as the length of time spent in such housing. The report must include the number of inmates diagnosed with mental illness and behavior disorders held in restrictive housing.

The bill passed on a 47-0 vote.

### Restrictions approved for property seizure

Lawmakers passed a bill April 13 that places restrictions on the state's civil forfeiture law, which allows law enforcement to seize property associated with suspected criminal activity without necessarily filing criminal charges.

LB1106, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Tommy Garrett, allows law enforcement agencies to dispense forfeited currency and property only after securing a criminal conviction. Persons not charged with a crime or later acquitted of a crime could recoup their property under the bill.



Sen. Tommy Garrett

The bill incorporates provisions

of Garrett's LB1108 requiring law enforcement agencies to file annual reports detailing their seizure of property. Written reports must include the date, type, monetary value and location of each property seizure. If property is seized during a traffic stop, the agency must document the race or ethnicity of the person forfeiting the property and whether they were arrested or issued a citation.

LB1106 also allows law enforcement agencies to partner with a federal agency to conduct forfeiture litigation only if the seized property is valued at more than \$25,000, involved in a federal investigation or physically confiscated by federal authorities. The state will have jurisdiction in all other cases.

Thirty days after a criminal charge is filed, a defendant can request a hearing to determine if the seized property was used in the commission of a crime. A person with a legal interest in seized property but unaware the property was used in the commission of a crime also can file a motion for a hearing.

The court will hold a hearing within 30 days and the prosecuting attorney is required to prove by clear and convincing evidence that the seized property was used in the commission of a crime.

The bill also adds the manufacture, distribution and possession of illegal drugs and child pornography to the crimes eligible for property seizure and forfeiture.

The bill passed on a 38-8 vote.



### Game and Parks fee increase approved

Senators passed a bill April 12 that raises fees that the state Game and Parks Commission is authorized

to charge for a wide range of permits, licenses and stamps.

LB745, introduced by Omaha Sen. John McCollister, also raises the caps on user fee ranges and increases the allowed growth rate for fees the commission is



Sen. John McCollister

authorized to charge for hunting, fishing and other activities. The fee increases will generate an estimated \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2016-17 and a further \$5 million in FY2017-18.

Resident fee caps for an annual hunting permit will be raised from \$13 to \$18 and the cap on an annual fishing permit will increase from \$17.50 to \$24. The bill will raise the fee cap for a deer hunting permit for residents from \$29 to \$39.

The minimum fee for an annual park permit for a resident motor vehicle will increase from \$25 to \$30.

The bill passed 44-3.

### Private renewable energy company exemptions approved

Senators passed a bill April 13 to encourage private renewable energy development—especially wind energy.

LB824, introduced by Omaha Sen. John McCollister, exempts private renewable energy generation facilities from certain laws that currently regulate facilities generating electricity.

The bill eliminates the requirement that a developer have a power purchase agreement—in which a customer agrees to buy most of a proposed facility's electricity—before the facility is built. The bill also exempts a private developer from a requirement that it prove that a new facility would not create stranded assets. Finally, the bill prohibits other power suppliers from acquiring the private facility's property through eminent domain.

To qualify for the exemption, a private company must notify the Power Review Board, which oversees most of the state's electric generating facilities, at least 30 days before it begins construction. The company also must certify that it will pay for any decommissioning costs if the facility fails.

The bill contains provisions from LB914, introduced by Sen. Ken Schilz of Ogallala, that increase from \$60 to \$250 per day the compensation for the Nebraska Power Review Board member who represents the state on the Southwest Power Pool's regional state committee. An appropriation of \$19,000 in fiscal year 2016-17 and again in FY2017-18 is provided to the board to cover the cost.

After two hours of final-round debate, McCollister filed a motion to invoke cloture, or cut off debate and vote on the bill. It succeeded 34-11. Thirty-three votes were needed.

Senators then passed the bill 34-10.

**Water appropriation stream flow bill passes**

Water currently used for generating hydropower can instead be used to maintain stream flow for fish, wildlife and recreation under a bill passed by lawmakers April 12.

LB1038, introduced by Sen. Al Davis of Hyannis, allows a water appropriation used to generate hydropower at a facility on a natural stream to be changed to an instream basin management appropriation to be held jointly by the state Game and Parks Commission and at least one natural resources district.



Sen. Ken Schilz



Sen. Al Davis

The bill incorporates provisions from LB711, introduced by Sen. Dan Hughes of Venango, that reestablish a task force with the goal of eradicating invasive plant species that reduce stream flows. The task force will be allocated \$1 million per year beginning in fiscal year 2016-17.



Sen. Dan Hughes

Further, the bill requires the state Department of Roads to provide permits to trim vegetation that obscures lawfully placed advertising signs or displays.

Senators voted 48-0 to pass the bill.

**NEBRASKA RETIREMENT SYSTEMS**

**New state patrol retirement benefits reduced**

Lawmakers gave final approval April 12 to a bill that changes the retirement plans of new Nebraska State Patrol members.

LB467, sponsored by Seward Sen. Mark Kolterman, creates a second tier of reduced benefits for new members. The bill makes the following benefit changes for state patrol officers who are hired on or after July 1, 2016:



Sen. Mark Kolterman

- increases the officer contribution rate from 16 to 17 percent;
- reduces the maximum cost of living adjustment (COLA) from 2.5 to 1 percent;
- prohibits participation in the Deferred Retirement Option Plan;
- increases from three to five the

number of years of employment used to calculate a member's final compensation rate;

- limits the increase in compensation in each of the five years prior to retirement to 8 percent per year for benefit calculations; and
- excludes any unused sick, vacation, holiday and compensatory leave in the calculation of a member's final average monthly compensation.

If the plan is 100 percent funded, a maximum supplemental COLA of 1.5 percent may be granted at the discretion of the Public Employees Retirement Board.

LB467 passed on a 32-0 vote.

**REVENUE**

**Homestead exemption extended to remarried spouses of veterans**

A bill that allows a veteran's surviving spouse to retain his or her homestead exemption after remarrying was passed by the Legislature April 12.

Under current state law, surviving spouses of veterans who died on active duty or were honorably discharged and drew disability compensation are eligible to retain the veterans' homestead exemption only if they do not remarry.

LB683, introduced by Omaha Sen. Joni Craighead, allows a surviving spouse to retain the exemption if he or she remarries after age 57.



Sen. Joni Craighead

The bill passed 47-0.

**Long-term care savings program ended**

Nebraska's Long-Term Care Savings Plan will be eliminated under a bill given final approval April 13.

LB756, introduced by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, terminates the plan on Jan. 1, 2018. Any participant is entitled to receive the full balance of his or her account on that date.

Under the bill, investment earnings from the plan will be deducted from an individual's adjusted gross income (AGI) for tax years beginning Jan. 1, 2018, and AGI will increase for unapproved withdrawals for tax years before Jan. 1, 2018.

The bill passed on a 49-0 vote.

**Tax exemptions approved for treatment centers, others**

Lawmakers passed a bill April 12 that provides a tax exemption for certain treatment centers.

LB774, introduced by Norfolk Sen. Jim Scheer, provides a sales and use tax exemption for purchases made by nonprofit substance abuse treatment centers.



Sen. Jim Scheer

It also incorporates provisions of LB510 as originally introduced by Omaha Sen. Tanya Cook. These provisions allow an employer to apply a nonrefundable tax credit against 20 percent of its expenses used for an



Sen. Tanya Cook

employee's postsecondary tuition or costs associated with a high school equivalency program. The tax credit is valid for no more than two years of

an eligible employee's expenses.

Provisions of six additional bills were added to LB774, including:

- LB542, originally introduced by Omaha Sen. Burke Harr, which creates a sales tax exemption for county agricultural societies;



Sen. Burke Harr

- LB888, originally introduced by Omaha Sen. Heath Mello, which clarifies that insurance companies are eligible for tax credits under the Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Revitalization Act and reserves the first \$4 million for applications seeking credits less than \$150,000;

- LB1014, introduced by Gering Sen. John Stinner, which exempts from levy limits any property taxes levied for bonds issued by a county airport authority;



Sen. John Stinner

- LB1015, introduced by Harr, which creates a sales tax exemption for museums that rent or lease property;
- LB1047, introduced by Harr, which adds as a qualified activity the drying and aerating of grain in commercial facilities under the sales tax exemption for energy used in manufacturing and processing; and
- LB1088, originally introduced by Hyannis Sen. Al Davis, which creates a sales tax exemption for independent living centers.

The bill passed on a 37-10 vote.

**Arena turnback taxes expanded**

Senators passed a bill April 13 that extends the range from which cities collect state sales taxes from hotels and businesses near sports arenas and convention centers.

Under current state law, 70 percent of state sales taxes generated by new and existing retailers near an arena are turned back to the city to help pay for the new facility. Thirty percent is directed to a fund that provides development grants to smaller communities across the state. Omaha and Lincoln currently receive turnback taxes from hotels within 200 yards and 450 yards, respectively, of any convention center or arena.

Introduced by Sen. Jim Scheer of Norfolk, LB884 extends turnback tax provisions to any publicly or privately owned hotel located within 600 yards of an eligible facility, to be measured from any point on the exterior perimeter of a facility.

The bill also extends to 48 months the period during which taxes are turned back to political subdivisions to pay for sports arena facilities and allows Lincoln to use 10 percent of its turnback taxes to pay for low-income housing projects.

The proposal allows cities to use the turnback tax to pay for capital improvements on the facilities, in addition to paying off the principal and interest on bonds used to pay for construction.

LB884 passed 43-4.

**Tax credit for volunteer emergency responders granted**

Senators passed a proposal April 12 to give tax credits to volunteer emergency responders.

LB886, introduced by Sen. Al Davis of Hyannis, creates a \$250 refund-



able tax credit for volunteer emergency responders, rescue squad members and firefighters who meet certain criteria. The bill establishes a point system to determine annual qualifications for the credit.



Sen. Al Davis

The bill is estimated to reduce state tax revenue by \$2.2 million in fiscal year 2017-18 and again in FY2018-19.

Senators voted 46-0 to pass the bill.

### Senators approve tax credits for early childhood workforce

Early childhood care and education program providers and their staff will be eligible for a tax credit under a bill passed by lawmakers April 12.

Introduced by Omaha Sen. Heath Mello, LB889 creates two tiered tax credits—one for providers of eligible early childhood care and education programs and another for staff members.



Sen. Heath Mello

A child care or early childhood education program will have to be assigned a quality rating under the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act to qualify for the credit. The amount of the credit will be determined by the program's quality rating and the average monthly number of children who attend the program.

The bill also directs the state Department of Education to develop a classification system for employees of applicable early childhood care and education programs. An employee's rating will be based on his or her level of education, training and work history. The rating will determine the amount of credit the employee receives.

The total amount of credits will be

capped at \$5 million per year and the credits will be available for five years beginning Jan. 1, 2017.

The bill passed 42-5.

### Ag land tax credit bill passes

A bill that increases the amount of property tax credits for agricultural landowners received final-round approval April 13.

Introduced by Grand Island Sen. Mike Gloor on behalf of Gov. Pete Ricketts, LB958 grants \$224 million in property tax credits for fiscal year 2016-17—a continuation of credits offered last year totaling \$204 million.



Sen. Mike Gloor

Gloor said this year's additional \$20 million in credits will go specifically to agricultural and horticultural landowners.

Senators voted 47-1 to pass the bill.

### Access to tax incentive data granted

Lawmakers passed a bill April 12 that ensures the Legislative Audit Office's access to data necessary for conducting performance audits of tax incentive programs.

LB1022, introduced by the Legislative Performance Audit Committee, gives the office direct access to all agency databases containing relevant program information. The bill allows the office to request confidential state Department of Revenue data and removes current provisions giving the speaker of the Legislature and the chairperson of the committee access to confidential data in certain circumstances.

The bill also extends the incentive programs' expiration by three years.

The bill passed 44-4.

## TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### Right of way clarification passed

A bill that clarifies right of way laws for bicyclists and pedestrians was passed April 13.

LB716, introduced by Omaha Sen. Rick Kolowski, specifies that any bicyclist who is riding on a designated path that intersects with a street or highway has the right of way within the crossing if he or she follows all traffic signals.



Sen. Rick Kolowski

A cyclist has all the rights and duties of a pedestrian, however, he or she must yield the right of way to pedestrians when riding on a sidewalk, crosswalk or road shoulder.

LB716 also repeals a current statute commonly referred to as the "mandatory sidepath" provision. This states that whenever a usable path for bicycles has been provided adjacent to a street, a bicyclist must use the path and not the street.

The bill passed on a 38-3 vote.

### Statewide 911 system proposal passes

Lawmakers approved a proposal April 12 to create a statewide enhanced 911 system.

Introduced by Sen. Jim Smith of Papillion, LB938 authorizes the Nebraska Public Service Commission to plan, implement, coordinate, maintain and organize



Sen. Jim Smith

funding for a statewide system capable of next-generation service. This means public safety answering points will have the ability to receive 911 calls via voice, text or video using Internet protocol.

At least two public hearings on the plan are required. The commission will present the plan to the Legislature no later than Dec. 1, 2017, and it will be implemented sometime after July 1, 2018.

The plan will estimate the startup and ongoing costs of a statewide system and recommend the number of public safety answering points the state should maintain. The commission will ensure uniform statewide standards for technical support, training, efficiency and quality assurance at public safety answering points.

The bill also creates a fund to pay for the commission's expenses in developing the plan, estimated to be \$1.1 million in fiscal year 2016-17 and another \$1 million in FY2017-18.

The commission will provide an annual report to the Legislature assessing the level of wireless 911 location accuracy compliance for wireless carriers.

Senators voted 48-0 to pass the bill.

### Animal transport weight exceptions passed

Certain agricultural vehicles are exempt from weight and load limitations under a bill passed by the Legislature April 12.

LB977, introduced by Papillion Sen. Jim Smith, exempts implements of animal husbandry—such as tractors, fertilizer spreaders and mixer-feed trucks—from weight and load limitations on Nebraska highways. The exemption does not apply to vehicles on the inter-



Sen. Jim Smith

state or in any instance where such an implement crosses a bridge or culvert.

The bill incorporates provisions of LB996, originally introduced by Henderson Sen. Curt Friesen, which excludes vehicle manufacturers that own or operate two or fewer dealerships in Nebraska, have owned or operated a warranty repair or service facility as of Jan. 1, 2016, and manufacture engines installed in vehicles with a gross weight rating of more than 16,000 pounds from owning an interest in, operating or controlling a franchise, franchisee or consumer care facility.



Sen. Curt Friesen

LB977 also incorporates provisions of six additional bills, including:

- LB799, originally introduced by Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz, which authorizes the use of funds collected under the Nebraska Transportation Act to be used for the purchase, replacement or rebuilding of public transportation vehicles;
- LB844, originally introduced by Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks, which creates a breast cancer awareness license plate to be available Jan. 1, 2017;
- LB872, originally introduced by Gretna Sen. John Murante, which allows vehicles oper-



Sen. Kate Bolz



Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks

ated by the state Department of Roads, as well as local authorities, to use blue and amber flashing lights when engaged in the inspection, construction, repair or maintenance of highways;

- LB918, introduced by Murante, which retains 1 percent of proceeds from the motor vehicle tax to fund the replacement and ongoing maintenance of a state vehicle title and registration system;
- LB946, introduced by Smith, which authorizes the chair of the Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board to modify, approve or reject any board action in which a controlling number of board members are active participants in the relevant market; and
- LB989, introduced by Murante, which decreases from 500 to 250 the number of prepaid applications required to issue a qualified organization's specialty license plate and allows for electronic renewal and replacement of commercial driver licenses.



Sen. John Murante

The bill passed on a 49-0 vote. ■



# LAST DAY PHOTOS



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Outgoing senators gathered for a group selfie in the rotunda after adjournment April 20.