

## Revenue Committee considers tax proposals



Sens. Brett Lindstrom and Lou Ann Linehan (left) introduced components of Gov. Pete Ricketts' property tax plan.

### Statutory minimum proposed for property tax relief fund

The Legislature would direct \$275 million each year to the state's property tax credit program under a bill heard Feb. 27 by the Revenue Committee.

The program uses state sales and income tax revenue to provide Nebraskans with credits meant to offset part of what they pay in property taxes.

LB303, introduced by Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom on behalf of Gov. Pete Ricketts, would direct the Legislature to place \$224 million in the fund in tax year 2018, the same as in 2017. For tax year 2019 and beyond, the bill would set the amount in the fund at no less than \$275 million.

"This is a straightforward approach to tax relief without imposing a tax shift from other sources of revenue," Lindstrom said.

Ricketts testified in support of the bill, although he

(continued page 2)

### Constitutional limit on local property tax increases proposed

Cities, counties and school districts could not increase the amount of property taxes they collect by more than 3 percent from year to year under a proposed amendment to the state constitution heard Feb. 27 by the Revenue Committee.

LR8CA, introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Lou Ann Linehan on behalf of Gov. Pete Ricketts, would place the proposal on the November 2020 general election ballot. If voters approve it, the amendment would limit the total amount of property tax revenue raised by a political subdivision in any fiscal year to 3 percent greater than the amount raised the previous fiscal year.

A political subdivision could exceed that limit by a specific amount only if a majority of legal voters approve in a special election.

(continued page 3)

## Statutory minimum proposed for property tax relief fund

(continued from front page)

acknowledged that it is not by itself a solution to the state's high property taxes. He said setting the minimum amount of property tax relief in statute would make it harder for future Legislatures to reduce the fund and would give Nebraskans certainty about how much they could expect to receive in credits each year.

Shane Greckel, a farmer from Bloomfield, also testified in support. He said the property tax credit fund provides relief directly to farmers and ranchers, who then spend that money in their communities. While the credit might amount to only \$10 or \$20 per acre, Greckel said, a farmer's profits might be a mere \$5 per acre.

"We have to work on extraordinarily thin margins, so any amount helps," he said.

Testifying in opposition to the bill was Sarah Curry, policy director for the Platte Institute. Instead of adding money to the property tax credit fund, she said, the Legislature should seek structural tax reform that limits local tax levies and changes the way

property is valued for tax purposes.

"It's clear that the property tax credit relief fund policy is not working to fundamentally lower property taxes and does not create lasting reform, only temporary relief," Curry said.

Renee Fry, executive director of OpenSky Policy Institute, gave neutral testimony on the bill. She said the property tax credit fund has done little since its inception to reduce the state's reliance on property taxes to fund public schools.

Fry noted that the Appropriations Committee's preliminary budget would reduce state aid to schools by \$38.5 million from the governor's initial budget proposal.

"They are fully funding the increase in the property tax credit program that is in this bill but at the same time reducing our funding commitment to [state aid], which is directly counter to the structural changes we think we should be making," she said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill. ■

### Economic forecasting board lowers revenue projections

The Nebraska Economic Forecasting Advisory Board voted to decrease revenue projections during a Feb. 28 meeting at the Capitol. The board provides an advisory forecast of general fund receipts used by the Legislature to craft the state's budget.

Revenue projections for the current fiscal year and FY2019-20 were lowered primarily based on anticipated decreases in sales and use tax receipts of \$60 million in FY2018-19 and \$20 million in FY2019-20.

Total projected revenue receipts for FY2018-19 were lowered to \$4.72 billion, a decrease of \$80 million. Projected total revenue receipts for FY2019-20 were set at \$4.87 billion, a decrease of \$20 million.

In addition, overall projected revenue receipts for FY2020-21 were set at \$4.99 billion, a \$10 million decrease.

The next board meeting is scheduled for April 25. ■

## 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), [twitter.com/UnicamUpdate](https://twitter.com/UnicamUpdate) and [facebook.com/UnicameralUpdate](https://facebook.com/UnicameralUpdate).

Clerk of the Legislature: Patrick J. O'Donnell

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

Printed copies of bills, resolutions and the Legislative Journal are available at the State Capitol room 1023, or by calling 402-471-2709 or 800-742-7456. Status of bills and resolutions can be requested at that number or can be found on [NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov). 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 Unicameral Update is available as an audio recording from the Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service. Call (800) 742-7691 for more information.

THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE'S OFFICIAL NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1977

# Constitutional limit on local property tax increases proposed

(continued from front page)

The limit would not apply to the property tax revenue needed to pay the principal and interest on a political subdivision's bonded indebtedness.

Linehan said the measure is an attempt to slow spending by local governments, which rely heavily on property taxes to fund their operation. Controlling school spending is especially important if the Legislature increases state aid to public schools in an effort to reduce the state's overreliance on property taxes to fund public education, she said.

"If we're going to step up to the plate and we're going to pick up a large portion of the funding for all schools," Linehan said, "we also owe it to the taxpayers ... to make sure we get control on the spending."

Ricketts testified in support of the resolution. He said limiting increases in property tax revenue is the only way to achieve sustainable tax relief.

Coby Mach testified in support of the proposal on behalf of the Lincoln Independent Business Association. He said the amendment would not restrict political subdivisions from increasing their budgets using other sources of revenue, such as sales tax, occupation tax or federal grants.

"In order for any property tax reduction proposal to make a lasting impact," Mach said, "we believe it must rein in property tax spending at the local level where the property taxes are actually levied."

Lincoln city council member Roy Christensen testified in support of the resolution on his own behalf, saying it would enhance local control.

"For most Nebraskans, they don't have the time to show up to the numerous budget meetings for their school, city, county and so forth," he

said. "With LR8CA, the people can vote to override the 3 percent cap if they believe local government needs additional resources."

Frederic Oltjenbruns also testified in support. Oltjenbruns said he and his family farmed near Ceresco until last year when they moved their operation to Missouri because they could not afford Nebraska's high property taxes. In 2017, Oltjenbruns said, he paid approximately \$50,000 in property taxes on 585 acres in Nebraska. His property tax bill on 855 acres in Missouri last year was less than \$1,200.

"I hope you guys can straighten this mess out before it goes from maybe the few of us to a landslide of farmers fleeing like refugees to other states," he said.

Douglas Kindig, mayor of La Vista, testified in opposition to the proposal on behalf of the United Cities of Sarpy County. He said the 3 percent limit on property tax revenue increases would stifle growth in the fastest-growing county in the state.

"Limiting revenue growth not only hinders our ability to maintain the current service level and quality of public services," Kindig said, "it will impede improvements and the expansion of basic services necessary for growth."

Jack Moles testified in opposition to the resolution on behalf of the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the Nebraska State Education Association. He said LR8CA would give school districts little room to accommodate rising costs that are beyond their control, such as staff salaries, health insurance and the cost of meeting federal and state regulations.

John Hansen, president of the Nebraska Farmers Union, also opposed the measure. If voters approve the amendment, he said, "the ceiling will become the floor," meaning local governments would raise their property tax requests to the maximum.

Hansen also cautioned against placing a cap in the state's constitution because doing so would limit the Legislature's ability to change the cap if necessary.

"If there is going to be some sort of cost control as a part of a [tax reform] package ... the proper place for it would be in statute, and it should not be in the constitution," he said.

The committee took no immediate action on LR8CA. ■

**UNICAMERAL UPDATE  
IN YOUR INBOX**

Readers can sign up to receive email updates by entering an email address on [Update.Legislature.ne.gov](http://Update.Legislature.ne.gov).



IVE

**Subscribe to email updates**

Get the latest Nebraska Legislature news sent to your inbox.

# MEET THE SENATOR

## Dorn brings a listening ear to the Legislature

**W**hen Adams Sen. Myron Dorn was sworn into office Jan. 9, he represented one of four generations of his family gathered in the legislative chamber that morning.

The eldest, Dorn's 90-year-old uncle Wilmer, had asked weeks before if he could attend his nephew's swearing-in ceremony, even though he has trouble getting around.

"I know he's super excited," Dorn said.

Dorn's wife, Julie, and his children, Kyle and Erin, also are "very much in favor" of him serving in the Legislature, he said, even if they are wary of the amount of time his new job will keep him away from the family farm.

It will be difficult, too, for a man who said he holds no ambition in life other than to be a farmer. Dorn grew up on his parents'—now his brother's—farm near Adams. When he left home to study animal science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the 1970s, he came home as often as he could to help with farm work.

Dorn grows soybeans and corn and raises cattle with his two younger brothers, his son and a nephew. Over time, the brothers have delegated decision making to the two younger men, a generational transfer of responsibility that Dorn said has been exciting to see.

Just as Dorn has enjoyed watching his son and nephew grow as young farmers, he looks forward to learning about the legislative process from more experienced senators.

In fact, Dorn said, he is glad to start his term with a 90-day long session so that he has more time to learn about lawmaking—even if that means being inside the Capitol rather than outside on the farm.

Dorn, who served on the Gage County Board from 2010 to 2018,

said the motivating force behind his run for the Legislature was the encouragement from those who watched the board work together during his three years as chairperson.

"From my perspective, I think they saw what I had the ability to do," Dorn said of his supporters.

One lesson from his time on the board stands out: If you talk too much instead of listening, he said, you can miss the big picture. Dorn said he made certain to hear everyone who came to him for help, even if it was clear that a resolution was out of his hands.

"When people visit with you about something or when they have an issue," he said, "they want to feel that they had somebody that was interested or had somebody that really listened to their concerns and their thoughts." ■



Sen. Myron Dorn and his grandson, Dempsey, on the family farm near Adams in 2018.

# AGRICULTURE

## Preemption of local pet store ordinances proposed

The Agriculture Committee heard testimony Feb. 26 on a bill that would bar municipalities from enacting ordinances to regulate pet stores.

The Dog and Cat Purchase Protection Act requires pet shops, dealers or commercial dog or cat breeders to give purchasers a disclosure statement containing information about their new pet at the time of sale, including its date of birth, sex, vaccination records and a record of any serious health problem that does or may adversely affect the animal.

LB382, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Suzanne Geist, would require sellers to make that statement available for customer review. It also would require pet shops to maintain records documenting the source of each pet for at least one year after its sale.

Additionally, the bill would prohibit pet shops from knowingly selling a dog that was produced by inbreeding or linebreeding a dog with its own parent or offspring.

As introduced, LB382 would prohibit municipalities from regulating pet shops.

Geist said the additional records requirements would protect Nebraska consumers and that bill also would shield pet stores from potential action by local governments to restrict the sourcing of puppies and certain breeds of dogs.

While no such ordinance currently exists in Nebraska, Geist said, animal

welfare groups are urging cities across the country to require pet stores to source dogs only from animal shelters rather than breeders.

“I’m sure there are bad actors out there,” she said, “but to wipe out pet stores as a class of business, I think is not wise.”

Geist brought an amendment to the hearing that would allow municipalities to adopt local laws or ordinances governing permits, licenses, fees, housing requirements or public safety regarding pet animals. It would not preempt any municipal law, ordinance or regulation already in effect.

Testifying in support of the bill was Mike Gonidakis on behalf of Citizens for Responsible Pet Ownership, a national nonprofit. Gonidakis said cities in other states have banned pet stores that do not source their animals from rescue shelters, effectively shutting down stores that sell only purebred dogs. He said LB382 is needed to prevent that from happening in Nebraska.

Jack Cheloha, lobbyist for the city of Omaha, testified in opposition to the bill. He said Omaha has not shut down a pet store during his 25 years working for the city, and no group has approached the city council with a proposal to restrict them.

Although Geist’s amendment would preserve part of the city’s ability to adopt local animal welfare ordinances, Cheloha said, “it’s still something that we’re not comfortable with.”

“We just don’t see the need for any preemption in the bill whatsoever,” he said. “It’s just not a problem in Nebraska.”

Robert Downey, president and CEO of the Capital Humane Society in Lincoln, also testified in opposition, specifically to the proposed preemption of local ordinances.

“The challenges that can be presented to animal control authorities

in different locales can be vastly different,” he said. “Local governing bodies need to be able to react to those challenges without having their hands tied by state law which prohibits them from being more restrictive than the state.”

Misty Christo testified in opposition to the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Rescue Council. She said cities in other states have passed ordinances banning pet stores from selling puppies from puppy mills. Businesses opposing those measures now are seeking protection from state legislatures rather than sourcing their animals from shelters, rescues and responsible breeders, Christo said.

“[LB382] appears to regulate the very industry that it protects,” she said, “but in reality it would place meaningless restrictions on pet stores and secure the puppy mill-pet store pipeline by preventing localities from enacting laws that regulate the sale of puppies in pet stores.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

# BANKING, COMMERCE & INSURANCE

## Real estate fee waiver approved

Lawmakers passed a bill Feb. 28 that waives real estate licensing fees for some veterans and their spouses.

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

LB12 passed 47-0 and takes effect immediately.



Sen. Suzanne Geist



Sen. Carol Blood

**Bill would change ATM fees**

The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee heard testimony Feb. 26 on a bill that would remove a requirement that financial institutions must charge the same automatic teller machine fees to all other financial institutions.

LB603, introduced by Omaha Sen. Brett Lindstrom, would affect default interchange fees that are charged between institutions during an ATM transaction. The bill would not change a bank customer's ATM fees.



Sen. Brett Lindstrom

"The bill would modernized Nebraska statutes," Lindstrom said.

Patrick Dwyer of MasterCard testified in favor of the bill. Dwyer said Nebraska is the only state that prohibits banks from charging varying fees. Without added flexibility, he said small cities would be at risk of losing ATMs.

"We're unable to negotiate with both large and small institutions for ATM pricing, therefore having the unintended consequence of limiting the amount of ATMs we deploy," Dwyer said.

No one testified against LB603 and the committee voted 8-0 to advance the bill to general file.

**EDUCATION**

**Update to American civics requirements advanced**

A bill that would update social studies requirements for Nebraska schools advanced from general file Feb. 26 after a successful cloture vote.

Peru Sen. Julie Slama, sponsor of LB399, said the bill would be the first major revision to the state's civic education standards since the Americanism statutes' adoption in 1949. The law requires school boards to appoint three members to a committee on Americanism, which approves textbooks used in the teaching of American history and government.



Sen. Julie Slama

Among other provisions, the bill would eliminate the current criminal penalty for violating the Americanism statutes' provisions.

As introduced, LB399 would require school districts to administer the 100-question civics portion of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services naturalization exam to students no later than eighth grade and again no later than 11th grade. A student's score would be given to his or her parents or guardians.

An Education Committee amendment, adopted 42-3, would remove the requirement that districts administer the exam and instead would make it one of three options a district would have to include in its curriculum.

A district also could require a student to attend or participate in a meeting of a public body and then complete a project or paper demonstrating what he or she learned or complete a project, paper or class presentation on a person, event or related topic from American history.

After six hours of debate spanning four days, Slama offered a motion to invoke cloture, or cease debate and vote on the bill. The motion was adopted 42-3. Thirty-three votes were needed.

After adopting a technical amendment, lawmakers voted 42-3 to advance the bill to select file.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Bill calls for assisted living oversight**

The Executive Board considered a proposal Feb. 27 that would expand the oversight powers of the Office of the Public Counsel to include licensed assisted living facilities.

The public counsel—also known as the state Ombudsman's Office—is an independent office that handles citizen complaints regarding the actions of administrative agencies of Nebraska state government.

LB572, introduced by Fremont Sen. Lynne Walz, would extend the public counsel's authority to all licensed assisted living facilities in Nebraska.



Sen. Lynne Walz

Walz said the bill was the result of a report submitted by the LR296 State-Licensed Care Facilities Oversight Committee. The committee was formed last year to examine assisted living facilities in which many of the residents are diagnosed with a mental illness.

The oversight committee visited many facilities across the state, Walz said, encountering "truly horrible" living conditions, including black mold, bed bugs and a lack of adequate resources and supports.

Currently, the state Department of Health and Human Services is required to visit a random sample of 25 percent of the state's licensed assisted living facilities each year, with no facility going more than five years between survey visits. The ombudsman's office can visit facilities only in conjunction with a DHHS surveyor, Walz said, a system that she described as inadequate.

“We need to be sure that people are safe and free from abuse, neglect and extortion” Walz said. “Giving the public counsel more oversight is just one way to get a better grasp on what we’re dealing with.”

Jerall Moreland, deputy ombudsman for institutions with the Office of the Public Counsel, testified in support of the bill. He said the oversight committee’s findings indicate that many assisted living facilities in Nebraska are not well equipped to serve people with significant mental health issues—to the point of putting the people who live in them at risk.

Calling the findings “extremely disappointing” and “highly inhumane,” Moreland said the state needs more oversight than the system now provides, including an avenue for independent inquiry into facility operations.

“The job is not being done right now,” he said.

Testifying in favor of LB572, Brad Meurrens of Disability Rights Nebraska agreed.

“Given the egregious incidents ... increased direct oversight is needed,” he said. “This legislation, we feel, would go a long way to meet that need. It would provide an additional layer of protection [including] another avenue for persons with disabilities to report incidents.”

Darrell Klein, deputy director of the DHHS Division of Public Health, testified in opposition. Although licensed by the state, assisted living facilities are privately owned and operated, he said.

The public counsel’s office has the authority to enter and inspect a DHHS 24/7 facility at any time, Klein said, but it is beyond their scope to do the same with privately-owned businesses without permission from the owner.

“This [bill] goes beyond the jurisdiction of the state and the department in particular,” he said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB572.

**Additional legislative fiscal tools sought**

The Legislature would gain additional avenues to address state and local government budget concerns under two bills considered Feb. 28 by the Executive Board.

LB713, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Tony Vargas, would add a new step in the Legislature’s budgeting process. The bill would require the legislative fiscal analyst to create additional revenue and budget reports throughout the biennium.



Sen. Tony Vargas

The reports would include a revenue volatility report in even-numbered years, a budget stress test in odd-numbered years and a long-term budget for major programs every four years.

Vargas, who is chairperson of the Legislature’s Planning Committee, said the bill is the result of that committee’s work. Research shows that states that engage in long-term budget planning are better able to address economic volatility, he said.

“In order to meet the needs of future Nebraskans, we have to start that planning now,” Vargas said.

Renee Fry, executive director of OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in favor of the bill. She said that stress testing in the past might have helped the state avoid painful budget cuts in difficult economic times.

“Stress testing is an important budgetary tool [and] with a possible recession in 2020, it’s prudent to prepare

for all possible economic scenarios,” Fry said. “Recessions are difficult to predict and receipts can vary widely from projections.”

The committee also heard testimony on LB636, introduced by Gering Sen. John Stinner, which would create the Financial Condition of Counties and Municipalities Task Force.



Sen. John Stinner

The task force would consider the advisability of creating a system and rating criterion to detect, monitor and prevent financial distress in Nebraska cities and counties. It also would provide recommendations on the state’s role in alleviating such distress and present its findings in a report to the Executive Board.

Stinner said many rural communities face budget issues that leave them struggling to provide basic services and adequate public safety, often through no fault of their own. When political subdivisions encounter economic crisis, he said, the impact also is felt at the state level.

“Outmigration trends over the last several decades have threatened the stability of county and municipal government tax revenues, putting tremendous stress on local infrastructures,” he said. “I’d like some way of analyzing this.”

The task force would include the chairperson of the Appropriations Committee and one other member of the Legislature selected by the Executive Board as nonvoting members. The ten voting members would include the auditor of public accounts and representatives from cities, counties and schools.

Christy Abraham, representing the League of Nebraska Municipalities, testified in support of LB636, which

she called a “sincere effort” to assist municipalities that are facing difficult times.

She said a task force would be a good first step toward deciding which factors should be taken into consideration in determining when a municipality might be in financial distress.

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



**Nonpartisan county election bill considered**

Counties of 15,000 or fewer residents could hold nonpartisan county primary elections under a bill considered by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 27.

LB144, introduced by Sen. Dan Hughes of Venango, would allow a qualifying county, either through a voter-approved county board resolution or citizen petition, to remove political party labels from the primary election ballot for all elected county offices.

The top two candidates would advance to the general election regardless of party affiliation. Party labels would appear on the general election ballot.

Hughes said that in the 74 Nebraska counties with fewer than 15,000 residents, political parties are less organized. Residents in rural counties often base their votes on personal knowledge of candidates, he said.

Hughes recalled a 2014 election in Red Willow County in which four can-



Sen. Dan Hughes

didates, all Republican, ran for sheriff.

“The Republicans in that county decided who their sheriff should be,” Hughes said.

JD Schluntz, a former Harlan County supervisor, testified in favor of the bill. The current system discourages voting because many elections essentially are decided in the primary election, effectively shutting out voters from other parties, he said.

“If you’re a Democrat and it’s only Republicans running, what’s the use of you voting?” Schluntz said.

Westin Miller of Civic Nebraska also testified in favor of the bill. He said elections are better when they are about candidates and not parties.

“Party affiliations can give you a general idea about a candidate, but they can also inhibit you from knowing that candidate themselves,” Miller said.

No one testified against LB144 and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

**Bill seeks to help veterans find employment**

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 27 on a bill that would create a new position in the state Department of Labor to assist veterans looking for work.

LB626, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks, would create the position of veterans’ workforce development coordinator.

The coordinator, who must be a veteran, would:

- develop a website with a job-search tool specific to veterans;
- serve as an ex-officio member



Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks

of the Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs;

- seek advice and input from the commission on veterans’ workforce development issues;
- research best practices and websites from other states that are specific to veterans; and
- submit an annual progress report to the commission.

LB626 also would require the department to hire necessary support staff for the new position.

Pansing Brooks said she brought the bill after constituents told her that neighboring states are providing more assistance to veterans seeking employment. She highlighted Home Base Iowa, a website that allows veterans in that state to post a resume and search a database of businesses that are interested in hiring veterans.

“I believe this bill sends a message to veterans and transitioning service members, welcoming them and acknowledging the fact that we want them here,” Pansing Brooks said.

Ronald Dupell of the Nebraska Veterans Coalition testified in support of the bill. He said it would help retain veterans, increase the size of Nebraska’s labor pool and reduce the outflow of veterans leaving the state.

“We have a pool of skilled, trained, disciplined people at our fingertips,” Dupell said.

Dupell added that the tax revenue generated by retaining veterans and their families would help offset the bill’s cost.

Veteran John Stewart also spoke in support of LB626. He said veteran retention efforts are long overdue.

“Iowa looks like a much better place for a second career if I were to leave Kearney where I live to get a job,” Stewart said.

No one spoke against the bill and the committee took no immediate action on it.



**Tourism promotion bill considered**

The Nebraska Tourism Commission would have greater control over promotional products under a bill considered March 1 by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

LB637, introduced by Gering Sen. John Stinner, would allow the commission to develop and approve state marketing campaigns and to produce, sell and distribute tourism promotional products. Current law does not allow the commission to do so.



Sen. John Stinner

Revenue generated by any sales would be credited to the commission's promotional cash fund.

"The commission must have the ability to develop and sell promotional products as part of a marketing strategy," Stinner said. "LB637 is an essential tool for the commission to bring growth to our tourism industry."

John Ricks, executive director of the Nebraska Tourism Commission, testified in favor of the bill. He said there is high demand for items bearing the state's new tourism slogan: "Honestly, it's not for everyone."

Since the unveiling of the slogan in October 2018, Ricks said there has been a 50 percent increase in traffic to the commission's website and a 65 percent increase in requests for Nebraska travel guides. He estimated the value of media coverage of the slogan at \$7.2 million.

"That's coverage you simply cannot buy," Ricks said.

The inability under current law to sell t-shirts, coffee mugs and other items carrying the slogan is costing the commission money, Ricks said.

David Fudge, President of the Nebraska Travel Association, also testified in favor of the bill. Fudge said that when he first heard of the new tourism campaign he asked Ricks where he could buy a t-shirt with the new slogan. He said he was perplexed when told that he couldn't.

"We're missing a golden opportunity to turn people from all parts of the country into brand ambassadors," Fudge said.

No one testified against LB637 and the committee took no immediate action on it.



**Clarification of firearm transportation considered**

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Feb. 28 on a bill intended to allow people to safely transport firearms throughout the state.

LB54, introduced by Kearney Sen. John Lowe, would allow a person to transport a legally-possessed firearm as long as it is unloaded and stored in a case.



Sen. John Lowe

Lowe said the Nebraska Supreme Court previously found that licensed gun owners who do not hold a concealed carry permit would be in violation of the state's concealed carry law if a weapon is within a person's immediate reach, including in a locked glove box.

LB54 would clarify the law so that gun owners know that they are following it, he said.

"Right now, we're in a gray area when it comes to transporting firearms," Lowe said. "Clarity is crucial

when it comes to firearm laws."

Patricia Harrold spoke in support of the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Firearms Owners Association. Most firearm owners already use the storage method outlined in the bill, she said.

"This is a return to the common-sense approach that all the firearm owners I know have used to transport their firearms ... and provides a means or a method to keep the firearm secure," Harrold said.

Opposing the bill was Megan Gentrup of Omaha. She said it would allow "hidden" handguns to be carried in public.

"We require law enforcement ... to take hours and hours of training [on gun safety]," Gentrup said. "However, with this bill, we would allow people to carry unloaded firearms in public with no [additional] training."

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

**Firearm protection orders discussed**

People who pose a safety threat could be required to surrender their firearms under a bill considered Feb. 28 by members of the Judiciary Committee.

LB58, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Adam Morfeld, would allow law enforcement or a family or household member to file a petition for an extreme risk protection order against someone who they believe poses an immediate safety threat.



Sen. Adam Morfeld

Family members, roommates and law enforcement are most likely to recognize warning signs, Morfeld said, which is why the bill authorizes them to petition the court.

“This bill would save lives by allowing firearms to be removed temporarily, with due process, from a person at extreme risk of harming themselves or others before warning signs escalate into violence,” he said.

A petition for an extreme risk protection order must demonstrate:

- evidence that a significant risk of personal injury to the individual or others exists;
- specific statements, actions or facts that show a reasonable fear of future dangerous acts;
- the number, type and location of any firearms believed to be in the person’s possession;
- if known, any existing harassment, sexual assault, domestic or similar protection orders; and
- any pending lawsuits, complaints, petitions or other action between the parties to the petition.

If law enforcement files the petition, the agency would be required to make a good faith effort to notify any family or household members who could be at risk of violence and include referrals to mental health, domestic violence and counseling resources.

The court where the petition is filed could decide to issue a temporary protection order “ex parte,” or without giving notice to the respondent, if the petitioner believes the respondent poses an immediate and significant safety risk. If reasonable cause is found for a risk protection order, it would be valid for one year.

Upon issuance of an order authorized under LB58, the respondent would be required to surrender to local law enforcement any concealed carry permit and firearms in his or her possession. Additionally, law enforcement would be authorized to take pos-

session of any firearm or permit found in plain sight or discovered through a legal search.

If an extreme risk protection order is terminated or is allowed to expire, all surrendered firearms would be returned to the respondent after confirming the person is legally eligible to possess them.

A petitioner who files for an extreme risk protection order based on false information or with the intent to harass the respondent would be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor, which carries a penalty of up to three years imprisonment, a \$500 fine or both.

Anyone who possesses, purchases or receives a firearm knowing he or she is the subject of an extreme risk protection order would be guilty of a Class II misdemeanor for a first or second violation, which carries a penalty of up to six months imprisonment, a \$1,000 fine or both.

A third or subsequent offense would be considered a Class IV felony, which carries a penalty of up to two years imprisonment with 12 months of post-release supervision, a \$10,000 fine or both.

Lincoln Police Chief Jeff Bliemeister supported LB58. Forty percent of the people who committed suicide in the last 30 years used firearms, he said, the majority of whom were not legally prohibited from possessing one.

“An extreme risk protection order would not be the most effective tool in preventing all the tragedies,” Bliemeister said. “But my professional experience leads me to believe that some deaths would be avoided, trauma to the family mitigated and additional time afforded to get everyone the assistance needed.”

Jayden Speed of Omaha also spoke in favor of the bill, saying it would lay the groundwork to fight gun violence in Nebraska.

“Many shootings and gun suicides are preceded by warning signs that indicate a person is a danger to himself or others,” he said. “Temporarily preventing a person in crisis [from having] access to a firearm can mean the difference between life and death.”

Opposing the measure was Patricia Harrold, representing the Nebraska Firearms Owners Association. The Legislature should focus on providing resources to law enforcement and the mental health community to address the issues behind gun violence, she said, instead of threatening people’s civil liberties.

“Rather than addressing those needs, we’re attempting to come up with a quick and easier solution to address the potential for crime and suicide,” Harrold said. “This bill proposes a real and tangible loss of civil liberties as a reasonable sacrifice in exchange for an incalculable degree of safety.”

Gregg Lanik of Lincoln also opposed LB58, saying that a person’s right to possess a firearm could be taken away in a “secret” hearing.

“The standard set in LB58 is not whether there is probable cause to believe a gun owner has committed a crime,” he said. “Rather, the standard is some subjective determination of whether the owner represents some danger.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

### **Study of missing Native American women and children approved**

Lawmakers passed a bill March 1 that seeks to increase investigative resources dedicated to the state’s Native American community.

LB154, sponsored by Gordon Sen. Tom Brewer, directs the Nebraska

State Patrol to conduct a study focusing on the scope of the problem, identifying barriers and creating partnerships to increase the reporting and investigation of missing Native American women and children.



Sen. Tom Brewer

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

The bill passed on a 45-0 vote.

### Reentry plan for inmates discussed

Members of the Judiciary Committee heard testimony Feb. 27 on a bill that would establish a uniform correctional reentry program for use throughout the state.

LB286, sponsored by Omaha Sen. John McCollister, would create a Coordinated Reentry Council to establish a statewide plan for people upon release from a correctional facility, based on national best practices.



Sen. John McCollister

The council would meet at least three times a year and make policy recommendations to the governor and Legislature.

McCollister cited ongoing work by the Sherwood Foundation, in conjunction with various stakeholders, to identify a number of challenges facing the state.

“If the foundation’s efforts can

be combined with the provisions in LB286, Nebraska would be able to establish a comprehensive and successful reentry program,” he said.

Membership on the council would include:

- the director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services;
- the chairperson of the Board of Parole;
- the director of supervision and services of the Division of Parole Supervision;
- the director of behavioral health of the state Department of Health and Human Services; and
- the executive director of the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

The governor would appoint eight additional members—subject to legislative approval—to include an executive director of a state community college association, a business owner who employs former inmates, two former inmates of a state correctional facility, a mental health and substance abuse professional, a social worker, a criminal justice researcher from a Nebraska university or college and one full-time law enforcement officer or employee.

The state probation administrator, two members of the Legislature and two judges appointed by the chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court would serve as nonvoting members.

Each member would serve an initial term of three years.

Doug Koebernick, inspector general of the Nebraska correctional system, testified in support of the bill. Work has been done to reform the state’s current reentry procedures, he said, but more formal oversight is needed.

“While there are efforts going on by various parties, it’s actually a dis-

jointed effort that would benefit from a long-term strategic plan or vision,” Koebernick said.

Opposing the bill was Scott Frakes, director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. The department already has two separate committees tasked with the duties outlined in LB286, he said, and creating a new council would be redundant.

“While I recognize that this particular group would focus on reentry, the problem with creating multiple committees to address similar issues is that ideas presented by each group must be reconciled,” Frakes said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

### Request for additional district court judge advanced

Lawmakers advanced a bill from general file Feb. 27 that would increase the number of district court judges in Douglas County.

LB309, introduced by Omaha Sen. Steve Lathrop, would add one district court judge, increasing the number in Douglas County to 17. Lathrop said the bill is based on a recommendation by the Judicial Resources Commission to ease the judicial workload.



Sen. Steve Lathrop

“Having an adequate number of judges is key to making sure people have the same access to the courts and receive the same attention from judges as litigants elsewhere in Nebraska,” he said.

Gothenburg Sen. Matt Williams spoke in support of the bill, saying that people in Omaha are spending two to three weeks in jail, waiting for an available judge to hold a bond hearing.

“We have three distinct branches

of government, but our branch has certain oversight and responsibility over the judicial branch,” Williams said. “It is our responsibility to create a functioning judiciary and right now ... it is very difficult to say we have a functioning judiciary [in Douglas County].”

Sen. Suzanne Geist of Lincoln expressed concern that the state’s problem-solving courts, which are presided over by volunteer judges, could suffer if judges are spread too thin.

“I’m not sure where I stand on this yet, but I do know that there is a big need for spreading the load and helping judges be able to see all the people on their docket that they need to,” Geist said.

Senators advanced the bill to select file on a 35-0 vote.

**Proposal considered to allow concealed carry in schools**

Local school boards could authorize teachers and school employees to carry concealed weapons on school property under a bill discussed Feb. 28 by the Judiciary Committee.

Under LB343, sponsored by Hastings Sen. Steve Halloran, any school governing body could authorize school employees who hold a valid concealed carry permit to carry a concealed handgun on school property or at school-sponsored activities or athletic events.

School safety is not a one-size-fits-all or “cookie-cutter” issue, Halloran said.

“[School shootings] have parents, students, school boards, communities and state legislatures looking for solutions to make our schools a safer learning environment,” he said.



Sen. Steve Halloran

“What we as a legislature need to do is provide local school districts with as many options [as possible] in their tool box to address their specific issues or concerns.”

The governing board could require additional training for staff members who carry a concealed handgun, place limitations on who could carry and when or impose any other restrictions deemed appropriate.

Rachele Epp of Elkhorn supported the bill. She said concealed carry permit holders are statistically some of the most law-abiding citizens.

“For teachers, it seems reasonable and logical to permit those who are concealed carry permit holders to carry during their workday,” Epp said. “[This bill] leaves the decision to the individual school districts across the state. School districts that do not wish to pursue this level of staff and student protection are not required to do so.”

Opposing the bill was Paul Schulte, speaking on behalf of the Nebraska State Education Association. The bill raises many questions, he said, including what, if any, training school employees would receive on the use of deadly force.

“Teachers should not be placed in a position of personal responsibility—and by extension, personal liability—as armed first responders in an attempt to deter school shootings,” Schulte said.

Lincoln High School sophomore Ainsley Frederick, representing the Lincoln High Feminists for Change, also opposed LB343. Students already deal with the persistent fear of a potential school shooting, she said, and they should not also have to wonder if one of their teachers is carrying a gun.

“I understand that this bill would only allow the option to school districts, but I don’t believe there is any situation in which having a gun on a

school campus should be acceptable,” Frederick said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

**Bill would ban housing discrimination**

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony March 1 on a bill that would expand protections against discriminatory housing practices.

Introduced by Omaha Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh, LB689 would prohibit sellers or landlords from refusing to sell or rent to individuals based on their



Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh

sexual orientation, gender identity or citizenship status. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, marital status and national origin currently is prohibited.

Supporters of the bill are not asking for special treatment, Cavanaugh said, they simply are asking to be treated equally.

“I bring this bill for the simple, yet important reason: it is the right thing to do,” she said. “People have a basic right to housing or an assurance that they may live in a safe and secure home, free from discrimination and hate.”

Cavanaugh brought an amendment to the hearing that also would prohibit housing discrimination based upon a person’s source of income.

Abbi Swatsworth, executive director of OutNebraska, spoke in support of the bill. Members of the LGBTQ community are more likely to become homeless, she said, and are more likely to endure discrimination and harassment that extends their homelessness.

“Protecting people from discrimi-

nation is simply about treating others how we would want to be treated ourselves,” Swatsworth said. “LGBTQ Nebraskans want to provide for their families and stable housing is a key element in family life.”

Also supporting LB689 was Danielle Conrad, executive director of the ACLU of Nebraska. Conrad said a recent public opinion poll conducted by the University of Nebraska found that 72 percent of Nebraskans from across the state and political spectrum support the kind of protections outlined in the bill.

“Housing discrimination laws that protect LGBTQ people from being unfairly evicted, denied housing or refused the ability to buy or rent housing based on their sexual orientation and gender identity are important,” she said. “So, not only would you be on the right side of history, you would stand in support of your fellow Nebraskans.”

Marilyn Asher of Omaha opposed the bill. She specifically objected to the provision that would prohibit discrimination based upon citizenship status, she said, because it would force her to participate in an illegal activity.

“I’m opposed because it forces me to possibly rent to an illegal, noncitizen and [if I do not] I could be accused of criminal conduct,” Asher said.

John Chatelain, representing the Metropolitan Omaha Property Owners Association, spoke in opposition to the proposed amendment. Some property owners choose not to accept government-subsidized housing vouchers, he said, because the process can be costly and time consuming.

“I don’t believe we should be meddling in the business of the landlord to the extent that we insist on accepting [subsidized housing],” he said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

## Reform of restrictive housing procedures proposed

A bill that would make several changes to Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) procedures for inmates in restrictive housing and solitary confinement was heard Feb. 27 by the Judiciary Committee.

Restrictive housing is defined as confinement that provides limited contact with other inmates, strictly controlled movement while out of cell and outside-of-cell time of less than 24 hours per week.

Under LB739, introduced by Omaha Sen. Tony Vargas, the department could not place a member of a vulnerable population in restrictive housing. Vulnerable populations would include any inmate who is 18 or younger, pregnant or diagnosed with a serious mental illness, developmental disability or traumatic brain injury.

These inmates could be placed temporarily in immediate segregation to protect staff, other inmates or inmates awaiting classification as a vulnerable population member.

Vargas said the Legislature needs to make sure inmates are not placed arbitrarily in restrictive housing.

“I think it’s appropriate to provide a clear process [when placing] people in restrictive housing for a lengthy period of time,” he said. “If it is deemed appropriate by the department staff, there ought to be an opportunity for the inmate to be heard.”

NDCS could not place an inmate in restrictive housing for more than 90 days in a calendar year, unless a specialized inmate classification committee convened by the department

deemed it necessary.

The committee would be required to hold a hearing to consider evidence—an inmate’s history of violent or threatening behavior, escape attempts or affiliation with a security threat group—to determine if continued restrictive housing would be appropriate.

Written notice must be given to the inmate of the review hearing and the evidence that would be considered by the committee. He or she could speak in person to the committee, provide evidence, and call and cross-examine witnesses.

An inmate could appeal the committee’s final decision in court. If successful, he or she would be released immediately from restrictive housing.

Finally, the bill would redefine solitary confinement as isolation in a cell for an average of 22 or more hours per day.

Amy Miller, legal director of the ACLU of Nebraska, supported LB739. Nebraska is third in the nation for the most prisoners per capita held in solitary confinement, she said, which may be the reason incidents of prisoner suicide, fatal riots and staff assaults have increased.

“The troubling use of solitary confinement has such severe effects on people’s mental health that continues long after they’ve left, whether they return to the general population or their home communities,” Miller said. “However, despite all these tragedies, the department has doubled down on the use of solitary confinement.”

Also testifying in support of the bill was Brad Meurrens, public policy director for Disability Rights Nebraska. Use of solitary confinement often has drastic and harmful effects on inmates, he said.

“It does not require much of a stretch to understand that solitary



Sen. Tony Vargas

confinement could create additional or exacerbate underlying mental health conditions for persons who are in one or more of those vulnerable populations [outlined in the bill],” Meurrens said.

NDCS Director Scott Frakes opposed the bill. The provisions of LB739 demonstrate a “profound misunderstanding” of the use of restrictive housing, how people are assigned and the efforts made to meet the needs of people held in restrictive housing, he said.

“It is a reality that people commit violent, disruptive acts in prison, which requires them to be separated from the general population for their own safety, the safety of others and the security of the institution,” Frakes said. “Despite the perceptions of some people, use of restrictive housing is not capricious, punitive, random or without reason.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Eminent domain restriction fails to advance

A bill that would curtail certain uses of eminent domain failed to advance from general file Feb. 27.

A private citizen no longer would be able to request the use of eminent domain in order to provide access to build transmission lines or other infrastructure related to a privately developed wind energy project under LB155, introduced by Gordon Sen. Tom Brewer.



Sen. Tom Brewer

“Next to property taxes, there is nothing more important to my district than the ongoing, adverse effects wind energy is having on my constituents,” Brewer said.

Brewer called the current law “immoral” and said the threat of eminent domain was “a loaded gun in the room” during negotiations regarding access to land.

Sen. Bruce Bostelman of Brainard said he supported the bill. He compared using eminent domain to build a wind turbine to a grocery store using eminent domain to create parking lot access by building a road through someone’s back yard.

Sen. Curt Friesen of Henderson also supported LB155, saying wind energy companies “target absentee landlords” to surround and subsequently pressure resistant land owners to allow access to their land. He said the bill would help give resistant land owners a better negotiating position.

Omaha Sen. John McCollister said the bill sends a message that Nebraska opposes renewable energy. He said the bill was unnecessary because no Nebraskan has used the power of eminent domain allowed under current law to gain access to a neighbor’s land.

McCollister added that LB155 would take away the authority of counties to regulate wind energy.

Also speaking against the bill was Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha. In the future, he said, Nebraska will need to generate more renewable energy and it must expand wind farming to do so.

“This is going to impair the growth of wind energy development, which may be the fundamental purpose of the bill,” Lathrop said.

Lincoln Sen. Anna Wishart expressed concern about the message LB155 would send. She said renewable energy could allow Nebraska to be energy independent and that the

state could raise revenue by exporting energy generated through renewable sources.

“We are moving globally in the direction of clean energy. We are recognizing the need to move quicker than we have in the past,” Wishart said. “I don’t think we should be going in an anti-business, anti-renewable energy direction.”

Senators voted 23-8 on advancement of LB155 to select file—two votes short of the number required.

## NEBRASKA RETIREMENT SYSTEMS

### Retirement plan administration changes adopted

Lawmakers gave final approval Feb. 28 to a bill that makes a number of governance and administrative changes to the Public Employees Retirement Board (PERB), Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System (NPERs), Nebraska Investment Council, Class V School Employees Retirement Plan and the Class V plan’s board of trustees.



Sen. Mark Kolterman

Introduced by Seward Sen. Mark Kolterman, LB33:

- increases the per diem for PERB members from \$50 to \$75;
- exempts legal compliance audit contracts from bidding requirements;
- increases from one to two the number of three-year extensions on actuarial contracts that the PERB may issue; and
- changes the presentation date of the NPERs and Nebraska Investment Council annual

reports to the Legislature from March 31 to April 10, beginning in 2020.

Finally, the bill grants the Class V School Employees Retirement Plan employer and its board of trustees the same exclusion from the state's public records law that applies to all other plans administered by the PERB.

LB33 passed on a 47-0 vote and takes effect immediately.

## REVENUE

### State loan for federal judgments proposed

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Feb. 28 on a bill that would allow a political subdivision to apply for a state loan to help pay a federal judgment against it.

In 2016, a federal judge awarded more than \$28 million in damages to the six men and women wrongfully convicted of the rape and homicide of a Beatrice woman in 1985. The individuals, commonly known as the "Beatrice Six," had sued Gage County in federal court after DNA evidence exonerated them.

Adams Sen. Myron Dorn, sponsor of LB473, said he introduced the bill to help the residents of Gage County, which raised its property tax levy for the 2018-19 fiscal year in order to pay the judgment, as required by law.



Sen. Myron Dorn

Dorn said the county increased its property tax levy from approximately 38 cents per \$100 of valuation to the statutory 50-cent limit. It will use the additional revenue to pay the judgment,

he said, but that will take at least eight years under current budget conditions.

If constitutional or statutory provisions prevent a public corporation or political subdivision from budgeting sufficient funds to pay a judgment in full, LB473 would require the public corporation or political subdivision to pay the portion of the judgment that it can under the law and then apply to the state treasurer for a loan to pay the rest.

If the state treasurer determines the loan to be proper, he or she would make the loan—with an interest rate of 0.5 percent per year—from funds available for investment in the state treasury.

The bill would require the governing body of the public corporation or political subdivision to budget and levy a sufficient amount to meet a repayment schedule determined by the treasurer until the loan, with interest, has been repaid.

Dorn said a state loan with a repayment term of more than eight years would allow the county to reduce its levy from the current 50-cent maximum, easing the annual property tax burden on Gage County residents.

"LB473 allows for the judgment to be paid quickly ... while still holding Gage County accountable for the total amount of the judgment," Dorn said.

James Nelson, a Beatrice attorney, testified in support of the bill on behalf of the Nebraska State Bar Association. He said LB473 would allow plaintiffs to be paid more quickly and would help any county, city or school district with a federal judgment against it to "stop the bleeding and just move on."

Testifying in opposition to the bill was Gregory C. Lauby, a Gage County resident. A state loan could reduce the annual property tax bill of Gage County property owners, he said, but it would not reduce the amount of

the judgment they are required to pay.

Agricultural land makes up approximately three-quarters of the county's property valuation, Lauby said, meaning farmers will pay a disproportionate share of the taxes used to pay the judgment.

Don Schuller gave neutral testimony on the bill, saying the idea of a state loan has merit. However, because the Beatrice Six were convicted under state law, he said, the state has a responsibility to pay the judgment.

"Innocent people of Gage County need help in paying this judgment, not a loan," Schuller said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

### Additional state aid from expanded sales, income taxes proposed

The Revenue Committee heard testimony March 1 on a bill that would use new sales and income tax revenue to provide more state aid to schools in an effort to reduce property taxes.

Bellevue Sen. Sue Crawford, sponsor of LB614, said the bill provides the Revenue Committee with "a menu of components" to choose



Sen. Sue Crawford

from as it prepares its own tax reform proposal.

"Nebraska has a property tax problem," she said. "LB614 is a responsible solution on the table that provides structural reform while protecting key services like health care, roads and K-12 schools."

The bill would raise the excise tax on cigarettes from \$0.64 cents per pack to \$2.15 per pack and the tax on alcohol and spirits from \$3.75 per gallon to \$8.02 per gallon. LB614 also

would impose sales and use tax on candy, soft drinks and bottled water.

In addition, the proposal would change several state income tax provisions. Nebraskans currently may subtract federal itemized deductions from their federal adjusted gross income for state income tax purposes. Under LB614, they could subtract only those deductions that are medical and dental expenses.

The bill would end an exclusion allowing owners of S corporations and limited liability companies to avoid paying Nebraska income tax on business income derived from sources outside the state. It also would end an income tax exclusion on the extraordinary dividends paid on and the capital gain from the sale or exchange of a corporation's capital stock acquired through employment with that corporation.

Additionally, the bill would eliminate a tax exemption for the first \$10,000 of valuation of tangible personal property.

The Legislative Fiscal Office estimates the changes would generate \$297 million in fiscal year 2020-21.

LB614 would direct that additional revenue to school aid and would increase the state's credit on the federal earned income tax credit from 10 percent to 15 percent.

The bill would distribute allocated income taxes to schools based on 20 percent of a local system's income tax liability rather than the current 2.23 percent.

Beginning with school fiscal year 2018-19, it also would require the state Department of Education to reimburse each school district in the following fiscal year at least 80 percent of the total excess allowable costs for special education programs and support services provided by the district.

The department would determine supplemental state aid to be paid to

each school district. The amount of aid would be a percentage of state-wide average general fund operating expenditures and would be distributed proportionately to each local system.

Finally, the bill would require school boards to publish a budget summary before approving a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The summary would include the percentage of the school's budget that comes from federal, state and local sources and would be published at least three days prior to the budget hearing.

Renee Fry, executive director of OpenSky Policy Institute, testified in support of LB614. She said the proposed supplemental school aid and increase in allocated income taxes could allow school districts to reduce their property tax levies by 8 cents on average.

Fry said the proposed budget summary would be a better approach than placing a limit on school spending, as other bills introduced this session would do.

"This additional level of transparency would hold local officials accountable without treating all school districts with a one-size-fits-all approach," she said.

Kari Loseke, president of the Blair Community Schools Board, also testified in support. She said the proposal could allow the district to reduce its levy from the current \$1.05 statutory limit to \$0.86, providing significant relief to the district's property taxpayers.

"We believe expanding the income tax base, repealing some exemptions and increasing certain consumption taxes seems to be a sustainable way to immediately fund public education," Loseke said.

Testifying in opposition to the bill was Ron Quinn, executive vice president of Tenaska, an Omaha-based energy company. He said LB614

would "severely penalize" Nebraska S corporations and LLCs that do business outside the state. The bill would make Nebraska less attractive to new businesses, Quinn said.

"The worst thing we can do is create an environment which is not a friendly place to do business," he said.

Also testifying in opposition was Bruce Grewcock, chairman and CEO of Kiewit, an Omaha-based construction and engineering company. He said employees are required to sell any Kiewit stock back to the company when they leave their job or retire. Without the capital gains exclusion that LB614 would eliminate, Grewcock said, many employees would leave Nebraska before retiring to avoid paying taxes when they sell their stock.

"I know property taxes are a priority for the Unicameral—and rightly so—but the solution to reducing taxes should not drive businesses, people and investment out," he said.

Brian Gilliland, general manager of a Lincoln-based Coca Cola distributor, testified in opposition to the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Beverage Association. He said LB614 does not define "soft drink," making it unclear which products would be subject to sales and use tax.

"We do not believe our industry's products should be singled out and declared to not be food," Gilliland said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



### Roads project bill approved

Lawmakers passed a bill March 1 that allows the Nebraska Department of Transportation to complete roads



projects more efficiently.

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



Sen. Curt Friesen

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

LB82 also allows each county and municipality to electronically certify completion of one-year and six-year road improvement plans required annually by state law, rather than submitting hard copies of both plans to the Nebraska Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards.

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

The bill passed on a 46-0 vote.

**Fee increase proposed for alternative fuel vehicles**

Owners of alternative fuel vehicles would pay higher registration fees under a bill discussed Feb. 26 by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

LB366, introduced by Brainard Sen. Bruce Bostelman, would increase the current \$75 fee to \$125 over five years. Increasing the registration fee for alternative fuel vehicles is a way to



Sen. Bruce Bostelman

compensate for a reduction in gas tax revenue, Bostelman said, which pays for road maintenance and repair.

“Due to the nature of their power source, alternative fuel vehicles are not contributing to the care and maintenance of the roads the way motor fuel vehicles are,” he said.

The fee would increase to \$85 in 2020, and then increase \$10 annually until reaching \$125 in 2024.

Testifying in support of the bill was John Brandeau of Papillion. As an owner of an alternative fuel vehicle, he said he is more than happy to pay his fair share.

“If you drive a vehicle on the public roads, you should share a cost in maintaining [them],” Brandeau said.

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

**URBAN AFFAIRS**

**Short-term rental bill approved**

The Legislature passed a bill March 1 that prevents a municipality from banning Airbnb or other short-term rental companies from operating in the state.

LB57, introduced by Sen. Adam Morfeld of Lincoln, prevents bans on short-term rentals, defined as 30 or fewer days. Municipalities still may regulate short-term rental properties for health and safety reasons and the bill does not affect regulation of homeowners’ associations.



Sen. Adam Morfeld

The bill also authorizes an online hosting platform to enter into an agreement with the state tax commis-

sioner to collect and pay applicable sales taxes imposed under Nebraska law on behalf of short-term renters.

Senators approved LB57 on a vote of 46-0.

**Occupation tax reporting sought**

Metropolitan-class cities would be required to report the impact of occupation taxes under a bill considered by the Urban Affairs Committee Feb. 26. Omaha is the state’s lone metropolitan-class city.



Sen. Mike McDonnell

Sen. Mike McDonnell of Omaha introduced LB445, which would require designated cities to produce an annual report detailing the following:

- the purpose of the tax;
- any special project designation;
- the amount of tax dollars collected;
- a list of how the money was spent or budgeted to be spent; and
- the scheduled or projected end date of the tax.

McDonnell said he wanted to provide citizens with more information regarding the fees they pay.

“Transparency builds trust,” he said.

McDonnell said he would offer an amendment to expand the bill to more cities.

Nicole Fox of the Platte Institute testified in favor of LB445, calling it a common-sense way to provide more information to the public.

“Taxes are confusing for most people, and occupation taxes are particularly poorly understood,” Fox said. “In legal theory, these taxes are imposed on businesses, but in practice, the costs are passed on to consumers and many taxpayers want

more information about how these revenues are used.”

No one testified against the bill and the committee took no immediate action on LB445.

### Expansion of regional public transit sought

The Urban Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 26 on a bill designed to expand mass transit in Nebraska’s larger cities.

LB492, introduced by Omaha Sen. Justin Wayne, would adopt the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority Act. It would allow a municipality or group of municipalities



Sen. Justin Wayne

within a metropolitan statistical area to create a regional metropolitan transit authority or join an existing one. The transit authority would be governed by a seven-person board and would have the power to issue revenue bonds.

Under the bill, an existing transit authority that serves one or more municipalities within the same metropolitan statistical area could connect to a RMTA. An ordinance to create or join a RMTA would require a two-thirds vote of the governing authority of each municipality involved.

Wayne said he introduced the bill after constituents told him that long gaps in bus schedules can mean that missing a bus turns into missing work.

“The fact of the matter is that if you miss a bus [in Omaha] and another bus doesn’t come for another two or three hours, your work day is gone,” Wayne said. “We’ve got to have a public transportation system that works, not just [for] those who have the ability to call an Uber, but for those who don’t.”

Greg Youell, Executive Director of the Omaha-based Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, testified in favor of the bill. He said the population of MAPA’s four-county region would reach 1.2 million by 2050. All those people need jobs, he said.

“A regional transit authority will provide a framework to improve transit service and better connect unemployed and underemployed people to training and jobs,” Youell said.

Jerry Janulewicz, Grand Island city attorney, also testified in support of LB492. He said the bill would benefit Grand Island and neighboring towns.

“This would be an organization, much like an airport authority, that would have board members with a laser focus on public transit and how best to provide services and expand services,” Janulewicz said.

Also testifying in support was Stephen Osberg, the director of transportation development for the Greater Omaha Chamber. Osberg said expanding transit services would help create a greater sense of place and help businesses attract employees.

“This is about getting people where they need to be for work, education, recreation and shopping regardless of where they live,” Osberg said.

Dustin Antonello of the Lincoln Independent Business Association testified against the bill. He said LB492 would create a government entity with the power to raise property taxes and take property through eminent domain.

“At a time when the Legislature is focused on solving the property tax crisis in Nebraska, it does not make sense to allow for the creation of another government body with the power to levy property taxes,” Antonello said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB492. ■

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings on bills typically are held in the afternoons during the first half of the legislative session. Committees have regularly scheduled rooms and meeting days, although they sometimes meet in different rooms at varying times in order to accommodate testifiers or large audiences.

The weekly schedule of committee hearings is published on the last legislative day of the week throughout the legislative session. The schedule is available on a table in front of the Clerk’s Office, in the Sunday editions of the Lincoln Journal Star and the Omaha World-Herald, in the weekly Unicameral Update and at [www.nebraskalegislature.gov](http://www.nebraskalegislature.gov).



# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Current hearing schedules are available at: [NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar)

## **Monday, March 4**

### **Appropriations**

#### **Room 1524 - 1:30 PM**

LB425 (Hilkemann) Appropriate funds to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska  
 LB552 (McDonnell) Change appropriations relating to the Nebraska Tree Recovery Program  
 LB562 (Stinner) State intent relating to University of Nebraska facilities and appropriations  
 Agency 51: University of Nebraska System

### **Banking, Commerce & Insurance**

#### **Room 1507 - 1:30 PM**

LB15 (Blood) Adopt the Children of Nebraska Hearing Aid Act  
 LB501 (Hunt) Require insurance coverage for in vitro fertilization procedures  
 LB316 (Kolterman) Adopt the Pharmacy Benefit Fairness and Transparency Act

### **Business & Labor**

#### **Room 1003 - 1:30 PM**

LB526 (McDonnell) Change provisions relating to compensation for temporary disability under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act  
 LB448 (McDonnell) Change provisions relating to compensation for burial expenses under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act  
 LB487 (La Grone) Require the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Court to adopt an evidence-based drug formulary  
 LB418 (Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to certain medical debt collection involving workers' compensation  
 LB364 (Quick) Change provisions relating to a limit on fees under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act  
 LB408 (Quick) Change provisions relating to compensation paid upon the death on an employee under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act

### **Education**

#### **Room 1525 - 1:30 PM**

LB120 (Crawford) Require teacher and school staff to receive training on behavioral and mental health  
 LB416 (Friesen) Change distribution of funds from the temporary school fund

and from fines and licenses  
 LB104 (Linehan) Change distribution of the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund  
 LB650 (Wayne) Adopt the Teach for Nebraska Program Act and change provisions relating to the Nebraska Education Improvement Fund and the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund

### **General Affairs**

#### **Room 1510 - 1:30 PM**

*Appointment:* Harry Hoch - Neb. Liquor Control Commission  
 LB137 (Blood) Adopt the Fantasy Contests Act and provide a gambling exception  
 LB149 (Quick) Change provisions relating to vapor products  
 LB397 (Briese) Change provisions relating to tobacco and other nicotine products and tobacco manufacturers  
 LB734 (Hunt) Provide for licensure of charter bus services under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act

### **Transportation & Telecommunications**

#### **Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM**

LB39 (Hilkemann) Change provisions relating to occupant protection system enforcement and change certain violations from secondary to primary enforcement  
 LB40 (Hilkemann) Change provisions related to provisional operator's permits, LPD and LPE learner's permits, and interactive wireless communication devices  
 LB620 (Kolowski) Provide for enforcement of violations relating to use of handheld wireless communication devices as a primary action  
 LB634 (Hilkemann) Require three-point safety belt systems for school vehicles as prescribed

## **Tuesday, March 5**

### **Agriculture**

#### **Room 1003 - 1:30 PM**

LB45 (Chambers) Repeal the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog Management Act  
 LB304 (Crawford) Exempt certain operations from the definition of a food establishment under the Nebraska Pure Food Act

LB732 (Vargas) Adopt the Mobile Food Unit Act and change fees for a mobile food unit

### **Appropriations**

#### **Room 1524 - 1:30 PM**

Agency 48: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education  
 Agency 50: Neb. State College System  
 Agency 83: Community College Aid

### **Banking, Commerce & Insurance**

#### **Room 1507 - 1:30 PM**

LB228 (Hughes) Prohibit certain insurance practices relating to a person's status as a living organ donor  
 LB619 (Kolowski) Require coverage under insurance policies for mental health services delivered in schools  
 LB569 (Morfeld) Adopt the Out-of-Network Consumer Protection, Transparency, and Accountability Act

### **Education**

#### **Room 1525 - 1:30 PM**

LB432 (Groene) Include tax-increment financing valuation in adjusted valuations for purposes of state aid to schools and change school district levy authority  
 LB671 (Linehan) Provide for sparsity aid in the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act  
 LB674 (Linehan) Change the base limitation for school districts  
 LB534 (Cavanaugh) Require public postsecondary educational institutions to conduct an annual sexual assault climate survey

### **Transportation & Telecommunications**

#### **Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM**

LB611 (Brandt) Require train crews of at least two individuals  
 LB401 (Quick) Adopt the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact  
 LB521 (McDonnell) Change and eliminate provisions relating to automated vehicles

### **Urban Affairs**

#### **Room 1510 - 1:30 PM**

LR14CA (Wayne) Constitutional amendment to authorize municipalities to pledge property taxes for up to twenty years if more than one-half of the property in a redevelopment project is extremely blighted

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Current hearing schedules are available at: [NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar)

LB648 (Wayne) Change the Community Development Law  
LB721 (Lindstrom) Provide for insurance eligibility for spouses and dependents of deceased or disabled firefighters of cities of the first-class  
LB564 (Bolz) Change the Civic and Community Center Financing Act  
LB731 (Hunt) Change provisions relating to new or updated comprehensive plans adopted by municipalities  
LB520 (McDonnell) Provide requirements for safety standards and operating procedures for road construction and maintenance in cities of the metropolitan class

## **Wednesday, March 6**

### **Appropriations**

#### **Room 1003 - 1:30 PM**

LB174 (Bolz) State intent relating to appropriations for the Office of Violence Prevention  
LB446 (McDonnell) State intent relating to appropriations for the County Justice Reinvestment Grant Program  
LB703 (Vargas) Appropriate funds to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice  
Agency 78: Neb. Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice  
Agency 21: State Fire Marshal  
Agency 35: Neb. Liquor Control Commission  
Agency 76: Neb. Indian Commission  
Agency 40: Neb. Motor Vehicle Licensing Board  
Agency 24: Dept. of Motor Vehicles

### **Government, Military & Veterans Affairs Room 1507 - 1:30 PM**

LB211 (Crawford) Provide for nonpartisan nomination and election of county officers  
LB163 (Hunt) Permit counties to conduct elections by mail  
LB83 (Wayne) Provide for restoration of voting rights upon completion of a felony sentence or probation for a felony  
LB711 (Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to voting qualifications for any person convicted of a felony

### **Health & Human Services**

#### **Room 1510 - 1:00 PM**

Office of Inspector General of Nebraska  
Child Welfare and Foster Care Review Board Briefing

### **Health & Human Services**

#### **Room 1510 - 1:30 PM**

LB59 (Cavanaugh) Change investigation and reporting provisions under the Children's Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act  
LB518 (Linehan) Adopt the Support for Trafficking Survivors Act

### **Judiciary**

#### **Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM**

LB179 (Hilgers) Authorize the appeal of certain motions as final orders  
LB231 (Pansing Brooks) Change provisions relating to legal defense of juveniles  
LB352 (Morfeld) Provide requirements relating to the use of jailhouse informants  
LB377 (DeBoer) Provide for voidability of certain releases from liability  
LB595 (Albrecht) Change Office of Dispute Resolution to Office of Restorative Justice and Dispute Resolution and change powers and duties of the office  
LB690 (Cavanaugh) Adopt the Healthy Pregnancies for Incarcerated Women Act

### **Natural Resources**

#### **Room 1525 - 1:30 PM**

*Appointment:* Mary L. Mercure - Niobrara Council  
*Appointment:* Michael S. Thede - Neb. Ethanol Board  
LB700 (Bostelman) Provide for decommissioning and reclamation of a wind energy conversion system

### **Revenue**

#### **Room 1524 - 1:30 PM**

LB720 (Kolterman) Adopt the ImagiNE Nebraska Act and provide tax incentives  
LB419 (Bolz) Change the Nebraska Advantage Act and create a fund and grant program  
LB413 (Brandt) Change application submission deadlines under the Nebraska Advantage Act  
LB417 (Friesen) Change application deadlines under certain tax incentive programs  
LB613 (Crawford) Change application deadlines under certain tax incentive programs

## **Thursday, March 7**

### **Appropriations**

#### **Room 1003 - 1:30 PM**

Agency 81: Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Agency 82: Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Agency 67: Equal Opportunity Commission  
Agency 68: Latino-American Commission  
Agency 70: Foster Care Review Board

### **Government, Military & Veterans Affairs**

#### **Room 1507 - 1:30 PM**

LB267 (Bolz) Provide a duty for the county board relating to deficient bridges and authorize a tax levy  
LB336 (M. Hansen) Change the vote required to exceed certain budget limitations  
LB543 (Lowe) Change provisions relating to state contracts, state vehicles, and state personnel

### **Health & Human Services**

#### **Room 1510 - 1:00 PM**

Child Welfare Briefing

### **Health & Human Services**

#### **Room 1510 - 1:30 PM**

*Appointment:* Lynette Kramer - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission  
LB460 (Health & Human Services Committee) Change criminal background check provisions under the Children's Residential Facilities and Placing Licensure Act  
LB328 (Bolz) Adopt the Nebraska Family First Act, provide for non-court-involved response to reports of child abuse or neglect, and provide for a family finding project  
LB332 (Bolz) Change eligibility requirements and other provisions of the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act

### **Judiciary**

#### **Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM**

LB44 (Chambers) Eliminate the death penalty and change provisions relating to murder in the first degree  
LB207 (Morfeld) Create a Death Penalty Defense Standards Advisory Council  
LB238 (Pansing Brooks) Change

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Current hearing schedules are available at: [NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar)

requirements for witnessing death penalty executions

## Natural Resources

### Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

LB367 (Hughes) Eliminate provisions relating to fund transfers and change a termination date under the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Act

## Revenue

### Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB279 (Bostelman) Provide a sales and use tax exemption for food sold by veterans service organizations  
LB670 (Linehan) Adopt the Opportunity Scholarships Act and provide tax credits

## Tuesday, March 12

### Agriculture

#### Room 1003 - 1:30 PM

*Appointments:* Chris Kircher, Dawn Caldwell, Jeremy Jensen - Neb. State Fair Board  
LB655 (Wayne) Change division fence provisions

### Appropriations

#### Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

LB642 (McDonnell) Create the Brain Injury Trust Fund  
LB666 (Dorn) Change Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund provisions and provide for a transfer to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska for a program to train first responders and emergency medical technicians in rural areas  
LB669 (Kolterman) Change Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund provisions and state intent relating to an appropriation for pancreatic cancer research  
LB673 (Hilkemann) Change Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund provisions and state intent relating to an appropriation for data collection and analysis on antimicrobial resistant bacteria  
LB481 (Bolz) State intent relating to an appropriation to the Department of Health and Human Services

### Banking, Commerce & Insurance

#### Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

LB265 (La Grone) Adopt the Unsecured Consumer Loan Licensing Act and

clarify licensing provisions under the Delayed Deposit Services Licensing Act and the Nebraska Installment Loan Act  
LB379 (Kolterman) Change provisions under the Delayed Deposit Services Licensing Act and the Nebraska Installment Loan Act  
LB602 (Lindstrom) Adopt the Domestic Stock Insurance Company Division Act

## Education

### Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

LB431 (Groene) Change school finance base limitation and local effort rate provisions  
LB180 (Bolz) Change program eligibility criteria under the Community College Gap Assistance Program Act  
LB27 (Kolterman) Change provisions related to the use of proceeds from community college levies  
LB702 (Cavanaugh) Adopt the Campus Safety Act

## Wednesday, March 13

### Appropriations

#### Room 1003 - 1:30 PM

LB334 (Stinner) Eliminate funding for the Angel Investment Tax Credit Act and increase funding and eliminate the termination date for the Business Innovation Act  
LB531 (Vargas) Create a fund and provide for a transfer of funds  
LB551 (McDonnell) State intent relating to funding for development districts  
LB694 (Vargas) Change matching fund requirements under the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act  
LB737 (Vargas) Change requirements for an annual status report relating to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund  
Agency 72: Dept. of Economic Development  
Agency 91: Neb. Tourism Commission  
Agency 60: Neb. Ethanol Board  
Agency 9: Secretary of State

### Health & Human Services

#### Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

*Appointment:* Laeth Nasir - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission  
LB654 (Wayne) Provide for a type 1 diabetes pilot study  
LB541 (Walz) Provide a duty for the

Department of Health and Human Services relating to bone marrow  
LB559 (Arch) Change provisions relating to the State Anatomical Board

## Judiciary

### Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB164 (Hunt) Prohibit electronic transmission or online posting of certain photographs or videos, redefine sexual exploitation, and provide for a registrable offense under the Sex Offender Registration Act  
LB173 (Pansing Brooks) Define and redefine terms of coercion and without consent and provide for applicability with respect to sexual assault  
LB475 (Geist) Create the offense of sexual extortion, redefine sexual exploitation, and provide for a registrable offense under the Sex Offender Registration Act  
LB478 (Vargas) Prohibit use of consent by a minor as a defense or mitigation of damages or liability in certain civil actions arising from sexual assaults  
LB519 (Slama) Change statutes of limitations for certain sexual and trafficking offenses and authorize interception of communications relating to such offenses  
LB630 (Morfeld) Create the offense of sexual extortion and change elements and penalties for sexual offenses

## Thursday, March 14

### Appropriations

#### Room 1003 - 1:30 PM

LB171 (Pansing Brooks) Appropriate funds to the Department of Administrative Services  
LB232 (Slama) Reduce the threshold amount for claims against the state for prosecution costs  
Agency 65: Dept. of Administrative Services  
Agency 19: Dept. of Banking  
Agency 22: Dept. of Insurance  
Agency 87: Accountability and Disclosure Commission  
Agency 64: Neb. State Patrol

### Health & Human Services

#### Room 1510 - 1:00 PM

Division of Public Health Briefing

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Current hearing schedules are available at: [NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar](http://NebraskaLegislature.gov/calendar)

## Health & Human Services

### Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

*Appointment:* Roger A. Wells - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission  
LB62 (Howard) Provide for education regarding and treatment of trichomoniasis

LB555 (Hunt) Adopt the Sexual Assault Emergency Care Act and provide for disciplinary action against hospitals  
LB692 (Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to commemorative certificates for a nonviable birth

## Judiciary

### Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB387 (Pansing Brooks) Change and modernize provisions relating to juries  
LB427 (Howard) Change terminology relating to legitimacy of children  
LB471 (La Grone) Provide a procedure for consolidation of related civil actions in multiple judicial districts  
LB643 (McDonnell) Change death and disability-related prima facie evidence provisions relating to emergency

responders

LB708 (Brandt) Adopt the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act  
LB712 (Friesen) Prohibit joint entities and joint public agencies from taking action against representative for their speech

## Friday, March 15

### Appropriations

#### Room 1003 - 1:30 PM

LB638 (Stinner) Change provisions relating to the transfer of excess General Fund net receipts to the Cash Reserve Fund  
Agency 16: Dept. of Revenue  
Agency 93: Tax Equalization and Review Commission  
Agency 57: Neb. Oil and Gas Conservation Commission  
Agency 75: Neb. Investment Council

## Health & Human Services

### Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

*Appointment:* Rebecca A. Schroeder - Neb. Rural Health Advisory Commission  
LB653 (Wayne) Adopt the Healthy Kids

Act and require tests for lead-based hazards in housing  
LB528 (Hilkemann) Change provisions relating to use of pharmaceutical agents and use of certain treatments and procedures by optometrists

## Judiciary

### Warner Chamber - 1:30 PM

LB131 (Pansing Brooks) Change certain provisions relating to minimum sentences  
LB176 (Chambers) Eliminate certain mandatory minimum penalties  
LB458 (Lathrop) Change provisions relating to child abuse or neglect  
LB479 (Wishart) Prohibit sexual abuse of a detainee and change provisions relating to sexual abuse of an inmate or parolee  
LB484 (Lowe) Change provisions relating to assault on certain employees and officers  
LB496 (Wayne) Increase penalties for tampering with witnesses, informants, jurors, or physical evidence and change provisions relating to discovery in criminal cases ■

## Youth Legislature Registration Open



High school students with an interest in law, government, leadership or public speaking are encouraged to register for the 2019 Unicameral Youth Legislature, which will convene June 9-12.

The Unicameral Youth Legislature is a four-day legislative simulation conducted at the State Capitol Building and coordinated by the Clerk's Office of the Nebraska Legislature. Student senators will sponsor bills, conduct committee hearings, debate legislation and discover the unique process of the nation's only unicameral.

Students will learn about the inner workings of the Legislature directly from senators and staff. Bills will be based on legislation considered dur-

ing the current legislative session.

Registrants are encouraged to apply for a Speaker Greg Adams Civic Scholarship award, which covers the full cost of admission. Applicants must submit a short essay. Other \$100 scholarships also are available.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Extension 4-H Youth Development Office coordinates housing and recreational activities for the camp as part of their Big Red Summer Camps program.

Registration forms can be obtained from the Legislature's Unicameral Youth Legislature page: [www.NebraskaLegislature.gov/uyl](http://www.NebraskaLegislature.gov/uyl).

The registration deadline is May 15.

# SENATOR CONTACT INFO

Updated 1/28/2019

Sen. Joni Albrecht Thurston, District 17 Room 1404 (402) 471-2716 jalbrecht@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist17	Sen. Robert Clements Elmwood, District 2 8th Floor (402) 471-2613 rclements@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist02	Sen. Ben Hansen Blair, District 16 11th Floor (402) 471-2728 bhansen@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist16	Sen. Steve Lathrop Omaha, District 12 Room 1202 (402) 471-2623 slathrop@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist12	Sen. Dan Quick Grand Island, District 35 Room 1406 (402) 471-2617 dquick@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist35
Sen. John Arch La Vista, District 14 8th Floor (402) 471-2730 jarch@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist14	Sen. Sue Crawford Bellevue, District 45 Room 1012 (402) 471-2615 scrawford@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist45	Sen. Matt Hansen Lincoln, District 26 Room 2011 (402) 471-2610 mhansen@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist26	Sen. Brett Lindstrom Omaha, District 18 Room 2015 (402) 471-2618 blindstrom@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist18	Sen. Jim Scheer Norfolk, District 19 Room 2010 (402) 471-2929 jscheer@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist19
Sen. Carol Blood Bellevue, District 3 Room 1021 (402) 471-2627 cblood@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist03	Sen. Wendy DeBoer Bennington, District 10 11th Floor (402) 471-2718 wdeboer@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist10	Sen. Mike Hilgers Lincoln, District 21 Room 2000 (402) 471-2673 mhilgers@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist21	Sen. Lou Ann Linehan Elkhorn, District 39 Room 1305 (402) 471-2885 llinehan@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist39	Sen. Julie Slama Peru, District 1 11th Floor (402) 471-2733 jslama@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist01
Sen. Kate Bolz Lincoln, District 29 Room 1015 (402) 471-2734 kbolz@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist29	Sen. Myron Dorn Adams, District 30 Room 1208 (402) 471-2620 mdorn@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist30	Sen. Robert Hilkemann Omaha, District 4 13th Floor (402) 471-2621 rhilkemann@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist04	Sen. John Lowe Kearney, District 37 12th Floor (402) 471-2726 jlowe@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist37	Sen. John Stinner Gering, District 48 Room 1004 (402) 471-2802 jstinner@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist48
Sen. Bruce Bostelman Brainard, District 23 8th Floor (402) 471-2719 bbostelman@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist23	Sen. Steve Erdman Bayard, District 47 12th Floor (402) 471-2616 serdman@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist47	Sen. Sara Howard Omaha, District 9 Room 1402 (402) 471-2723 showard@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist09	Sen. John McCollister Omaha, District 20 Room 1017 (402) 471-2622 jmccollister@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist20	Sen. Tony Vargas Omaha, District 7 Room 1000 (402) 471-2721 tvargas@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist07
Sen. Tom Brandt Plymouth, District 32 12th Floor (402) 471-2711 tbrandt@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist32	Sen. Curt Friesen Henderson, District 34 Room 1308 (402) 471-2630 cfriesen@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist34	Sen. Dan Hughes Venango, District 44 Room 1210 (402) 471-2805 dhughes@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist44	Sen. Mike McDonnell Omaha, District 5 13th Floor (402) 471-2710 mmcdonnell@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist05	Sen. Lynne Walz Fremont, District 15 Room 1403 (402) 471-2625 lwalz@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist15
Sen. Tom Brewer Gordon, District 43 Room 1423 (402) 471-2628 tbrewer@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist43	Sen. Suzanne Geist Lincoln, District 25 12th Floor (402) 471-2731 sgeist@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist25	Sen. Megan Hunt Omaha, District 8 11th Floor (402) 471-2722 mhunt@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist08	Sen. Adam Morfeld Lincoln, District 46 Room 1008 (402) 471-2720 amorfeld@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist46	Sen. Justin Wayne Omaha, District 13 Room 1212 (402) 471-2727 jwayne@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist13
Sen. Tom Briese Albion, District 41 Room 1019 (402) 471-2631 tbriese@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist41	Sen. Tim Gragert Creighton, District 40 11th Floor (402) 471-2801 tgragert@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist40	Sen. Rick Kolowski Omaha, District 31 Room 1018 (402) 471-2327 rkolowski@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist31	Sen. Mike Moser Columbus, District 22 12th Floor (402) 471-2715 mmoser@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist22	Sen. Matt Williams Gothenburg, District 36 Room 1401 (402) 471-2642 mwilliams@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist36
Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh Omaha, District 6 11th Floor (402) 471-2714 mcavanaugh@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist06	Sen. Mike Groene North Platte, District 42 Room 1306 (402) 471-2729 mgroene@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist42	Sen. Mark Kolterman Seward, District 24 Room 2004 (402) 471-2756 mkolterman@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist24	Sen. Dave Murman Glenvil, District 38 12th Floor (402) 471-2732 dmurman@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist38	Sen. Anna Wishart Lincoln, District 27 8th Floor (402) 471-2632 awishart@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist27
Sen. Ernie Chambers Omaha, District 11 Room 1302 (402) 471-2612 news.legislature.ne.gov/dist11	Sen. Steve Halloran Hastings, District 33 Room 1022 (402) 471-2712 shalloran@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist33	Sen. Andrew La Grone Gretna, District 49 Room 1206 (402) 471-2725 alagrone@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist49	Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks Lincoln, District 28 Room 1016 (402) 471-2633 ppansingbrooks@leg.ne.gov news.legislature.ne.gov/dist28	

**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

