

Omnibus government bill clears first round

A proposal meant to clarify procedures for interpreting state laws and regulations was amended to include provisions of several additional bills and advanced to select file Jan. 23.

LB43, as introduced by Bellevue Sen. Rita Sanders, would direct hearing officers and judges not to rely on a state agency's interpretation of state laws or regulations in contested cases under the Administrative Procedures Act.

Sanders said the goal is to focus more on the legislative intent behind laws and less on agency interpretations in situations involving disputes over state agency actions. Deferring to state agency interpretations often serves to enhance the



Sen. Rita Sanders' LB43 was amended Jan. 23 to become an omnibus 'good governance' proposal.

power of an unelected bureaucracy, she said.

"In our system of government, it's important for the Legislature – the people's branch of the government –

to say what it means when granting authority to executive branch agencies," Sanders said.

A Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment, adopted 37-0, added the provisions of five additional bills that address the state's Administrative Procedures Act and Public Records Act.

Gordon Sen. Tom Brewer, chairperson of the committee, said the measures focus on shielding Nebraskans from government overreach, protecting

religious freedom, improving government transparency and protecting the state's "cyberspace" efforts through changes to public records laws.

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Chief justice highlights judicial branch progress, challenges

Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Heavican delivered his State of the Judiciary address to senators Jan. 25.

Heavican began by outlining "significant" improvements in judicial branch staffing. He said the judicial branch workforce now exceeds pre-pandemic staffing levels, with a turnover rate of just over 5%. Those improvements are "no accident," Heavican said, noting the Legislature's recent partnership to help address workforce shortages by funding salary increases for judicial branch staff.

Collaborative courts such as problem-solving courts continue to be successful, Heavican said, calling attention to the recent expansion of the Young Adult Problem Solving Court in Douglas County. He said the addition of an employment coordinator to that program has resulted in a 13% decrease in unemployment for participants.

Problem-solving courts also are cost-effective, he said,

with an annual average cost of \$4,400 for each participant compared to the \$41,000 cost for incarceration.

"Like probation, each problem-solving court is the taxpayers' friend," Heavican said.

Highlighting the state's probation programs, Heavican said Nebraska Probation and the Nebraska Department of Labor recently partnered to provide employment training and opportunities for individuals on probation in Nebraska's 17 community reporting centers.

"This important cooperation will assist [those on] probation with obtaining and maintaining employment to be successful citizens," he said.

In 2023, there was a 25% increase in youth ordered to probation, but recidivism rates for juveniles on probation have held steady at 19% for the past two years, Heavican said. Despite that success, he said, challenges remain. For

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Included in the amendment are provisions of Brewer's LB277, which would adopt the First Freedom Act. The act would create a more restrictive standard for imposing a "substantial burden" on a person's right to the exercise of religion. Any such religious restriction would have to be essential to the furtherance of a compelling state interest and be administered by the least restrictive means possible.



Sen. Tom Brewer

The act would not apply to government actions taken in an emergency as long as restrictions on religious practice are not greater than those placed on non-religious organizations and businesses. It also would provide a legal cause of action for a person whose exercise of religious freedom has been subject to an undue restriction.

Brewer said the provisions would address situations such as when the government placed greater restrictions on the operation of churches than

businesses during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"They should be on the same playing field," he said.

LB277 also contains provisions that would authorize indigenous tribal members who are students in approved or accredited public schools to wear tribal regalia — including garments, jewelry and other adornments or traditional objects of cultural significance — at any school facility or function, unless doing so would prevent school purposes or interfere with the educational process.

Omaha Sen. John Cavanaugh expressed concern regarding provisions of LB277 related to the First Freedom Act, which he said could be used to challenge important existing government protections.

He offered an amendment to clarify that the provisions could not be used to challenge any provision of law that provides protections against discrimination or the promotion of equal opportunity.

"It's important that this bill be a shield to protect the religious freedom

rights of people and not a sword to challenge well-settled nondiscrimination law or employment protections," Cavanaugh said.

Sen. John Fredrickson of Omaha said he fully supported LB277's provisions protecting students' right to wear tribal regalia, calling the history of discrimination against Native American students long and "very cruel."

He expressed concerns, however, regarding the way in which claims of infringement upon religious freedoms recently have been "weaponized" against the LGBTQ community in ways that he described as "far beyond an expression of simple religious faith."

Cavanaugh withdrew his amendment before a vote was taken, saying he hoped to continue working on the bill before the next round of debate.

Other provisions

Also included in the committee amendment are provisions of LB366, sponsored by Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln, which seek to improve the process for fulfilling information

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requests under the state’s Public Records Act.

The measure would differentiate between Nebraska residents and non-residents when ap-



Sen. Danielle Conrad

plying a fee structure for requests — but all news media would be considered residents for fee purposes. Currently, Nebraska residents may be charged for time spent fulfilling a request beyond the first four hours. Conrad’s proposal would change that threshold to eight hours and allow nonresidents to be charged the full cost of fulfilling a request.

In addition, it would require that any claim that a request requires more than four days to fulfill be “attested to under oath” before being provided in writing to the requester.

Conrad said the provisions represent a “long overdue” update of Nebraska’s public records law and seek to prevent a continued “tamping down” of citizens’ right to know what the government is doing in their name and with their tax dollars.

“It was once very simple and straightforward to get information about what government was up to and it’s become increasingly difficult,” she said.

A provision originally in LB366 that would have provided that police body camera video of an in-custody death be considered a public record after the conclusion of a required grand jury proceeding was removed by the committee amendment.

Also included are provisions of LB297, sponsored by Sanders, that would prohibit state and local government agencies from compelling a nonprofit organization to release the personal information of its members, supporters, volunteers or donors.

The provisions would not apply to legally required disclosures under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act or for use in criminal or civil investigations. The committee amendment adds exceptions related to evaluation of applications for occupational and facility licenses and criminal history checks and includes a damages maximum of \$2,500 per violation.

Sanders said there recently has been a nationwide push to mandate disclosure of the personal information of nonprofit donors in order to “target” people based on their beliefs. She said such measures infringe on individual First Amendment rights and that nonprofits should be able to keep donor information confidential.

Finally, the amendment includes provisions of two additional proposals. LB650, introduced by Omaha Sen. Mike McDonnell, would amend public records law to permit withholding by the state or any political subdivision of records relating to the “nature, location or function of cybersecurity.”



Sen. Mike McDonnell

LB41, sponsored by Sen. Ben Hansen of Blair, would prohibit the state from placing “intrusive or politically motivated” filing or reporting requirements on charitable organizations beyond those required by state law unless narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest or to fulfill federal funding requirements.



Sen. Ben Hansen

Following adoption of the committee amendment, senators advanced LB43 to select file on a 37-0 vote. ■

Chief justice highlights judicial branch progress, challenges

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example, there is a need to address the state’s lack of juvenile detention facilities, which are located entirely in the eastern side of the state, he said.

“There are no juvenile detention facilities west of this building, and counties have no incentive to fund them,” Heavican said. “We are forced to pay Iowa, Kansas and Wyoming in order to handle our juvenile detention needs.”

Additional funding for language access initiatives also is needed, Heavican said. In 2023, Nebraska courts utilized interpreters for 69 languages, he said. As an example of the workload, Heavican noted that the court served 12 families who spoke six different languages during a single truancy hearing last year in Lancaster County.

The chief justice also noted the need for self-contained IT infrastructure for the judicial branch to assist individuals who are hard of hearing and to address potential security threats.

Recently, the Kansas court system was hit by a cyberattack that compromised sensitive personal information, including Social Security and bank account numbers, Heavican said. Additionally, the attack affected lawyers’ public access to online filings and court documents, highlighting the need for upgrades in court system security, he said.

“Kansas serves as a warning for the rest of us,” Heavican said. “If the Kansas Supreme Court fell victim to a sophisticated foreign cyberattack, without needed upgrades, we must consider ourselves equally vulnerable.” ■

BANKING, COMMERCE & INSURANCE

Safeguards advanced for genetic information privacy

Nebraskans would have more control over use of their genetic information under a bill advanced from general file Jan. 23.

Under LB308, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Eliot Bostar, express consent would be required from Nebraska residents for the sharing, storage and use of any consumer genetic data by direct-to-consumer genetic testing services.

Bostar said direct-to-consumer genetic tests are becoming more popular and that roughly one in five Americans has taken one. This increase in popularity has led to growing concerns about how that data is used, he said, because it is not regulated in the same manner as genetic data arising from medical tests.

Ancestry and 23andMe developed privacy best practices in 2018, Bostar said, which were translated into model legislation that has been adopted by 11 states so far.

“Genetic information consists of our most sensitive and personal information,” Bostar said. “It uniquely identifies an individual, reveals their propensity to develop certain diseases and gives insight on family, ethnic and cultural background.”

Under the bill, a direct-to-consumer genetic testing company could not disclose a consumer’s genetic data to any entity offering health, life or long-term care insurance or to an employer

without written consent. The measure also would require a process by which consumers could delete their accounts and their genetic data.

Following adoption of a technical Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee amendment on a 39-0 vote, lawmakers advanced LB308 to select file 39-0.

Changes to colorectal cancer insurance coverage considered

The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee heard testimony Jan. 22 on a bill that would change provisions related to insurance coverage for colorectal cancer screening.

LB829, sponsored by Sen. Carol Blood of Bellevue, would add the concurrent removal of polyps, biopsy or both to coverage requirements for colorectal cancer screening by self-funded employee benefit insurance plans in Nebraska. Such plans are required to cover screening exams and laboratory tests for individuals who are at least 45 years old.

If a polyp is found and removed during a screening colonoscopy, however, the procedure instead may be deemed as diagnostic, Blood said, which could lead to hundreds of dollars in unexpected additional charges.

“This expense creates a barrier to the lifesaving screening for those who are most at risk for colorectal cancer,” she said. “This loophole could be the difference between life and death.”

John Trapp, a pulmonary and critical care physician, testified in support of the proposal on behalf of the Nebraska Medical Association. He said the bill would be a “positive step” toward removing cost as a bar-

rier to treatment of polyps before they become malignant.

It is far easier on the patient to remove a polyp during a colonoscopy than to require a second procedure, Trapp said, and doing so lowers costs and improves health outcomes. If a patient knows that they won’t face additional costs if a polyp is found, it might encourage them to be screened, he said.

“Fewer than 65% of Nebraskans ages 45 to 75 meet the recommendation and receive colorectal cancer screening,” Trapp said. “That is, unfortunately, in spite of the fact that Nebraska has a higher rate of colorectal cancer than the national average.”

Testifying on behalf of AARP Nebraska, June Ryan also spoke in support of LB829. Colorectal cancer is almost entirely preventable with recommended screenings, she said, and yet 1,692 Nebraskans died of colorectal cancer between 2011 and 2015.

“About one-third of adults skip the recommended screenings that could help prevent and help treat this deadly disease,” Ryan said, “and often the reason for skipping these screenings is due to lack of insurance coverage.”

No one testified in opposition to LB829 and the committee took no immediate action on the measure.



Sen. Eliot Bostar



Sen. Carol Blood

BUSINESS & LABOR

Apprenticeship grant program considered

The Business and Labor Committee heard testimony Jan. 22 on a bill intended to assist individuals who are receiving public benefits to achieve full-time employment through a registered apprenticeship program.

LB993, introduced by Sumner Sen.

Teresa Ibach, would create the Apprenticeship Grant Act to be administered by the state Department of Economic Development. Under the act, DED could provide grants of up to \$37,000 per enrolled apprentice to qualified Nebraska businesses. Funds would be used to reimburse the cost of on-the-job training and classroom instruction for underemployed individuals who also are receiving state-funded economic assistance.



Sen. Teresa Ibach

Qualifying businesses would need to be partnered with a registered apprenticeship program and offer full-time employment upon successful completion of the apprenticeship program that pays a wage sufficient to reduce the individual's participation in economic assistance programs.

The bill also would create the Apprenticeship Nebraska Cash Fund and authorize up to \$4 million in total annual grants. The measure would not, however, transfer or direct any state dollars to the fund. The fund could accept legislative appropriations, donations, bequests or other contributions from public or private entities.

Ibach said the measure was inspired by Ignite Nebraska, a registered apprenticeship program currently operating in the state.

"Ignite Nebraska ... has developed an excellent workforce model that connects community partners, employers and educational institutions to provide paid apprenticeship opportunities with the promise of a full-time job offer in a high-demand, high-skilled, high-paying career," Ibach said. "LB993 seeks to expand this program statewide."

Joni Wheeler, founder of Ignite Nebraska, testified in favor of the

bill, which she said could replicate the success of her program statewide. Every graduate of Ignite Nebraska has received full-time employment in their field, she said.

"Of the alumni who previously received economic assistance from the state of Nebraska, 100% no longer rely on state-funded support." Wheeler said. "This bill is a game changer in workforce development and it is life changing for Nebraskans."

Speaking in support of LB993, Luke Grobeck said graduating from the Ignite Nebraska program made it possible for him not only to survive and afford basic necessities, but to thrive and pursue additional education.

"I no longer worry about affording my rent or maintenance on my car because my career has enabled me to build financial stability and independence," Grobeck said. "The apprenticeship ensured that I focused on learning the new skills I needed in the classroom without having to worry about losing access to the resources I needed to be successful."

Carter Thiele, policy and research coordinator for the Lincoln Independent Business Association, also testified in support of LB993. He suggested modifications to the program's administration, however, and suggested that lawmakers increase the proposed annual grant cap from \$4 million to \$8 million to allow for full utilization of the program across the state.

"Increased funding and a more business friendly approach could ensure that the Apprenticeship Grant Act not only achieves its noble goals, but also becomes a resounding success story for the great state of Nebraska," Thiele said.

Testifying on behalf of the State Council of Electrical Workers, John Nebel spoke in opposition to the bill. Although not opposed to the develop-

ment of registered apprenticeships, Nebel noted that many positions in the trades require an apprentice to obtain an additional license or certification before they can be considered for a full-time position.

The committee took no immediate action on LB993.

EDUCATION

School lunch debt collection ban proposed

School districts would be barred from contracting with debt collection agencies to collect students' outstanding lunch or breakfast debt under a measure considered by the Education Committee Jan. 23.

LB855, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Danielle Conrad, also would prohibit school districts from assessing or collecting interest, fees or other monetary penalties for outstanding debts on a student's school lunch or breakfast account.



Sen. Danielle Conrad

Conrad said she doesn't believe the practice of using collection agencies for school lunch or breakfast debt is widespread in Nebraska, but that some families in Lincoln have been turned over to collections for outstanding lunch bills as low as \$20.

"When families are living on the edge — and these are the families who can't pay their school meal debt — and they get turned over to collections, it really starts to spiral for them," Conrad said.

Many families cannot afford legal counsel, Conrad said, and a default

judgment on school lunch debt will impact their credit report, which could impede their ability to rent housing.

Katie Nungesser testified in support of the measure on behalf of Voices for Children in Nebraska. School meal costs have risen in recent years, Nungesser said, and families who are just above the qualifying threshold to receive free or reduced lunch have struggled to stay on top of the expense.

Chase Boyd of Omaha also testified in favor of the bill. During his fourth-grade year, Boyd said, his family was impacted by the 2008 recession and their financial difficulties resulted in lunch debt.

One day in the lunch line, Boyd said a school nutrition worker told him to tell his parents that he had an overdue bill. Boyd said he was left to wonder if eating lunch was hurting his family.

“It is my belief that no child should have to go through or experience what I did,” Boyd said. “The embarrassment that I felt that day should be no child’s cross to bear.”

Stephen Grizzle, superintendent of South Central Nebraska Unified School District #5, testified in opposition to the bill. While he appreciated the measure’s intent, Grizzle said families may stop paying for school meals if there are no consequences, which could lead to a significant loss of revenue for school districts.

“I feel like this is another example of a bill being passed that’s requiring the school districts to pick up more and more costs,” Grizzle said. “[Schools] also get accused of spending too much money and being the sole reason for high property taxes.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Easing of non-public school regulations considered

Laws regulating Nebraska schools that choose not to meet accreditation requirements would be relaxed under a bill heard Jan. 22 by the Education Committee. Such schools, which may be private, parochial, denominational, group or home-based, are referred to as “exempt.”

Elmwood Sen. Robert Clements, sponsor of LB1027, said the bill aims to eliminate “cumbersome administrative barriers” for parents who educate their children in exempt schools.

“I believe it’s important to respect the privacy of parents who have elected to pursue alternative educational settings for their children,” Clements said. “The parents should be the primary person in charge of a child’s education.”

Under the bill, the application process to attend an exempt school would be the same as the requirement for public schools, with only one parent required to apply to the state Department of Education. Current law requires two parents or guardians to apply for their child to attend an exempt school.

LB1027 also would eliminate the annual application required to attend exempt schools, which entails three multiple-page forms that parents and schools must file annually. Many parents and schools don’t receive their application acknowledgment letter from the department promptly, Clements said, forcing parents to begin educating their children without it.

The bill also seeks to harmonize state law with current department practices, Clements said, including

removing language that requires subject matter testing for employees of exempt schools. The change would align the requirements for exempt school employees with those of public school teachers, who no longer must complete the Praxis exam.

Finally, LB1027 would remove the department’s authority to visit or inspect exempt schools and to proctor achievement testing of exempt school students. Clements said the department has never carried out inspections of exempt schools or achievement testing.

David Lostroh testified in support of the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Christian Home Educators Association. The state Department of Education operates on “the more lenient end of the scale,” when it comes to regulating exempt schools, he said, but nothing in current state law prevents the department from becoming more restrictive in the future.

Lostroh said LB1027 would solidify current practices and ensure that no further restrictions on exempt schools are enacted.

Shannon Splonskowski, president of the Bellevue Area Christian Home-schoolers Co-op, also testified in support of the bill.

Splonskowski said that while she doesn’t need the department’s acknowledgement letter to homeschool, it serves as evidence that she operates legally. The department’s issuance of the letter has become less timely in recent years, she said, which can lead to other problems.

Current law allows home visits by the department, Splonskowski said, and “misinformed” neighbors or school officials have been known to notify child protective services when they suspect that kids are truant from school.

“Having the acknowledgment letter



Sen. Robert Clements

in my possession is confirmation that the state, at least for the time being, is not going to take action against us for not complying with education laws,” Splonskowski said.

Ashley Mason, a homeschool parent from Gage County who assists other homeschool families, also testified in support of the bill. Homeschool regulations in Nebraska are burdensome and “intimidating,” she said, and are more restrictive than those found in other states.

Mason also said the current two-signature requirement prevents single-parent households from homeschooling and fails to consider circumstances like domestic violence.

Brian Halstead, deputy commissioner of the Nebraska Department of Education, provided neutral testimony. He said the department agrees with most of the proposed changes in LB1027 and recognizes the need to update state laws regarding exempt schools, which hasn’t been done in over 40 years.

He said the department is opposed, however, to changing the annual enrollment policy. The department views enrollment as a “yearly activity,” he said, which also is a requirement for public school students.

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

School supply reimbursement proposed

Nebraska teachers could be reimbursed up to \$300 for the purchase of school supplies under a bill considered by the Education Committee Jan. 22.

LB1052, introduced by Fremont Sen. Lynne Walz, would allow K-12 teachers from any approved or accredited public, private, denominational or parochial school to apply for reim-

bursement of up to \$300 annually for school supplies purchased with personal funds.

The Nebraska Department of Education would be responsible for establishing a reimbursement policy and administering payments. To receive reimbursement, participating teachers would need to provide receipts for the purchased supplies and the policy would take effect beginning with the 2024-25 school year.

Walz said a report from the Institute of Education Sciences found that, on average, teachers spend \$478 each school year on school-related expenses. Many teachers face financial difficulties, she said, and being reimbursed for school supplies could help alleviate that burden.

“This bill is meant to recognize and show appreciation for the work that [teachers] do, and to let them know that our state is here to support them too,” Walz said.

Tim Royers testified in support of the bill on behalf of the Millard and Nebraska State Education associations. He said teachers would appreciate acknowledgement of the money they spend on classroom-related items.

“The importance of this bill goes beyond just the dollars provided,” Royers said. “The acknowledgment of the state that teachers are taking these extra steps to make our classrooms welcoming environments goes a long way.”

Edison McDonald, executive director of the Arc of Nebraska, also supported the bill. He said that despite recent funding increases, special education teachers often use their own money to provide additional resources and support for their students.

Heidi Gilliland of Papillion spoke



Sen. Lynne Walz

in opposition to LB1052, citing concerns over a \$130 million bond in her local district and the additional burden the bill could place on taxpayers.

“When you talk about giving more money to teachers – while I appreciate everything they do – that’s my money, that’s my taxes,” Gilliland said.

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.



Easing of occupational licensure clears first round

Senators advanced a bill from general file Jan. 22 aimed at alleviating certain occupational licensure regulations in Nebraska.

LB16, originally introduced last year by former Albion Sen. Tom Briese, was taken up this session by Sen.

Danielle Conrad of Lincoln. The bill would make a number of changes to state law regarding credentials for certain professions.

A Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment, adopted 38-1, replaced the bill. Among other changes, the amended measure would provide broad reciprocal licensure for military members, apprentices and individuals who are licensed in other states, provided they meet a number of criteria. It also would add two members to the State Electrical Board.

Reducing barriers to entry into professions is an important element of a comprehensive approach to the



Sen. Danielle Conrad

state's workforce shortage, Conrad said, and approximately 20 other states have adopted similar policies. Those states subsequently have seen increased workforce participation and overall economic benefits, she said.

"This is about removing needless red tape from our statute books," Conrad said. "This is about opening up competition ... and this is about getting government out of the way when it comes to individuals who are seeking an opportunity to work and pursue their dreams."

Seward Sen. Jana Hughes supported the proposal. She called LB16 a "commonsense" measure that would allow qualified individuals to join the one in four occupations that require licensure under Nebraska law. The state already has made progress toward this goal for many health care related occupations and for teachers who are spouses of active military members, she said.

"If universal recognition can work for these two industries, then I believe it's time for us to support LB16 to bring even more licensed occupations under the universal recognition umbrella," Hughes said. "Nebraska has a critical shortage of workers and LB16 provides a solution to help address this shortage."

Among other provisions, the bill would require that applicants for reciprocal licensure must:

- have held their credential for at least a year;
- hold a credential that covers a similar scope of practice, as determined by the licensing board;
- not have a disqualifying criminal record, as determined by the licensing board;
- not have had their credential surrendered or revoked for negligence or misconduct; and

- not have an open complaint or investigation in any other jurisdiction related to unprofessional conduct or an alleged crime.

Following the 39-1 adoption of a Conrad amendment, lawmakers voted 41-1 to advance LB16 to the second round of debate.

Land surveyor updates clear first round

Laws governing the work of professional land surveyors in Nebraska would be overhauled by a bill advanced from general file Jan. 25.

LB102, sponsored by Bayard Sen. Steve Erdman, would revise the Nebraska Plane Coordinate System Act, Land Surveyors Regulation Act and related state laws that govern the land surveying profession in Nebraska.

Among other provisions, the bill would provide new authority for professional land surveyors and their assistants and trainees to enter public and private lands and waterways to conduct land surveys and to place survey monuments. Vehicles used for this purpose would have to be clearly marked with identifying information and surveyors would be liable for any property or crop damage resulting from their work.

Erdman said the idea came from a constituent in the land surveying profession who was having difficulty accessing private land to find a property marker. Calling the bill a "commonsense approach" to helping land surveyors do an important job, he noted that state laws governing the profession have not been updated since 1983.



Sen. Steve Erdman

For example, Erdman said, county and state surveyors currently are able to go on private land to find markers without landowner permission but others lack that authority.

"Many of our parcels [of land] are owned by absentee landowners, or by an LLC or a trust, and so when the surveyor is trying to discover who owns the parcel and get permission, it could take several days or weeks to discover who that is," Erdman said.

In addition, he said, the bill would protect private landowners by shielding them from liability for damages to surveyors incurred during their survey work, unless such damages are the result of an intentional tort.

The bill also would define the scope of practice and licensure processes for land surveyors who offer their services through an organization and would set out a professional disciplinary process for the examining board to follow in enforcing the Land Surveyors Regulation Act.

A Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment, adopted 37-0, would allow county facilities other than a county courthouse to be used as storage for surveyor records and make other technical changes.

Elmwood Sen. Robert Clements supported the bill, noting that he had difficulty obtaining permission to access land near a farm that he purchased in order to establish property boundaries.

Following adoption of the committee amendment, senators voted 37-0 to advance LB102 to select file.

State procurement changes advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Jan. 22 to a bill that would make a number of changes to the process the state uses to obtain goods and services.

Sen. John Arch of La Vista, sponsor of LB461, said the bill resulted from a study of the state Department of Administrative Services' procurement processes that was required under a bill passed by the Legislature in 2022. The study was authorized in the wake of the state's failed contract for child welfare services with St. Francis Ministries.



Sen. John Arch

That contract, which was terminated early by the state after the agency proved unable to deliver on the contracted services, was underbid by 40%, Arch said.

"Had there been the ability to subjectively analyze this bid based on realism, the extremely low bid would have been a huge red flag," he said.

In addition, Arch said, two other recent high-profile state contracts resulted in large expenditures for software that was never delivered. LB461 could help avoid these types of "flawed" contracts that have cost the state millions in taxpayer dollars, he said, by fully implementing the study's suggestions for improving the state's procurement process.

"Annually, the state oversees hundreds of contracts worth billions of dollars to carry out our government functions to serve Nebraska," Arch said. "It's been over 20 years since we've updated our procurement procedures."

Among other changes, the bill would:

- detail the form of bid solicitations;
- revise the factors to be considered when evaluating bids;
- provide guidance for evaluating what are "realistic" and "reasonable" prices;
- prohibit certain provisions in procurement contracts;

- redefine which contracts are subject to DAS administration;
- modify when proof of need analysis would be required; and
- require that the requesting agency provide a detailed requisition for services or personal property to be contracted.

Senators voted 41-0 to adopt a Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment that would remove a resident bidder preference and make other technical changes to the bill.

Sen. Lynne Walz of Fremont called the proposal the "single most important piece of legislation" that lawmakers would consider this year. Speaking in support of LB461, she said the St. Francis situation was something that senators need to make sure never happens again.

"This was a terrible ... lesson learned about how we as a state would allow the cost of services to come before the care of our children," Walz said.

North Platte Sen. Mike Jacobson also spoke in support of the bill and the amendment. LB461 would put the state's focus on how tax dollars are spent, he said, and would direct DAS to find entities that can provide services most efficiently.

"It's not always about the lowest bidder," Jacobson said. "It's about who can deliver the job, who can do the job and do we need the job done?"

Following adoption of the committee amendment, LB461 advanced to select file on a 45-0 vote.

Partisan elections for certain public power districts advanced

An attempt to move public power and irrigation district elections to a partisan format was narrowed and advanced from general file Jan. 26.

As originally introduced last ses-

sion by Kearney Sen. John Lowe, LB541 would have required that all such elections be conducted on partisan ballots for both the primary and general elections.



Sen. John Lowe

A Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee amendment, adopted 31-9, would narrow the bill's provisions to cover only districts receiving annual revenue in excess of \$500 million. The change effectively would limit the measure to the Nebraska Public Power District and the Omaha Public Power District.

Lowe said he brought the proposal after learning of "outside interests" who were "pouring" thousands of dollars into NPPD elections in 2022 — funds he characterized as "East Coast money" meant to influence district members toward a specific political agenda. One NPPD candidate in his district received nearly \$100,000 from one source, he said.

Lowe acknowledged that none of those organizations engaged in wrongdoing or broke any laws, but he said making elections partisan would give voters a better idea of where candidates stand. Nebraskans have difficulty learning about "down-ballot" races, he said, and identifying candidates as Republicans, Democrats or Independents would simplify the process.

"Most of the time, that one word choice will tell voters 99% of what they need to know about how a candidate will govern," Lowe said.

Sen. Barry DeKay of Niobrara supported the bill and the amendment. A former member of the Nebraska Public Power District board, DeKay said groups from outside Nebraska are trying to influence power districts to move toward wind and solar power generation.

“These groups have never approached me [or] asked me what my views were on generation — they opposed me because of my party affiliation,” DeKay said.

Sen. Jane Raybould of Lincoln opposed the bill and offered a motion to recommit it to committee, saying public power is not a partisan issue.

Monied interests have sought for years to influence Nebraska elections, Raybould said, usually in favor of oil, coal and gas. Supporters of LB541 only seem concerned, however, if that money comes from entities favoring wind and other renewable energy sources, she said.

“The good news — for all Nebraskans — is that the boards that are elected remain grounded in their mission of delivering reliable and affordable public power throughout the state,” Raybould said.

Bellevue Sen. Carol Blood also opposed the bill. Candidates should be encouraged to think for themselves, she said, rather than being defined solely by their party affiliation. That philosophy has worked well in the Nebraska Legislature in the past, she said, and in other nonpartisan elected bodies.

In nonpartisan systems, Blood said, people are free to seek collaboration and compromise and are encouraged to work together and find common ground rather than focusing on their own political agenda.

“Partisanship is not better for democracy,” she said. “Nonpartisanship is.”

Also speaking in opposition was Lincoln Sen. George Dungan, who said nonpartisan elections encourage voters to do their research rather than simply voting for one party or the other.

“I think we should be encouraging more civic engagement,” Dungan said.

Raybould’s recommit motion was defeated 15-28, and LB541 advanced to select file on a 29-16 vote.



Expansion of Medicaid fraud investigation powers advanced

A bill that would update several provisions of the Nebraska False Medicaid Claims Act was advanced from general file Jan. 23.

LB664, introduced by Ralston Sen. Merv Riepe, would expand the authority of the state’s Medicaid fraud control unit. Under the bill, the unit — which is part of the state attorney general’s office — would be authorized to investigate and prosecute cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation of Medicaid recipients who receive medical services inside and outside of institutional settings.



Sen. Merv Riepe

The proposal also would grant the attorney general’s office access to all applicable records of any resident living in a Medicaid-funded facility when investigating and prosecuting instances of abuse, neglect or exploitation, regardless of whether the resident is a Medicaid recipient. This would include an expansion of preexisting subpoena powers.

Medicaid fraud control units were granted these powers by Congress in the mid-1970s, Riepe said, but current Nebraska law contradicts that authority by prohibiting the unit from reviewing or obtaining information concerning non-Medicaid residents of health care facilities without the patient’s consent or a court order.

“[LB664 makes] Nebraska’s laws consistent with Congress’s intent and aligns this statute with similar

provisions found in 49 other states,” Riepe said.

Lawmakers voted 41-0 to advance the bill to the second round of debate.

Child care provider assistance proposed

The Health and Human Services Committee heard testimony Jan. 26 on a bill that would create a new category of eligibility for Nebraska child care providers under the Child Care Subsidy program.

LB856, introduced by Omaha Sen. John Fredrickson, would exclude all earned and unearned income from eligibility determinations for the program for households with at least one individual who holds employment in a qualifying child care setting.



Sen. John Fredrickson

Under the bill, individuals who pass a criminal background check and are employed at least 20 hours a week at an in-home or licensed child care facility would be eligible for the child care subsidy for their own children under the program.

Fredrickson said LB856 is modeled after a successful initiative in Kentucky that resulted in more than 3,200 additional parents qualifying for subsidized child care for over 5,600 children. When adjusting these figures proportionally to Nebraska’s population, Fredrickson estimated the bill would result in an additional 2,175 parent providers in the workforce, offering stable child care to more than 16,000 Nebraska children.

“The LB856 concept is simple and measurable,” he said. “More workers recruited and retained in our child care workforce means more children served and more workers into our

overall economy.”

Fredrickson said the state Department of Health and Human Services has estimated a cost of \$21 million to carry out the bill’s provisions, but he noted that similar legislation enacted in Iowa was estimated to cost only \$6.8 million.

“Even at \$21 million, this is an investment that will pay dividends,” he said. “It is not possible to address the child care crisis in a truly meaningful way without investment.”

Testifying on behalf of Voices for Children in Nebraska in support of LB56, Anahi Salazar said many parents have had to reduce their hours or quit jobs due to a lack of accessible and affordable child care. Ninety one percent of Nebraska counties cannot meet local child care demands, she said, and 11 are considered “child care deserts” – having no licensed providers.

“These deserts have a negative impact not only on parents and children, but also the economy.” Salazar said. “In order to keep and attract families in Nebraska, there needs to be affordable and accessible high-quality child care for every child.”

Anne Brandt, executive director of Lincoln Littles, also testified in support of the measure. A survey conducted by Lincoln Littles and the Nebraska Public Policy Center found that nearly 60% of local child care facilities are experiencing shortages, she said.

Many child care facilities have started offering discounted rates for employees’ children in order to recruit staff, she said, but the resulting revenue loss is negatively impacting their long-term profitability.

“Passing LB856 into law would not only recruit and retain more individuals to the child care field, but also put money back into businesses’ pockets,” Brandt said.

Also testifying in support of the bill,

Platte Institute representative Nicole Fox said employment in the child care industry has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. Between January and April of 2020, employment in the child care sector declined by 33%, she said.

“Child care workers were forced to search for work in other industries, leading to child care staffing shortages and limited child care availability,” Fox said. “LB856 provides a solution to a piece of Nebraska’s critical workforce shortage puzzle by helping to increase child care options for working families while supporting those doing this important work.”

No one testified in opposition to LB856 and the committee took no immediate action.

JUDICIARY



Case transfer protections for juveniles advanced

Senators gave first-round approval Jan. 25 to a bill that would prevent certain statements made by juvenile defendants from being used against them in other proceedings.

LB184, introduced by Omaha Sen. John Cavanaugh, aims to protect child defendants attempting to transfer their cases from adult to juvenile court by preventing their statements made to a mental health professional during the hearing process from being used against them in other proceedings. A mental health professional includes a psychiatrist, psychologist, therapist or licensed mental health practitioner.



Sen. John Cavanaugh

Cavanaugh said that some juveniles refrain from being honest with mental health professionals out of fear that their statements later could be used against them in court. This fear can hinder a mental health professional’s ability to evaluate the child, he said.

“LB184 is a small but important step for helping those children charged with law violations to get the treatment they need,” Cavanaugh said.

A Judiciary Committee amendment, adopted 40-0, replaced the bill. The amendment would clarify that such statements are admissible as evidence in the transfer proceedings in certain circumstances. It also would permit statements to be used for impeachment purposes.

Sen. Carolyn Bosn of Lincoln supported the bill and the amendment, which she said would enable courts to better determine which system, juvenile or adult, is best suited for a young person. Bosn said the amendment represents compromise language agreed to by county attorneys and law enforcement.

Lincoln Sen. George Dungan, who worked as a public defender in juvenile court, also offered support for the bill. He said it is crucial for a juvenile to be honest with a mental health professional during the evaluation process because it can help the court understand the individual’s background.

North Platte Sen. Mike Jacobson also supported LB184 and agreed with the importance of rehabilitating court-involved youth. He cautioned lawmakers, however, to remember that consequences also are necessary to help prevent future offenses.

Following the adoption of the committee amendment, senators advanced LB184 to select file on a 41-0 vote.

Bill permitting syringe sharing programs advanced

Senators gave first-round approval Jan. 26 to a bill that would protect public or behavioral health programs and pharmacies from drug paraphernalia offenses when distributing clean, hypodermic needles to community members.

LB307, introduced by Omaha Sen. Megan Hunt, would allow local jurisdictions to permit public and behavioral health organizations to implement Syringe Services Programs by exempting staff and participants from drug paraphernalia prosecution.

SSPs provide many services, Hunt said, including referrals to substance abuse treatment programs, care for infectious diseases, overdose prevention, education on safe injection practices and supplies to prevent overdoses.

Hunt said SSPs also benefit communities by reducing litter and preventing used needles from being left in common spaces such as parks and playgrounds. In addition, studies show that SSPs can reduce the spread of infectious diseases like HIV and hepatitis C by 50%, she said.

The measure offers a tool for localities that wish to adopt an SSP, Hunt said, but does not require any local government to participate or implement a program.

Sen. Rick Holdcroft of Bellevue spoke in support of LB307. SSPs are a “smart balance” of harm reduction, rehabilitation and enforcement efforts, he said.

“Drug addiction and the spread of communicable disease is a scourge on our community,” Holdcroft said. “Local governments or qualified health

care providers should be able to legally distribute clean needles under careful and responsible circumstances.”

La Vista Sen. John Arch supported the measure and said that while people may initially believe that SSPs enable participants to continue using drugs, evidence shows that individuals who access the programs are actually five times more likely to seek treatment.

Also speaking in support of the bill was North Platte Sen. Mike Jacobson, who said the bill would positively impact all Nebraskans, including those in his district.

“As you dig in the bill and look at what we’re trying to accomplish – particularly when it comes to not just handing out free needles, but being able to create a counseling environment – that’s the brilliance in this bill,” Jacobson said.

Lawmakers adopted a technical amendment from the Judiciary Committee 39-0 before advancing LB307 to select file on a 37-2 vote.

Extended preservation of sexual assault forensic evidence considered

Individuals who have undergone a forensic examination following a reported sexual assault could request that law enforcement preserve that forensic evidence for an additional 20 years under a bill considered Jan. 26 by the Judiciary Committee.

LB870, introduced by Omaha Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh, would require law enforcement to notify the individual, no later than 60 days prior to the end of the statutorily required retention period for such evidence, of its

intended destruction or disposal.

Currently, law enforcement is required to preserve sexual assault forensic evidence for 20 years. Under the bill, a victim could request the preservation of their evidence for an additional 20 years.

“My goal in this is to give victims more information while doing it in a way that does not put them at further harm or risk,” Cavanaugh said.

The bill also would require law enforcement to notify the victim if there is a change in the status of their case, including if the case has been closed or reopened.

Erin Feichtinger testified in support of the bill on behalf of the Women’s Fund of Omaha. Allowing individuals to have power over their sexual assault evidence will give them control over their healing journey, she said.

“When survivors feel safe and supported throughout their interaction with medical and legal processes, they are more likely to report their assaults and Nebraska is more likely to hold perpetrators accountable while achieving safety for our communities,” Feichtinger said.

Also supporting the measure was Melanie Kirk, speaking on behalf of the Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence. Allowing evidence to be preserved longer could provide reassurance to survivors who may need additional time to heal after an assault, Kirk said.

No one testified in opposition to LB870 and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill seeks to ease foster care transition

Youth who age out of the state’s foster care system would receive additional records and documents under a bill considered by the Judiciary Com-



Sen. Megan Hunt



Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh

mittee Jan. 24.

Currently, the state Department of Health and Human Services is required to develop a transition plan for state wards age 16 and older and provide certain documents. LB945, introduced by Seward Sen. Jana Hughes, outlines additional materials to be provided, including:



Sen. Jana Hughes

- Foster Care Review Office reports;
- all case numbers and court records;
- available photographs of the child;
- a written explanation of the reason the child is leaving foster care;
- a document that describes the child's rights concerning education, health, visitation and court participation; and
- a copy of the child's medical records, including but not limited to, documents related to psychological care or evaluations and a list of health care and mental health care providers the child saw while in care.

Hughes said that visiting with individuals who assist youth aging out of the foster care system led her to better understand how providing information is vital to helping those youth understand their past. It's also a workforce concern, she said, because young adults who are missing information about themselves may have trouble obtaining employment.

"We have a workforce issue here in Nebraska that is not going to fix itself," Hughes said. "We need to remove barriers so that people can get employed."

The bill also would allow a state ward or their guardian ad litem to request additional case information

through the courts before leaving foster care, which would be granted if deemed to be in the child's best interest.

If a party objects to a document request, the court could allow a partial redaction or other measures to address privacy concerns, including waiving privacy rights. If the request is approved, the court would identify the confidential information the child may receive. DHHS would have 30 days to provide such information.

Sarah Helvey of Nebraska Applesseed testified in support of the bill. Current state and federal laws require DHHS to provide youth aging out of foster care with certain documents already, she said, but some are not receiving all of the necessary information. LB945 would clarify which documents youth are required to receive, Helvey said.

Jerry Milner, a former associate commissioner with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, also supported the bill. He said young people without vital documents and information likely will encounter barriers to housing, education, employment and health care.

"As long as we are going to allow young people to exit foster care to be on their own, we need to do every single thing we can to prepare them and equip them for life after foster care," Milner said.

Bethany Bradley, who said she spent nearly two years in foster care before being adopted, also testified in favor of LB945.

Bradley said that while her adoptive parents have her vital records, she doesn't know much about her childhood or what relationships with her biological family were like. More information would help her and other foster youth understand their histories, she said.

"Giving us access to all of our information can help us prepare for

our future because we understand our past," Bradley said.

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

Bills would bar HOA prohibitions on solar installations, political signs

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony on two proposals Jan. 25 that would prohibit homeowners associations from restricting the installation of solar panels or the placement of political signs on homeowner property.

LB1119, introduced by Lincoln Sen. George Dungan, would prohibit HOAs from restricting the installation and use of solar panels in any covenant, declaration, bylaw, deed contract or other agreement. Under the bill, any regulations prohibiting solar installations would be deemed void and homeowners would have a civil cause of action if a violation occurred.



Sen. George Dungan

Homeowners, within reason, should be able to do what they wish with their property, Dungan said. LB1119 would not harm any person or entity, he said, but rather would allow landowners to improve their homes without infringement of their personal property rights.

Al Davis testified in support of the bill on behalf of the Nebraska chapter of the Sierra Club. Davis said solar energy has become more popular, affordable and durable in recent years, and tax credits have made installation lucrative for homeowners. He said there is no evidence that homes with solar panels lower the value of neighboring properties.

“Solar panels on a roof are not an eyesore but an adaptation to a new technology, which is helping our planet reduce the use of fossil fuels and should be encouraged rather than opposed by local and state governments,” Davis said.

Merlyn Bartels of Lincoln testified in opposition to LB1119. He expressed concern that installing solar panels on a home could increase costs for other association members who obtain insurance through their HOA.

LB886, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Danielle Conrad, would prohibit HOAs from banning political signs that promote candidates or ballot measures on homeowner property 90 days before or 10 days after an election.

Under the bill, HOAs could require that political signs be mounted to the ground, and homeowners could be limited to one sign for each candidate or ballot measure. LB886 would, however, allow HOAs to prohibit a variety of signs, including those with lights, sounds or other distractions, and those larger than 4 feet by 6 feet or that threaten public safety.

Conrad said she has heard numerous complaints during election seasons from individuals who were told by their HOA, or similar groups, that they couldn’t display political signs on their property.

LB886 would ensure the preservation of two “quintessential liberties,” she said — personal property rights and First Amendment rights.

Grant Friedman testified in support of the bill on behalf of ACLU Nebraska. The First Amendment prohibits the government from encroaching on a resident’s right to free speech, he said, which includes the right to speak about political and electoral issues.

“While private organizations like HOAs have the ability to regulate

private property within their associations, they cannot disregard the free speech rights of their residents,” Friedman said.

No one testified in opposition to LB886 and the committee took no immediate action on either proposal.

REVENUE

Income tax credit for family caregivers proposed

Nebraskans could claim a state income tax credit for certain expenses they incur when caring for a family member under a bill heard Jan. 25 by the Revenue Committee.

Under LB937, introduced by Sen. Eliot Bostar of Lincoln, a family caregiver would be eligible for a non-refundable income tax credit equal to 50% of expenses incurred that are directly related to the care for and support of an eligible family member. The credit would be available beginning with tax year 2025.



Sen. Eliot Bostar

The maximum credit for a single tax year would be \$2,000 or \$3,000 if the family member is a veteran or has dementia.

Bostar said the proposal recognizes the sacrifice made by the approximately 179,000 family caregivers in Nebraska who provide more than 168 million hours of unpaid care worth roughly \$2.8 billion annually. The average caregiver spends more than \$7,200 each year to care for a family member, he said.

“To successfully address the chal-

lenges of a surging population of older adults — as well as the hurdles associated with living with chronic conditions — we must develop methods to enable caregivers to continue to support their loved ones at home and in the community,” Bostar said.

Certain improvements to the family member’s primary residence, the purchase of durable medical equipment or the hiring of a home care aide would be among the expenditures eligible for the credit.

To qualify as an eligible family member, an individual would require assistance with at least two activities of daily living, live in a private residence and qualify as the caregiver’s dependent, spouse, parent or other relation by blood or marriage.

Only caregivers with a federal adjusted gross income of less than \$50,000, or \$100,000 if married filing jointly, could claim the credit.

The state Department of Revenue estimates that LB937 would reduce state general fund revenue by approximately \$37.1 million in fiscal year 2025-26, \$43.3 million in FY2026-27 and \$48.3 million in FY2027-28.

Suzan DeCamp testified in support of the bill on behalf of AARP Nebraska. She said caregivers are essential to the stability of Nebraska’s long-term care system because they allow many of the state’s older residents to remain in their homes instead of moving to expensive, taxpayer-funded assisted living and nursing facilities.

“Caregivers have saved and continue to save the state of Nebraska millions of dollars while bearing some financial risk, taking on increasingly complex tasks and having to balance their caregiving and work responsibilities,” DeCamp said.

Sarah Rasby also testified in support of LB937 on behalf of AARP Nebraska. Rasby said she left her job to provide

full-time care for her twin sister, who suffered a severe brain injury. The proposed credit would have helped her cover those expenses, she said.

“My family suffered significantly because we lost all of our income,” Rasby said. “We’re still trying to recover from all of that.”

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

Immediate deduction of equipment, R&D expenses considered

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Jan. 25 on a proposal intended to incentivize Nebraska businesses to invest in new equipment and technology.

Elkhorn Sen. R. Brad von Gillern, sponsor of LB1023, said the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act enacted by Congress allowed businesses to fully and immediately deduct expenses for certain business machinery and equipment, as well as research or experimental expenditures. Those two tax breaks have since expired, he said, requiring businesses to deduct their expenditures over a period of several years.



Sen. R. Brad von Gillern

LB1023 would decouple Nebraska’s tax code from both federal provisions, reinstating the immediate deductions for state income tax purposes.

Allowing Nebraska businesses to keep more of their money up front would allow them to reinvest it in their operations, benefiting local economies, von Gillern said.

“Anything we can do to help business entities keep Nebraska competitive and encourage research and devel-

opment is a win for our state,” he said.

The state Department of Revenue estimates that the bill would reduce state general fund revenue by \$28.6 million in fiscal year 2025-26, \$44.6 million in FY26-27 and \$53.5 million in FY27-28.

Bryan Slone testified in support of LB1023 on behalf of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Greater Omaha Chamber and the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. He said the proposal is “urgent” at a time when technology is becoming more integral to each of Nebraska’s core industries.

Slone said the state’s software companies were especially hard hit by the recent federal change requiring them to amortize their expenses over five years rather than fully deduct them in the current year.

“Should Congress take action on this, [LB1023] would not be required,” he said, “but we simply cannot wait.”

Dawn Caldwell testified in support of the bill on behalf of Renewable Fuels Nebraska, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and the Nebraska Soybean Association. She said LB1023 would make the state more attractive to companies that are deciding where to invest capital and help Nebraska businesses upgrade their facilities.

“Nebraska’s ethanol ... soybean crush and renewable fuels plants are all continually analyzing options for efficiency, value-added products, carbon capture and more,” Caldwell said. “This bill will be crucial to executing projects that are currently just possibilities.”

No one testified in opposition to LB1023 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Municipal infrastructure aid proposal advanced

Senators gave first-round approval Jan. 23 to a new program that would help certain Nebraska cities pay for infrastructure improvements needed to attract manufacturers and other companies.

As introduced by Sen. Loren Lippincott of Central City last session, LB600 would have allowed an existing state Department of Transportation program to finance certain infrastructure improvements in first or second class cities or villages.



Sen. Loren Lippincott

A Transportation and Telecommunications Committee amendment, adopted 42-0, replaced the bill.

Under the new proposal, which would create the Municipality Infrastructure Aid Act, first or second class cities or villages with a redevelopment plan approved under the Community Development Law could apply to the state Department of Economic Development for a grant to finance water and sewer systems, roads, bridges and other infrastructure related to site development.

Lippincott said LB600 would help Nebraska communities prepare large, construction-ready sites for manufacturing, processing, trade and other businesses. Development of one such site on the outskirts of Grand Island would be a “huge economic driver for central Nebraska,” he said.

In its application, a city or village would have to describe how the pro-

posed improvements would attract and support any new business or business expansion and how that activity would create additional jobs in or near the city or village, among other information.

Applications also would include a cost-benefit analysis of the redevelopment plan. Only applications with a positive analysis would be eligible for a grant.

Grants would be limited to \$5 million per application, and grantees would have to provide matching funds equal to at least 25 percent of the amount of the grant.

Sen. Raymond Aguilar of Grand Island supported the bill. He said the proposal could help Grand Island take advantage of Union Pacific and BNSF rail lines that run through the city, reducing truck traffic and saving central Nebraska businesses millions of dollars in transportation expenses.

Elmwood Sen. Robert Clements, chairperson of the Appropriations Committee, also voted to advance LB600 to the second round of debate but said he does not support the proposed transfer of \$10 million from the state's Cash Reserve Fund to the new program. Those funds might not be available by the end of the legislative session, he said.

Following the 40-0 adoption of a technical amendment offered by Sen. Mike Moser of Columbus, the bill advanced to select file on a vote of 41-0.

Interoperability of 911, mental health hotline discussed

Callers to Nebraska's 911 service system could be connected to the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline and vice versa under a bill heard Jan. 22 by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

Under LB929, introduced by Omaha Sen. John Fredrickson, the state Department of Health and Human Services would oversee administration of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline in Nebraska. The service currently connects callers who are experiencing mental-health related distress with mental health care professionals at Boys Town in Omaha.



Sen. John Fredrickson

The bill would require the department to coordinate with the Nebraska Public Service Commission to ensure that 988 has the capability to connect callers to, and receive communications from, the 911 service system. The commission would adopt statewide standards providing for that dual capability so that it would be operational by Jan. 1, 2025.

Despite the existence of 988, Fredrickson said, the 911 system still receives many calls from Nebraskans experiencing mental health crises. He said LB929 would allow 911 dispatchers to transfer those callers to counselors at 988, alleviating stress on law enforcement officers who otherwise would have responded.

"For 988 to fulfill its purpose," Fredrickson said, "we need the systems to work collaboratively."

Matthew Harwell, public safety dispatch supervisor at the Lincoln Emergency Communications Center, testified in support of the bill. He said 911 dispatchers are "ill equipped" to help callers experiencing a mental health crisis and that collaborating with the 988 lifeline would empower dispatchers to connect callers to the appropriate services.

"However, this is only possible with the dual capabilities that this bill is putting into place," Harwell said.

Dan Watermeier gave neutral testimony on behalf of the Public Service Commission. The commission supports establishing standards coordinating the 911 and 988 systems, he said, although some technical challenges exist.

Current differences between the systems prevent an automatic, direct transfer of callers, Watermeier said, necessitating a "warm transfer" in which the operator of one system brings an operator of the other system on the line before transferring the call.

No one testified in opposition to LB929 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

URBAN AFFAIRS

Local anti-poverty plans proposed

Certain Nebraska cities would be required to create detailed poverty elimination plans in the state's poorest communities under a proposal heard Jan. 23 by the Urban Affairs Committee.

LB840, introduced by Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney, would create the Poverty Elimination Action Plan Act.



Sen. Terrell McKinney

Beginning in July 2025, the act would require Nebraska cities with a population of at least 50,000 to adopt a five-year poverty elimination action plan, reevaluate the plan every two years and update it every five. Cities would submit the plans to the committee and the Clerk of the Legislature.

Each city's plan would outline its goals for eliminating poverty in

current high-poverty areas, qualified census tracts and economic redevelopment areas and describe its planned use of federal, state and local incentives to reach that goal.

McKinney said anti-poverty efforts by cities and nonprofits, particularly in his North Omaha district, often are “siloeed” and not effectively implemented. Although the proposed plans would not in themselves eliminate poverty in Nebraska, he said, they would serve as a “crucial starting point” for taking action to address poverty’s complex underlying causes.

In addition to the plans, LB840 would require metropolitan class, primary class and first class cities with a population of at least 20,000 to submit a report to the committee every other

year describing their efforts to eliminate poverty.

Reports would contain more than a dozen key components, including a comprehensive needs assessment, education and job training and affordable housing. The committee could request any city to present its report at a public hearing.

Tina Rockenbach testified in support of the bill on behalf of Community Action of Nebraska, saying it could address the silo effect McKinney referred to. When drawing up their plans, cities could partner with community action agencies and other nonprofits across the state that already are working to eliminate poverty, she added.

“I would hate to see a city do this from scratch ... when so many of us

have already done it – are doing it,” Rockenbach said.

Testifying in opposition to LB840 was Blair MacDonald on behalf of an association representing mid-sized Nebraska cities including Grand Island, Hastings and Kearney. The association supports the goal of eliminating poverty, she said, but its member cities lack the resources, staff and expertise to meet the bill’s requirements.

McKinney’s proposal would provide no state funding to help cities create the proposed plans, MacDonald said.

“While the concept is both worthwhile and noble,” she said, “it would be incredibly costly and difficult to implement.”

The committee took no immediate action on LB840. ■

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The Unicameral Update print edition is mailed weekly, while the online version, located at Update.Legislature.ne.gov, is updated throughout each legislative day.

The site provides links to the Update’s social media feeds. Readers may search Update stories by bill number, senator’s name or keyword using the search box provided in the top-right corner.

The screenshot shows the website header with the title "UNICAMERAL UPDATE" and the tagline "The Nebraska Legislature's official news source since 1977". A navigation bar includes links for "ABOUT", "COMMITTEES", "FEATURES", "PRINT ARCHIVE", "SUBSCRIPTIONS", and "SESSION REVIEW 2023". The main content area features a large image of a legislative session with the headline "Case transfer protections for juveniles advanced" and a sub-headline "JUDICIARY". Below the headline is the text "January 26, 2024 Sen. John Cavanaugh, LB184 Edit". To the right of the main article is a search bar and a "Most read" section listing several articles, followed by a "Resources" section with links to various legislative documents and schedules.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Tuesday, Jan. 30

Agriculture

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

LB828 (Blood) Change provisions of the Nebraska Apiary Act and provide for the Pollinator Task Force, the Nebraska Apiary Registry, and immunity for certain damages relating to bees

LB831 (Blood) Change provisions of the Noxious Weed Control Act and provide for control of restricted plants

LB1116 (Ibach) Adopt the Grocer Reinvestment Option Act

LB1142 (Wayne) Require and restrict certain actions of any animal control facility, animal rescue, animal shelter, or rabies control authority

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1412 (Speaker Arch) Provide, change, and eliminate appropriations for operation of state government, postsecondary education, state aid, capital construction, and federal funds allocated to the State of Nebraska from the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

LB1413 (Speaker Arch) Transfer and provide for the transfer of funds and create and change the use and distribution of funds

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: KC Belitz - Dept. of Economic Development

LB1074 (Slama) Adopt changes to federal law regarding banking and finance and change provisions of the Commodity Code, the Credit Union Act, and the Securities Act of Nebraska

LB1075 (Slama) Change provisions of the Delayed Deposit Services Licensing Act, the Nebraska Installment Loan Act, the Nebraska Installment Sales Act, the Nebraska Money Transmitters Act, and the Residential Mortgage Licensing Act

LB991 (Bostar) Adopt the Blockchain Basics Act

LB955 (Bostar) Require business entities to provide certain notice

to purchasers of gift certificates and gift cards

LB1294 (Bostar) Adopt the Data Privacy Act, change provisions relating to certain certificates and information relating to vital records, and provide for certain records to be exempt from public disclosure

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB878 (Holdcroft) Change provisions regarding certain bond and related elections

LB1259 (Meyer) Provide for grants and bonuses for teachers as prescribed and require the State Department of Education to develop and administer a Classroom Improvement Program

LB1263 (Wishart) Provide scholarships to students enrolled in trade programs

LB1386 (Hansen) Establish an educational savings account for each student enrolled in an approved or accredited private, denominational, or parochial school for qualified educational expenses as prescribed

LB1306 (Education) Eliminate the Professional Practices Commission and provide, change, and eliminate provisions relating to standards for and conduct of teachers and administrators

LB1081 (Conrad) Require school districts to comply with student-teacher ratios in certain classrooms

LB1230 (Wayne) Change provisions relating to the applicability of the enrollment option program for any student who enrolls in another school district within the same city as the school district in which such student resides

LB1329 (Murman) Change provisions of the Nebraska Career Scholarship Act

LB1328 (Murman) Change provisions relating to the classification of school districts

LB1331 (Murman) Change provisions related to truancy and attendance and various programs administered by the State Department of Education

LB1005 (Walz) Change provisions relating to the Attracting Excellence in Teaching Program and the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund under the Excellence in Teaching Act

LB1160 (Walz) Change provisions relating to the Attracting Excellence to Teaching Program and the Excellence in Teaching Cash Fund

LB1377 (Walz) Change requirements relating to training for certain school employees

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointments: Greg Wolford, David Copple, James Kindig, Richard W. Meginnis - State Highway Commission

LB1200 (Moser) Adopt updates to federal law relating to motor vehicles and motor carriers and change provisions relating to the Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title Act, the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act, the Motor Vehicle Registration Act, and the Nebraska Rules of the Road

LB1108 (Dorn) Change a fee under the Motor Vehicle Registration Act

LB1249 (J. Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to kit vehicles under the Motor Vehicle Certificate of Title Act

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB948 (McDonnell) Provide certain requirements for redevelopment contracts under the Community Development Law

LB1165 (Lowe) Provide requirements for zoning regulations and duplex housing

LB1166 (Lowe) Provide requirements for zoning regulations and accessory dwelling units

LB842 (McKinney) Change provisions relating to affordable housing under the Municipal Density and Missing Middle Housing Act, the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act, and the Nebraska Housing Agency Act

Wednesday, Jan. 31

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

Agency 11: Attorney General

Agency 14: Public Service Commission

Agency 41: State Real Estate Commission

Agency 54: Neb. State Historical Society

Agency 58: Board of Engineers and Architects

LB1077 (McDonnell) Appropriate funds

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

to the Department of Labor to provide grants for facility expansion relating to workforce development and career readiness programs
 LB1226 (Clements) Appropriate funds to the Legislative Council

**Executive Board
 Room 2102 - 12:00 p.m.**

LB1286 (Walz) Provide for an assessment of economic impact by the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
 LB1104 (Aguilar) Change fees for lobbyist registration and change distribution of such fees

**Government, Military & Veterans Affairs
 Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB861 (Linehan) Change procedures to remove a name from a petition under the Election Act
 LB1070 (Bostar) Change closing dates and filing deadlines for campaign statements of ballot question committees
 LB1068 (Brewer) Change provisions relating to the appointment, certification, and convening of presidential electors (*Note: LB1068 will be a combined hearing with LB1152*)
 LB1152 (Brewer) Change provisions relating to elections, motor vehicle operators' licenses, and state identification cards (*Note: LB1152 will be a combined hearing with LB1068*)

**Health & Human Services
 Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB1035 (Hughes) Adopt the Prescription Drug Donation Act
 LB1060 (Hansen) Provide an exemption from newborn screening
 LB1171 (Hardin) Change verification requirements for pharmacy technicians
 LB1196 (Ballard) Change provisions relating to registration of medication aides
 LB1215 (Hansen) Change provisions relating to credentialing fees, communicable diseases, rehabilitation beds, and acute care beds

**Judiciary
 Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB846 (Hunt) Adopt the Bed Bug Detection and Treatment Act

LB845 (Hunt) Prohibit eviction of certain tenants during the school year
 LB1115 (Dungan) Provide a right to a trial by jury under the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act
 LB1312 (Dover) Provide for electronic notices by landlords under the Uniform Residential Landlord and Tenant Act and the Mobile Home Landlord and Tenant Act
 LB884 (Bostar) Change provisions relating to medicaid estate recovery
 LB902 (DeBoer) Prohibit assisted-living facilities from requiring a third-party guarantee of payment
 LB1168 (DeBoer) Adopt the Uniform Health-Care Decisions Act

**Natural Resources
 Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB971 (Lippincott) Provide for a free hunting permit for veterans to hunt on Veterans (Day)
 LB867 (Bostelman) Provide for a voluntary hunting and fishing guide and outfitter database
 LB1406 (Sanders) Provide for an active-duty military permit for state park entry

**Revenue
 Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB1113 (Meyer) Change provisions relating to the types of property receiving a property tax exemption under the Imagine Nebraska Act
 LB1049 (Bostar) Change the amount authorized for the municipal occupation tax on telecommunications companies
 LB1316 (Linehan) Eliminate provisions relating to the base growth percentage for school districts under the School District Property Tax Limitation Act
 LB1397 (Murman) Redefine agricultural land and horticultural land for property tax purposes
 LB1318 (Linehan) Change the Nebraska Property Tax Incentive Act and change provisions relating to certain transfers to the Cash Reserve Fund
 LB1241 (von Gillern) Change provisions relating to property tax levy limits

**Thursday, Feb. 1
 Appropriations**

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.
 Agency 16: Dept. of Revenue
 Agency 82: Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 Agency 83: Community College Aid
 Agency 85: Public Employees Retirement Board
 LB930 (Fredrickson) Change provisions relating to appropriations to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska
 LB1242 (McDonnell) State intent to appropriate funds to the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska

**Executive Board
 Room 2102 - 12:00 p.m.**

LB1240 (Wayne) Provide a requirement for state officials and state employees testifying before the Legislature
 LB1020 (M. Cavanaugh) Require public contractors to provide records to members of the Legislature

**Government, Military & Veterans Affairs
 Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB925 (Aguilar) Adopt the Firearm Industry Nondiscrimination Act
 LB1169 (Erdman) Provide, change, and eliminate provisions relating to the Nebraska State Historical Society
 LB887 (Brewer) Adopt the Nebraska Nonprofit Security Grant Program Act

**Health & Human Services
 Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB905 (Riepe) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a waiver or state plan amendment for medical respite care
 LB910 (Riepe) Authorize emergency care providers to provide care to injured law enforcement canines
 LB952 (Day) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to implement the federal Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer Program
 LB1172 (von Gillern) Change provisions relating to access to health data in certain registries and databases for research purposes
 LB1214 (Health & Human Services) Change provisions relating to a criminal background check for cer-

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

tain professions under the Uniform Credentialing Act

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1288 (Raybould) Provide for recognition of tribal mental health and dangerous sex offender commitment orders and for transportation of and commitment of persons civilly committed under tribal law

LB972 (Lippincott) Prohibit kratom as a controlled substance

LB892 (Bosn) Change provisions relating to controlled substances under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act

LB999 (Ibach) Change provisions of the Nebraska Hemp Farming Act and the Uniform Controlled Substances Act (*Rescheduled. Note: This hearing will operate under Annotated Committee Guidelines.*)

LB1167 (DeBoer) Provide a deadline for arraignment of individuals arrested without a warrant

LB1044 (McKinney) Create a task force to study reparations for slavery and change permitted uses of a tax imposed on marijuana

Natural Resources

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1199 (Moser) Repeal provisions relating to certain administrative fees imposed by the Department of Natural Resources

LB1370 (Bostelman) Provide requirements for retirement of a dispatchable electric generation facility by an electric supplier

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1525 - 12:00 p.m.

Appointment: Gail Werner-Robertson - Neb. Investment Council

Appointment: John Murante - Neb. Public Employees Retirement Systems (*Note: Director of NPEERS*)

Appointments: Charles Neumann, Gerald Clausen, Luke H. Splattstoesser - Public Employees Retirement Board

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1248 (Kauth) Eliminate certain sales and use tax exemptions

LB1310 (Albrecht) Adopt the Advertising Services Tax Act and eliminate certain sales and use tax exemptions

LB1354 (Albrecht) Adopt the Advertising Services Tax Act

LB1311 (Meyer) Eliminate certain sales and use tax exemptions and impose sales and use taxes on certain services

LB1349 (Murman) Eliminate certain sales and use tax exemptions and impose sales and use taxes on certain services

LB1308 (von Gillern) Eliminate certain sales and use tax exemptions and impose sales and use taxes on certain services

LB1319 (Linehan) Eliminate a sales and use tax exemption relating to data centers

LB1345 (Wayne) Impose sales and use taxes on certain services

LB1356 (Wayne) Change provisions relating to the Community Development Assistance Act and provide tax credits

LB1317 (Linehan) State findings relating to property taxes

Friday, Feb. 2

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

Agency 18: Dept. of Agriculture

LB1179 (Wishart) Appropriate funds to the Department of Natural Resources

LB1131 (Raybould) Appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for grants for tribal-owned community drinking water and sewer systems

LB1234 (Wayne) Appropriate funds to the Department of Environment and Energy

LB1245 (McDonnell) Change provisions relating to the Lead Service Line Cash Fund and provide for grants

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1018 (Holdcroft) Provide that positions of public employment shall not require a postsecondary degree and require equal consideration for non-degree-holders' wages and benefits

LB1174 (Hansen) Change provisions relating to section lines and vacation or abandonment of public roads

LB1082 (Conrad) Require coverage for

in vitro fertilization for state employees under the Nebraska State Insurance Program

LB1162 (Lowe) Change provisions relating to reimbursement for mileage for sheriffs and constables

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB913 (Hunt) Require a state plan amendment for postpartum coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program

LB1003 (Hansen) Change a requirement relating to child care licensing in cities, villages, or counties

LB1087 (Jacobson) Adopt the Hospital Quality Assurance and Access Assessment Act

LB1187 (Hardin) Allow registered nurses to perform auricular acupuncture as prescribed

Judiciary

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1366 (J. Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to the use of eminent domain

LB1267 (Conrad) Adopt the Uniform Public Expression Protection Act and eliminate provisions relating to actions involving public petition and participation

LB1192 (Conrad) Change provisions of the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act and the State Tort Claims Act to allow certain claims by prisoners, detainees, and children in the custody, care, or control of a government entity

LB1292 (Conrad) Change provisions relating to standing to file a petition for a declaratory judgment

LB1265 (Conrad) Change provisions relating to grants for providers of free civil legal services

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1394 (Brewer) Exempt Nebraska National Guard income from state income taxation

LB1400 (Ballard) Adopt the Relocation Incentive Act and provide tax incentives

LB1410 (Linehan) Change provisions relating to tax incentives under the ImagiNE Nebraska Act

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

LB1414 (Linehan) Adopt the Property Tax Growth Limitation Act and change provisions relating to budget limitations
 LB1415 (Dover) Adopt the Property Tax Relief Act and change the Nebraska Property Tax Incentive Act

Monday, Feb. 5

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

Agency 65: Dept. of Administrative Services

Agency 91: Neb. Tourism Commission

LB1090 (Ballard) Appropriate funds to the Department of Administrative Services for the Nebraska Public Safety Communication System
 LB1210 (Clements) State legislative intent to appropriate funds to the Department of Administrative Services and provide for a transfer from the Cash Reserve Fund
 LB1275 (Brewer) Appropriate funds to the Department of Administrative Services
 LB1378 (Dover) State legislative intent to appropriate funds to the Department of Administrative Services as prescribed and change provisions relating to certain funds
 LB1380 (Dover) State intent to appropriate funds for Wyuka Cemetery and provide for a transfer from the Cash Reserve Fund

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1122 (Ballard) Change enforcement provisions relating to written solicitations for financial products or services
 LB1227 (Ballard) Change provisions of the Professional Employer Organization Registration Act
 LB1176 (Dungan) Adopt the Public Entities Pooled Investment Act
 LB1332 (Dungan) Adopt the Prepaid Card Consumer Protection Act
 LB1395 (Murman) Adopt the Natural Asset Company Prohibition Act
 LB872 (Clements) Prohibit acceptance of central bank digital currency by state and local governments

Business & Labor

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

LB961 (Dungan) Prohibit noncompet

agreements for lower-wage employees
 LB1213 (Walz) Require employers to provide twenty hours of paid leave per year for schoolrelated activities
 LB1139 (M. Cavanaugh) Adopt the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act
 LB1170 (Riepe) Change provisions of the Employment Security Law relating to benefit amounts and periods of disqualification for benefits

General Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1204 (J. Cavanaugh) Define rickhouse and authorize a holder of a manufacturer's license or microdistillery license to operate a rickhouse under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
 LB875 (Hughes) Prohibit sales of alcohol or beer for consumption off the premises at less than cost under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
 LB1276 (Brewer) Change provisions relating to issuance of certain liquor licenses in a city of the second class or village under the Nebraska Liquor Control Act
 LB1296 (Hughes) Change provisions relating to electronic nicotine delivery systems and tobacco products and provide for a directory of manufacturers of such systems
 LB838 (Lowe) Change provisions relating to the appointment of members of the Nebraska Arts Council

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointment: Heath Mello - State Highway Commission
 LB1030 (Bostelman) Change provisions of the County Bridge Match Program and provide for a transfer of funds from the Roads Operations Cash Fund
 LB1127 (Bosn) Provide a requirement for personal vehicles used for purposes of transportation network companies
 LB1163 (Lowe) Authorize the operation of all-terrain vehicles and utility-type vehicles between the hours of sunset and sunrise if used for snow removal as prescribed
 LB1250 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide for grants for bike-sharing programs

Tuesday, Feb. 6

Agriculture

Room 2102 - 1:30 p.m.

LB844 (Erdman) Change provisions of the Farm Labor Contractors Act
 LB1061 (Ibach) Change provisions of the Nebraska Corn Resources Act
 LB1301 (DeKay) Adopt the Foreign-owned Real Estate National Security Act

Appropriations

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

Agency 13: Dept. of Education

LB858 (Linehan) State intent to appropriate funds to the State Department of Education to expand the office of finance and administrative services
 LB1008 (Walz) Appropriate funds to the State Department of Education
 LB1402 (Linehan) Appropriate funds to the State Treasurer for the purpose of providing grants to scholarship-granting organizations

Banking, Commerce & Insurance

Room 1507 - 1:30 p.m.

LB1416 (Bostar) Adopt the Child Care Capacity Building and Workforce Act
 LB1229 (Wayne) Transfer duties related to housing from the Department of Economic Development to the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and change and provide powers and duties for the authority
 LB1132 (Lippincott) Change motor vehicle liability insurance and financial responsibility requirements
 LB1147 (Bostar) Provide requirements for separate investment accounts holding assets of index-linked variable annuity contracts
 LB849 (Jacobson) Change provisions relating to insurance rate adjustments

Transportation & Telecommunications

Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

LB965 (Holdcroft) Change provisions relating to certain license plates issued to persons with military affiliation as prescribed
 LB1129 (Raybould) Provide for autism acceptance license plates and change provisions relating to license plates and the Autism Treatment Program Cash Fund

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

LB1298 (Lippincott) Provide for the issuance of veteran, honorary, and distinctive licenses under the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act

Urban Affairs

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1314 (McKinney) Provide for grants under the Municipal Inland Port Authority Act and change the distribution of certain interest earnings
- LB1344 (Wayne) Change provisions of the Nebraska Innovation Hub Act
- LB1046 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide for appointment of counsel for terminating hearings and eviction proceedings under the Nebraska Housing Agency Act
- LB1384 (Raybould) Provide for grants to cities and villages from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Wednesday, Feb. 7

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

- Agency 24: Dept. of Motor Vehicles
- Agency 33: Game & Parks Commission
- Agency 31: Military Department
- LB1233 (Wayne) Change appropriations and contract provisions regarding a museum and visitor center honoring Chief Standing Bear
- LB1239 (Wayne) Appropriate funds to the Game and Parks Commission for the Mayhew Cabin site
- LB1289 (Bostar) State legislative intent to appropriate funds to the Adjutant General and provide for a transfer from the Cash Reserve Fund
- LB1407 (Sanders) Rename and change provisions relating to the Military Base Development and Support Fund

Thursday, Feb. 8

Appropriations

Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

- Agency 5: Supreme Court
- Agency 64: State Patrol
- Agency 78: Neb. Commission on Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice
- Agency 94: Commission on Public Advocacy
- LB864 (Dungan) State intent regarding appropriations to the Supreme Court for interpreter services
- LB1225 (McKinney) Appropriate funds to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

Natural Resources

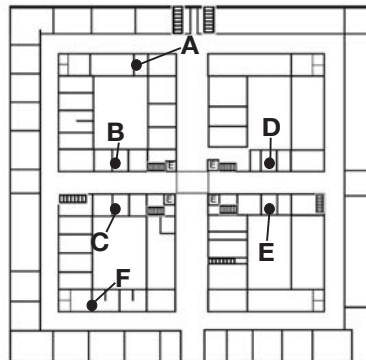
Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

Appointments: Jan K. tenBensel, Tracy Zink - Neb. Ethanol Board ■

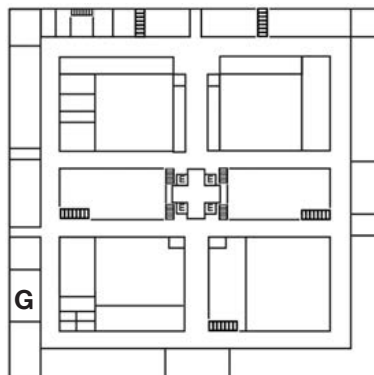
HEARING ROOMS

Hearing Room	Committee	Meeting Days
2102 (G)	Agriculture	Tu
1524 (B)	Appropriations	M, Tu
1003 (A)	Appropriations	W, Th, F
1507 (E)	Banking, Commerce & Insurance	M, Tu
2102 (G)	Business & Labor	M
1525 (C)	Education	M, Tu
1510 (D)	General Affairs	M
1507 (E)	Government, Military & Veterans Affairs	W, Th, F
1510 (D)	Health & Human Services	W, Th, F
1113 (F)	Judiciary	W, Th, F
1525 (C)	Natural Resources	W, Th, F
1525 (C)	Nebraska Retirement Systems	(Meets at noon as scheduled)
1524 (B)	Revenue	W, Th, F
1113 (F)	Transportation & Telecommunications	M, Tu
1510 (D)	Urban Affairs	Tu

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



2024 Legislative Session*

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
January						
	1	2	3 DAY 1	4 DAY 2	5 DAY 3	6
7	8 DAY 4	9 DAY 5	10 DAY 6	11 DAY 7	12 DAY 8	13
14	15 HOLIDAY	16 DAY 9	17 DAY 10	18 DAY 11	19 DAY 12	20
21	22 DAY 13	23 DAY 14	24 DAY 15	25 DAY 16	26 DAY 17	27
28	29 RECESS	30 DAY 18	31 DAY 19			

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
February						
				1 DAY 20	2 DAY 21	3
4	5 DAY 22	6 DAY 23	7 DAY 24	8 DAY 25	9 RECESS	10
11	12 DAY 26	13 DAY 27	14 DAY 28	15 DAY 29	16 RECESS	17
18	19 HOLIDAY	20 DAY 30	21 DAY 31	22 DAY 32	23 DAY 33	24
25	26 RECESS	27 DAY 34	28 DAY 35	29 DAY 36		

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
March						
					1 RECESS	2
3	4 DAY 37	5 DAY 38	6 DAY 39	7 DAY 40	8 RECESS	9
10	11 RECESS	12 DAY 41	13 DAY 42	14 DAY 43	15 DAY 44	16
17	18 DAY 45	19 DAY 46	20 DAY 47	21 DAY 48	22 RECESS	23
24	25 DAY 49	26 DAY 50	27 DAY 51	28 DAY 52	29 RECESS	30
31						

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
April						
	1 RECESS	2 DAY 53	3 DAY 54	4 DAY 55	5 DAY 56	6
7	8 RECESS	9 DAY 57	10 DAY 58	11 DAY 59	12 RECESS	13
14	15 RECESS	16 RECESS	17 RECESS	18 DAY 60		20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Federal & State Holidays

January 15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 February 19 – Presidents' Day

Legislative Recess Days

January 29
 February 9, 16, 26
 March 1, 8, 11, 22, 29
 April 1, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17

*The Speaker reserves the right to revise the session calendar.

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Senators escort Chief Justice Michael Heavican and members of the Nebraska Supreme Court to the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber for Heavican's State of the Judiciary address Jan. 25.