

Controlled substance cleanup bill amended to add fentanyl enhancement, advanced

After four hours of second-round debate, lawmakers advanced a cleanup bill to final reading Feb. 19 after amending it to provide a penalty enhancement for certain offenses involving fentanyl.

LB795, as introduced by Sen. Barry DeKay of Niobrara, would make a number of technical changes to the state's Uniform Controlled Substances Act, including correcting the spelling in statute of three chemicals. It also would designate bromazepam as a Schedule 1 controlled substance under the act.

DeKay said bromazepam, a designer drug, has been designated as a Schedule 1 controlled substance by six states and that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is in the process of doing the same at the federal level.

During select file debate Feb. 17, Whitman Sen. Tanya Storer offered an amendment to add provisions of her LB817 to the measure.

As introduced last session, the provisions would amend the Uniform Controlled Substances Act to add fentanyl to the list of controlled



From left: Sens. Carolyn Bosn, Tanya Storer and Barry DeKay confer during select file debate on LB795.

substances that if knowingly or intentionally manufactured, distributed, delivered, dispensed or possessed with the intent to distribute — either by itself, or in a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl — would be a violation subject to penalty depending on the quantity.

Under the proposal:

- 140 grams would be a Class IB felony;
- at least 28 grams but less than 140 grams would be a Class IC felony; and
- at least 10 grams but less than 28 grams would be a Class ID felony.

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Exception for suspension of young students amended, advanced to final round

A bill that would allow Nebraska schools to suspend pre-K through second-grade students in certain cases advanced to final reading Feb. 17 after lawmakers adopted an amendment clarifying parental involvement and written notification requirements.

LB653, sponsored by Glenvil Sen. Dave Murman, also would require option school districts not in a learning community to automatically accept siblings of currently enrolled option students with Individualized Education Programs.



Sen. Dave Murman

The proposal, which was introduced last session, was amended during first-round debate to remove several other provisions related to option enrollment and to add provisions from Murman's LB430. Those provisions would partially repeal a 2023 law banning suspension or expulsion of pre-K through second-grade students by allowing an exception for students who engage in physical violence that harms others.

As amended, LB653 also would require schools to provide parents written notice when a child is suspended, including available resources, steps taken to address the behavior and strategies to keep the student in school.

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Controlled substance cleanup bill amended to add fentanyl enhancement, advanced

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A Class IB felony is punishable by a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison up to a maximum of life imprisonment.

Storer said the measure simply would bring penalties for those who traffic fentanyl in line with existing penalties for similar substances.

“It is updating our ... laws to treat fentanyl trafficking and distribution with the same clear, proportional and consistent penalty structure that we already apply to methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine,” she said.

Fentanyl is more deadly than any of those drugs, Storer said, but Nebraska law currently does not have a penalty enhancement for trafficking-level weights.

Sen. Carolyn Bosn of Lincoln agreed that fentanyl is an “exceptionally dangerous” drug that should be treated as such.

“Essentially, two granules of sugar is what is an amount of fentanyl that will kill you,” Bosn said. “Two granules of sugar is the equivalent of a death

sentence when it comes to fentanyl.”

Hastings Sen. Brian Hardin said the proposal would target those who traffic in fentanyl, not simply those who are in possession of amounts meant for personal use.

“These quantities reflect trafficking – distribution at a scale that endangers entire communities,” he said. “By aligning penalties with the amount involved, the [bill] targets those who profit from this poison, not those struggling with addiction.”

Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney objected to the inclusion of Storer’s amendment and offered a series of unsuccessful motions to extend debate on the proposal. He said penalty enhancements would only add to the state’s prison overcrowding problem and end up costing taxpayers more money.

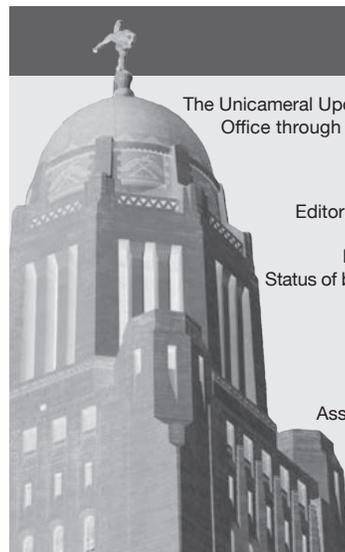
“[The] solution to decreasing crime ... is not more felonies, it’s helping people,” McKinney said. “It’s making sure people have a bite to eat, making sure people have lights on at home [and] making sure they have good jobs.”

Speaking in support of a motion from McKinney to bracket LB795, Lincoln Sen. George Dungan said he objected to the inclusion of a new penalty that could result in a life sentence. He said Nebraska lawmakers continue to “double down” on penalty enhancements in defiance of national trends.

Many states have started to focus on the root causes of substance use and abuse, Dungan said, calling this a smarter way to reduce prison overcrowding and promote safer communities.

After four hours of debate over three days, DeKay offered a motion Feb. 19 to invoke cloture, which ceases debate and forces a vote on the bill and any pending amendments. The motion succeeded on a 35-13 vote.

Lawmakers then adopted Storer’s amendment 36-13 and advanced LB795 to final reading on a vote of 35-14. ■



UNICAMERAL UPDATE

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Exception for suspension of young students amended, advanced to final round

(continued from front page)

During select file debate Feb. 12, Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney offered an amendment that would define chronic disruptive and violent behavior as grounds for suspension, but also would allow elementary schools to use “purposeful inschool suspension” for those students.

The amendment defines such suspension as a short-term, structured intervention emphasizing instruction, behavioral support and quick reintegration into the classroom.

McKinney said the amendment would require supportive interventions for students such as written parental notification, individualized behavior plans and referrals for assessment if a student’s behavior indicates a possible disability.

Sen. Ashlei Spivey of Omaha offered an amendment to McKinney’s amendment that would add a requirement for school districts to compile and publish on their websites an annual report on suspension data consisting of:

- the number of K-12 students suspended during the prior calendar year;
- aggregate data on the infractions causing suspensions; and
- data on suspensions disaggregated by demographics.

Spivey said the amendment wouldn’t create new expenses or requirements for districts, which already collect the data, but would increase transparency and help prevent disproportionate impacts of suspensions on students of color.

Seward Sen. Jana Hughes opposed both amendments, saying teachers and districts need to focus on preserving

the classroom environment for the other students who are trying to learn, rather than focusing all their energy on one disruptive student.

Sen. Kathleen Kauth of Omaha raised similar concerns.

“We have to be willing to say, ‘If you are the one who is creating the problem, you’re the one who has the consequences,’” Kauth said. “We cannot keep punishing and holding hostage all the other children in the classroom because of one student’s bad behavior.”

Both amendments failed on 16-29 votes. Twenty-five votes were needed. Lawmakers adjourned for the week before taking a vote on advancement of the underlying bill.

When debate resumed Feb. 17, Lincoln Sen. George Dungan offered what he characterized as a compromise amendment, developed in consultation with Murman. The amendment would specify that a meeting involving the parent, guardian or educational decisionmaker must be held following a suspension and would allow such a meeting to be requested if it does not occur.

The amendment also would require written notice of the charges leading to a suspension.

Following the 36-0 adoption of Dungan’s amendment, senators advanced LB653 to final reading on a vote of 28-7. ■

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February 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
01	02 Day 18 109th Leg. 2nd Session 7 Hearings	03 Day 19 109th Leg. 2nd Session 6 Hearings	04 Day 20 109th Leg. 2nd Session 7 Hearings	05 Day 21 109th Leg. 2nd Session 7 Hearings	06 Day 22 109th Leg. 2nd Session 6 Hearings	07
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PRIORITY BILLS

Priority bills generally are scheduled for debate ahead of other bills. Each senator may select one priority bill, each standing committee may select two priority bills and the Speaker of the Legislature may select 25 bills.

SENATOR PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	One-line description
Andersen	LR292CA	Andersen	Constitutional amendment to provide a new method of valuing real property for property tax purposes, provide a limit on property tax increases, provide certain exceptions, provide requirements for declared emergencies, provide for emergency bond levies, and eliminate conflicting constitutional provisions
Arch	LB1087	Arch	Create the Nebraska-Ireland Commission
Armendariz	LB1089	Hughes	Change enforcement provisions of the Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act
Ballard	LB997	Andersen	Change provisions relating to emergency contracts in the State Procurement Act
Bosn	LB1059	Bosn	Prohibit certain conduct relating to mobile tracking devices and change penalties for stalking
Bostar	LB1096	Bostar	Adopt the Preventing Lethal Agricultural and National Threats Act and the Critical Infrastructure Protection Act, authorize the withholding of records relating to critical water infrastructure, and provide civil and criminal penalties
Brandt	LR298CA	Brandt	Constitutional amendment to create requirements for the use of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund
J. Cavanaugh	LB933	J. Cavanaugh	Provide immunity for health care practitioners under the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection Act
M. Cavanaugh	LB958	M. Cavanaugh	Provide a requirement for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to 1915(c) waivers and define nursing facility level of care under the Medical Assistance Act
Clements	LB468	Clements	Change provisions relating to inheritance taxes, change certain fee and tax provisions, and eliminate a sales tax exemption relating to data centers
Clouse	LB889	Clouse	Change a penalty in the State Electrical Act
Conrad	LB779	Conrad	Provide requirements for health care facilities and collection agencies relating to medical debt
DeBoer	LB304	DeBoer	Eliminate a sunset date for the federal Child Care Subsidy program
DeKay	LR283CA	DeKay	Constitutional amendment to state that only a United States citizen may be an elector
Dorn	LB1187	DeKay	Change certain fees and surcharges under the Livestock Brand Act
Dover	LB768	Dover	Provide powers for the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and change provisions relating to the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act, the Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act, and the Middle Income Workforce Housing Investment Act
Dungan	LB762	Dungan	Require insurance coverage of pediatric autoimmune disorders
Fredrickson	LB929	Fredrickson	Provide requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to deductions and cost sharing for medicaid enrollees
Guereca	LB878	Guereca	Require paid maternity leave for state employees
Hallstrom	LB455	Hallstrom	Provide for confidentiality of and access to certain injury reports under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
Hansen	LB1219	Brandt	Limit the amount of property taxes that may be levied by a political subdivision
Hardin	LB1143	Hardin	Change provisions relating to nursing facility rates and establish a money follows the person program under the Medical Assistance Act
Holdcroft	LB512	Holdcroft	Adopt the Chemical Abortion Safety Protocol Act
Hughes	LB1124	Sorrentino	Increase the cigarette tax and state intent and change provisions relating to the distribution of cigarette tax proceeds
Hunt	LB966	M. Cavanaugh	Adopt the Hunger-Free Schools Act
Ibach	LB815	Brandt	Provide for a tax on diesel fuels, change provisions relating to refunds for motor fuel taxes and the petroleum release remedial action fee, change and eliminate provisions of the Ethanol Development Act, and eliminate the Ethanol Production Incentive Cash Fund

SENATOR PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	One-line description
Jacobson	LB525	Jacobson	Adopt the Agricultural Data Privacy Act
Juarez	LB1034	Dungan	Prohibit school staff from allowing federal immigration enforcement officers to access schools without a judicial warrant
Kauth	LB730	Kauth	Require schools and state agencies to designate restrooms and locker rooms based on sex and require state agencies to define an individual's sex as either male or female for purposes of rules and regulations, the enforcement of administrative actions, and adjudication of disputes
Lippincott	LB548	Lippincott	Provide for political subdivisions that own or operate natural gas systems to contract with industrial consumers of natural gas
Lonowski	LB669	Storer	Change requirements for voluntary and informed consent and civil actions relating to abortion
McKinney	LB962	McKinney	Adopt the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act
F. Meyer	LR24CA	Dorn	Constitutional amendment to provide for selection of presidential electors
G. Meyer	LB988	G. Meyer	Change provisions of the Community Development Law
Moser	LB1261	DeKay	Prohibit the use of eminent domain to acquire certain privately owned electric generation facilities
Murman	LB978	Storer	Provide for civil actions for conduct relating to obscene material, child sexual abuse material, and child sexual exploitation devices
Prokop	LB1091	Bostar	Provide requirements for the Department of Health and Human Services for long-term care clients with special needs under the medical assistance program
Quick	LB720	Quick	Create a temporary event license for body artists under the Uniform Credentialing Act
Raybould	LB1000	Prokop	Change penalties for violations of domestic abuse and sexual assault protection orders
Riepe	LB1212	Riepe	Provide for licensure of internationally trained physicians under the Uniform Credentialing Act
Rountree	LB839	Rountree	Change reporting requirements under the Municipal Density and Missing Middle Housing Act
Sanders	LB538	Hardin	Require the State Board of Education to develop a model policy regarding discrimination and antisemitism, require school boards to adopt a policy regarding discrimination and antisemitism, and provide for Title VI coordinators
Sorrentino	LB1100	Sorrentino	Modernize language in a civil procedure statute
Spivey	LB1067	Hallstrom	Change provisions relating to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the rate and disbursement of the documentary stamp tax, the Rural Workforce Housing Investment Fund, and the Middle Income Workforce Housing Investment Fund
Storer	LB1083	Storer	Adopt the Transparency in Artificial Intelligence Risk Management Act, create a fund, and change provisions relating to records which may be withheld from the public
Storm	LB938	Hallstrom	Adopt the First-Time Home Buyer Savings Account Act and provide for income tax adjustments
Strommen	LB258	Raybould	Change provisions relating to the minimum wage under the Wage and Hour Act
von Gillern	LB1165	von Gillern	Change provisions relating to the Key Employer and Jobs Retention Act, the ImagiNE Nebraska Act, and the Site and Building Development Act and create a grant program to help employers retain or attract employees
Wordekemper	LB400	Wordekemper	Provide for compensation under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act for cancers experienced by firefighters



COMMITTEE PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	One-line description
Agriculture	LB894	DeKay	Change provisions relating to the Grain Dealer Act and the Grain Warehouse Act Rename and change provisions of the Nebraska Commercial Fertilizer and Soil Conditioner Act, eliminate the Nebraska Poultry and Egg Resources Act, terminate a fund, and eliminate provisions relating to certain associations and societies
	LB948	Agriculture	
Appropriations	LB1209	Clements	Appropriate funds for the Legislative Council
	LB1210	Clements	Eliminate an obsolete transfer relating to the Cash Reserve Fund
Banking, Commerce & Insurance	LB838	Jacobson	Change provisions relating to the financial exploitation of vulnerable or senior adults
	LB967	Jacobson	Provide requirements for electronic notice of annual meetings by mutual insurance holding companies
Business & Labor	LB847	Kauth	Adopt the Nebraska Registered Apprenticeship Act and change provisions relating to the combined tax rate under the Employment Security Law
	LB921	Ibach	Adopt the Nebraska Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act and change certain employer duties under the Non-English-Speaking Workers Protection Act
Education	LB1050	Murman	Amend the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act to limit advancement to grade four
	LB937	Education	Change provisions relating to option enrollment, reading, dyslexia, reporting, teacher apprenticeships, teacher recruitment and retention, and the College Pathway Program
Executive Board	LB634	Hansen	Adopt the Legislative Sunset Review Act and eliminate the Legislature's Planning Committee
	LB1237	Executive Board	Prohibit bringing weapons or prohibited substances into the State Capitol
General Affairs	LB1001	General Affairs	Change and eliminate provisions relating to licensed racetrack enclosures, licenses and wagering on horseracing, assistance to problem gamblers, the Nebraska Commission on Problem Gambling, the Charitable Gaming Division of the Department of Revenue, keno at licensed racetrack enclosures, and the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund
	LB1235	General Affairs	Change and transfer provisions of the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection Act and the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Regulation Act and provide for taxation
Government, Military & Veterans Affairs	LB596	Sanders	Change requirements for legal publications and notices required by law
	LB1075	Sanders	Provide requirements for certain village warrants, change various provisions of the Election Act, and change election provisions for exceeding a school district's property tax authority
Health & Human Services	LB912	Hardin	Adopt the Community Health Worker Training Endorsement Act
	LB867	Health & Human Services	Change and eliminate provisions relating to programs and services administered by the Department of Health and Human Services
Judiciary	LB935	Bosn	Provide for the award of costs and attorney's fees in certain actions involving political subdivisions
	LB965	Bostar	Prohibit sexual abuse of a probationer or problem solving court participant; prohibit sexual abuse by a conservator, guardian, guardian ad litem, or child welfare service provider; provide for administration of naloxone by probation employees; and change conduct constituting the offense of incest
Legislative Oversight	LB1155	Dorn	Change provisions relating to legislative oversight
Legislature's Planning Committee	LB1179	DeBoer	Change provisions relating to the Agriculture Committee, Natural Resources Committee, and Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Legislature

COMMITTEE PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	One-line description
Natural Resources	LB759	Brandt	Change provisions relating to water wells, the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, the Perkins County Canal Project Act, and the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund
	LB1010	Brandt	Provide for eminent domain of electrical energy storage property, storage of electric energy under the Electric Cooperative Corporation Act, and energy storage resources and change application, notice, filing, exemption, and violation provisions relating to electric suppliers
Nebraska Retirement Systems	LB820	Neb. Retirement Systems	Change retirement provisions relating to approved identification documents, participation in certain retirement systems, state contributions, ex officio members of the Nebraska Investment Council, contributions by school districts, and computation of tax withholdings, and change the title of the executive director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems
	LB1101	Neb. Retirement Systems	Change the amount of the state contribution to the Nebraska Retirement Fund for Judges
Revenue	LB803	Revenue	Change provisions relating to the listing of taxable tangible personal property
	LB901	Revenue	Change the sales and use tax rate and provisions relating to fund distributions
State-Tribal Relations	LB1032	DeBoer	Provide for recognition and enforcement of tribal customary adoptions under the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Act and related laws
Transportation & Telecommunications	LB972	Fredrickson	Change provisions relating to parking spaces for handicapped or disabled persons, the State Boat Act, the Motor Vehicle Registration Act, the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act, the Motor Vehicle Safety Responsibility Act, and the Nebraska Rules of the Road
	LB1126	Moser	Adopt the Infrastructure Development Investment Program Act and change provisions relating to the construction and repair of roads, the Transportation Innovation Act, the Motor Vehicle Safety Responsibility Act, and the Nebraska Rules of the Road
Urban Affairs	LB1114	Urban Affairs	Change provisions related to eligibility of redevelopment plans for expedited review under the Community Development Law
	LB1135	Urban Affairs	Change provisions of the Nebraska Municipal Land Bank Act



SPEAKER PRIORITY BILLS

Priority	Bill	Introducer	One-line description
Speaker Arch	LB727	Kauth	Authorize law enforcement agencies to obtain, maintain, and possess epinephrine autoinjectors for use by a law enforcement officer and require training
Speaker Arch	LB758	von Gillern	Change provisions relating to nontestamentary transfers on death and provide a method for a beneficiary charitable organization to receive property or information
Speaker Arch	LB764	Holdcroft	Provide for certain Department of Correctional Services employees to be law enforcement officers
Speaker Arch	LB781	Ballard	Adopt updates to federal law relating to motor vehicles and motor carriers and change civil penalties against certain motor carriers
Speaker Arch	LB787	Sanders	Change provisions relating to the Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs and eliminate provisions relating to veterans homes
Speaker Arch	LB819	Hallstrom	Change provisions of the Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act and the Middle Income Workforce Housing Investment Act
Speaker Arch	LB826	DeKay	Change provisions relating to late applications for homestead exemptions
Speaker Arch	LB835	Jacobson	Change and eliminate provisions relating to fees of the Secretary of State, notices of liens under the Uniform Federal Lien Registration Act and the Uniform State Tax Lien Registration and Enforcement Act, the central filing system, effective financing statements, the master lien list, and filed records under the Uniform Commercial Code
Speaker Arch	LB852	Spivey	Provide for the recapture of funding distributed from the Convention Center Support Fund to certain recipients
Speaker Arch	LB866	Ballard	Change distribution of the Nebraska Opioid Recovery Trust Fund, create a fund, and provide for drug detection activities
Speaker Arch	LB888	Clouse	Change enforcement provisions for violations of the Nebraska Uniform Standards for Modular Housing Units Act, the Uniform Standard Code for Manufactured Homes and Recreational Vehicles, and certain rules, regulations, and orders
Speaker Arch	LB904	Arch	Change provisions relating to Chinese military companies under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act
Speaker Arch	LB905	Arch	Change and eliminate provisions relating to boards, commissions, committees, task forces, and funds that terminate
Speaker Arch	LB914	Hardin	Eliminate physician liability for negligence of physician assistants
Speaker Arch	LB955	Hardin	Provide for practice agreements between pharmacists and physician assistants
Speaker Arch	LB985	DeBoer	Provide a limitation on the number of individuals for which a guardian or conservator may accept appointment
Speaker Arch	LB986	Bostar	Allow expenditure of campaign funds for security services and systems under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act
Speaker Arch	LB1029	Conrad	Redefine terms relating to reportable funding from a foreign adversarial source for colleges and universities
Speaker Arch	LB1048	Arch	Change and eliminate reporting requirements for certain government agencies and preparation of the state executive budget and eliminate the Small Business Advisory Council, the Suggestion Award Board, and the state employee suggestion system
Speaker Arch	LB1057	Ballard	Redefine adult day service under the Health Care Facility Licensure Act
Speaker Arch	LB1086	Dover	Change eligibility requirements for community college gap assistance
Speaker Arch	LB1181	Bosn	Change provisions relating to the rights of victims of certain crimes
Speaker Arch	LB1205	Clouse	Require the Department of Economic Development to award grants under the Business Innovation Act
Speaker Arch	LB1236	Executive Board	Change provisions relating to publication, printing, and distribution of legislative journals, session laws, and statutes
Speaker Arch	LB1240	Murman	Change provisions relating to state recovery under the achieving a better life experience program

AGRICULTURE



Bill considered to eliminate Brand Committee, make inspections voluntary

A measure that would eliminate the Nebraska Brand Committee and transfer its responsibilities to the state Department of Agriculture was discussed Feb. 17 by the Agriculture Committee.

LB1258, introduced by Blair Sen. Ben Hansen, would rename the Livestock Brand Act as the Livestock Protection Act, eliminate the Nebraska Brand Committee and transfer its duties to a new Division



Sen. Ben Hansen

of Brand Registration, Brand Inspection and Livestock Theft Investigation within the Department of Agriculture.

Rather than enforcing mandatory inspections within a brand inspection area, the new division would register brands, maintain records and provide statewide, voluntary fee-based brand inspections as proof of livestock ownership at an owner's request. Like the existing agency, the new division would be cash-funded through inspection, brand registration and renewal fees.

The bill would take effect Jan. 1, 2027.

Hansen said LB1258 was modeled after the Kansas voluntary brand inspection system and would provide a more consistent, statewide approach to brand inspections. The current system varies widely by region, he said, creating inconsistency and division within the state's top industry.

In addition, he said, trust in the Nebraska Brand Committee was eroded

among some producers after the committee was found to be charging unauthorized fees and using a "guilty until proven innocent" approach to enforcement.

"With stronger oversight, professional administration and an advisory committee of stakeholders, we can restore trust and stability," Hansen said. "Most importantly, we create a uniform, statewide system that better serves producers and positions Nebraska to compete nationally and globally."

Cassie Lepaseotes, who operates a feedlot in Bridgeport, testified in support of the measure. She said some of her out-of-state partners hesitate to do business in Nebraska because brand regulations are varied and unpredictable. LB1258 would provide a fair, consistent framework that strengthens the industry, she said.

"If we truly value agriculture, the traditions we've built [and] the way of life that makes Nebraska special, then we must be willing to find a path that unifies us," Lepaseotes said. "LB1258 offers that path."

Conor Dwyer of Bridgeport also supported the bill. As a commercial feedlot operator, Dwyer said, he has seen firsthand how strict brand laws and the Nebraska Brand Committee's "targeting" of producers drives business out of the state.

For example, he said, it impacts already thin profit margins when shipments of cattle ready for slaughter are blocked by the committee over minor paperwork errors, prompting some producers to take their business elsewhere.

"I think we can all agree integrity is not an issue among cattlemen and women in Nebraska," Dwyer said. "I am, however, beginning to question the integrity of the Brand Committee."

Also supporting the bill was Curry Sexton, general counsel for Foote Busi-

ness Services, which operates the Imperial Beef feedyard. He said Imperial Beef has processed over 2 million cattle over the past 20 years, spending thousands of dollars on brand fees and compliance and not experiencing any theft.

But, Sexton said, the company's feedyards and ranches in Northwest Kansas, where brand inspection is voluntary, also have never had issues with cattle theft, indicating that strict brand laws are unnecessary at the feedlot level.

Duane Gangwish testified against LB1258 on behalf of the Nebraska Brand Committee, saying the measure would fundamentally restructure Nebraska's brand laws, which are supported by county sheriffs and state livestock organizations.

Gangwish noted that the Brand Committee recently has taken steps to modernize — including clarifying ownership rules, reducing unnecessary inspections and exploring exemptions — while maintaining a financially sound system. He said a better approach than eliminating mandatory brand inspection would be to continue discussions with stakeholders regarding their concerns.

Knox County Sheriff Don Henry also opposed LB1258. Eliminating the Brand Committee could impose an unfunded mandate in the form of extra staff and resources needed by sheriffs to work more stolen cattle cases, he said, ultimately burdening taxpayers.

Representing the Nebraska Cattlemen, Matt Blackford testified against the proposal. Counties historically have decided whether or not to join brand inspection areas, he said, and such decisions should remain local.

Roland Paddock, testifying on behalf of Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska, also spoke in opposition. He said brand inspection is a crucial business safeguard — similar to audits for cars, real estate or banks — to verify

ownership and prevent theft.

“That’s what this brand inspection is about,” Paddock said, “making sure that when you sell cattle, you own it.”

The committee took no immediate action on LB1258.

Ag cleanup bill clears first round

A bill intended to modernize regulatory language related to “beneficial substances” and update certain fees related to fertilizer and soil conditioners was amended and advanced to select file Feb. 20.

LB948, introduced by the Agriculture Committee, would rename the Nebraska Commercial Fertilizer and Soil Conditioners Act as the Nebraska Commercial Fertilizer and Beneficial Substances Act. It also would incorporate beneficial substances – such as biostimulants that support a plant’s natural processes – as regulated products and revise fees collected under the act.

Niobrara Sen. Barry DeKay, committee chairperson, said the measure would allow Nebraska to join other states that have incorporated beneficial substances into state fertilizer laws.

“The change in LB948 is consistent with the nationwide movement to update state fertilizer and soil conditioner labeling, content and efficiency verification laws to encompass new types of beneficial substances to ensure such products are honestly and accurately labeled to promote uniformity in regulation and facilitate further innovation,” DeKay said.

The bill also would add a new registration fee under the act of \$50 per product to cover the department’s cost of reviewing product labels, increase the minimum tonnage inspection fee from \$5 to \$10 and increase an annual license fee for distributing fertilizers and beneficial substance from \$15 to \$25.

Among other provisions, LB948 also would repeal obsolete sections of state law relating to a number of no longer functioning agricultural organizations that DeKay said have found representation through other associations and organizations.

A committee amendment, adopted 34-1, would add the provisions of LB947, also introduced by the committee. Those provisions would:

- revise authority for license, inspection and certification fees under the Plant Protection and Plant Pest Act;
- update fees under the Nebraska Pesticide Act;
- amend the state Department of Agriculture’s duties relating to publishing and distributing the “Weeds of the Great Plains” book;
- repeal the Nebraska Poultry and Egg Resources Act and direct the transfer of funds from the Nebraska Poultry and Egg Development, Utilization and Marketing Fund to the Nebraska Agricultural Products Marketing Cash Fund; and
- terminate the Potato Development Cash Fund and direct residual funds to the Plant Protection and Plant Pest Cash Fund.

DeKay said the fee increases included in the bill and the amendment would help keep important agriculture programs functioning without having to “steal from other programs” or rely on state general funds. Fee adjustments would make the programs “self-sustaining” he said, without increasing the property tax burden on Nebraska residents.

David City Sen. Jared Storm said he voted against the proposal coming out of committee over concerns regarding the fee increases included in the package.

“A fee increase is a tax increase,” Storm said, adding that the cost of living currently is the No. 1 issue for Nebraskans.

Following the 26-2 adoption of a technical amendment from DeKay, lawmakers advanced LB948 to select file on a voice vote.



Bill would require insurance coverage for certain pediatric disorders

The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee heard testimony Feb. 17 on a bill that would require Nebraska insurers to cover treatments for two related pediatric autoimmune disorders.

LB762, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. George Dungan, would require coverage for an array of treatments for pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) and pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infections (PANDAS).



Sen. George Dungan

Dungan said the related disorders, commonly known as PANS/PANDAS, impact a child’s autoimmune system and are characterized by the sudden onset of a number of troubling behavioral issues such as obsessions and compulsions, extreme anxiety, behavioral aggression, mood disorders, urinary symptoms and sleep disorders.

While PANS/PANDAS is a recognized clinical diagnosis, Dungan said, the disorders are rare enough to remain misunderstood by many in the health care and insurance fields.

Dungan said LB762 is important because the last resort when all other treatments have failed is intravenous immunoglobulin, or IVIG, which costs roughly \$15,000 a month. The treatment can be needed for up to eight months, he said, at a cost that could bankrupt a family if not covered by insurance.

“With early and appropriate treatment, many children can experience significant improvement or even remission,” Dungan said. “However, if left untreated, the inflammation can persist, causing long-term neurological and psychiatric issues.”

The bill also would require an annual report to the state Department of Insurance that includes the number of times the insurance policy denied coverage for treatment of PANS/PANDAS and which specific treatment was denied.

Phil Boucher, a Lincoln pediatrician, testified in support of the proposal. He said he has treated many children dealing with PANS/PANDAS, which typically starts with an attempt to reduce inflammation through a variety of means, including steroids.

Boucher said approximately 10% of children with the disorders need intravenous immunoglobulin to recover, however, and insurance coverage of IVIG is inconsistent. IVIG is FDA approved, he said, and several randomized trials have shown it to be effective in decreasing or alleviating PANS/PANDAS symptoms.

“It’s certainly safe and effective,” Boucher said. “It’s not the first line [of treatment] but for children who need it, it is life changing and life altering in the trajectory of their disease course.”

Nearly a dozen parents of children with PANS/PANDAS and young people diagnosed with the disorders also testified in support of LB762.

Elizabeth Fandl said her daughter’s

life has been “profoundly” impacted by a delayed PANS diagnosis. IVIG has improved her condition, she said, but the family has had to “fight every six months” for coverage of the procedure by their insurance company, even with detailed documentation from her daughter’s medical team.

“We urgently need improved awareness, access and insurance coverage for evidence-based PANS care,” Fandl said. “You have the power to stop [the] suffering for these children, like 20 other states have.”

Also speaking in favor was Grace Troupe, who said she has two daughters with PANS/PANDAS, ages 8 and 10. One child was approved for IVIG and one was denied, she said, adding that treatment decisions often depend on whether the provider reviewing a case is familiar with the disorders or not.

No middle-class family can afford to pay \$15,000 out-of-pocket monthly for IVIG, Troupe said, and delayed treatment can lead to long-term disabilities and the care needs that accompany them.

“Please don’t make us wait another year,” she said. “A year is everything to us.”

Jeremiah Blake testified in opposition to LB762 on behalf of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska. He said the company recognizes PANS/PANDAS as a valid diagnosis and covers many of the treatments referenced in the bill when medically necessary.

They do not cover IVIG for PANS/PANDAS, however, because research does not support its wide use as a treatment for the disorders, Blake said. In addition, he said, premiums are based on costs and all Nebraska families currently are facing a health care affordability crisis.

“[Our] opposition to LB762 is grounded in the principle that plan design should be driven by clinical

evidence while being mindful of how these decisions affect the cost of insurance,” Blake said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB762.

Omnibus banking bill passed

Lawmakers approved a measure Feb. 20 that makes a number of changes to Nebraska banking laws.

LB717, introduced by North Platte Sen. Mike Jacobson at the request of the Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance, is the department’s annual administrative update.



Sen. Mike Jacobson

Among other technical changes, the bill harmonizes state law with federal law and preserves the “wild card” powers of state banks, credit unions and savings associations.

The measure also provides a number of consumer protections, such as requiring a “net tangible benefit” analysis for borrowers financing installment or mortgage loans and authorizing the emergency closure of financial institutions in the event of a cybersecurity breach.

In addition, LB717 expands the definition of financial institutions to include credit unions under the Nebraska Financial Innovation Act, broadens the scope of controllable electronic record kiosks and updates lending limits by increasing the usury rate exemption cap from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

Finally, the measure provides an exemption from the Nebraska Money Transmitters Act for payroll processors that have fewer than 25 full-time employees and provide services to fewer than 50 clients who reside in Nebraska.

LB717 passed on a vote of 48-0.

CPA licensure rules updated

Lawmakers passed a measure Feb. 20 intended to increase licensure access to those seeking to become certified public accountants in Nebraska.

Currently, to sit for the CPA exam in Nebraska, one must have completed 150 semester-hours of postsecondary academic credit, earned a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university and demonstrated professional competency.

LB718, sponsored by Sen. Mike Jacobson of North Platte, instead creates three distinct licensure pathways in the state:



Sen. Mike Jacobson

- a master's degree plus one year of experience;
- a bachelor's degree plus 30 additional credit hours and one year of experience;
- a bachelor's degree plus two years of professional experience.

The measure also clarifies that passing the exam is not the same as being credentialed as a CPA, aligns Nebraska law with the Uniform Accountancy Act and clarifies that administrative lapses are not considered ethical violations for disciplinary purposes.

Lawmakers passed LB718 on a 48-0 vote.

BUSINESS & LABOR

Human trafficking bill approved

Lawmakers passed a bill Feb. 20 intended to help combat human trafficking at Nebraska hotels and motels.

LB320, sponsored by Sen. Rita Sanders of Bellevue, adds hotels

and other lodging establishments to the list of public spaces required to display posters that include the Nebraska human trafficking hotline number and other information.

The bill also allows for optional training for employees on human trafficking issues specific to the lodging industry, which may be developed and provided through collaboration between the state attorney general, the state Department of Labor and lodging establishments.

An owner, operator or employee of a hotel or similar public lodging establishment who implements the training and other policies would not be liable for any act or omission related to human trafficking committed by a third party at the establishment, unless they knowingly assist such action or fail to act in a reasonable manner.

LB320 passed on a vote of 46-1.

Workplace safety committee rules modified

Lawmakers approved a measure Feb. 20 that eliminates an unfunded state program related to workplace safety for private employers.

LB397, sponsored by Columbus Sen. Mike Moser, repeals the Workplace Safety Consultation Program, which authorized the state Department of Labor to conduct workplace inspections and consultations to determine whether employers are complying with standards issued by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.



Sen. Rita Sanders



Sen. Mike Moser

The bill also removes the requirement for private sector employers to maintain a workplace safety committee. Public sector employers subject to the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act still must establish workplace safety committees to allow oversight for employees not covered by OSHA.

Under the measure, public sector employers subject to collective bargaining agreements may establish safety committees through the collective bargaining process.

LB397 passed on a 35-13 vote.

EDUCATION

Bill would eliminate reduced-price school meal fees

A measure aimed at making school breakfast and lunch free for students who currently pay reduced prices was considered by the Education Committee Feb. 17.

LB966, introduced by Omaha Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh, would adopt the Hunger-Free Schools Act and require the state Department of Education to reimburse schools for part of the cost of serving students who qualify for reduced-price meals under federal guidelines.



Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh

Under the bill, the state would cover the difference between the federal reimbursement rate for a free meal and the lower rate for a reduced-price meal. This would allow schools to provide those meals at no cost to eligible students, eliminating the reduced-price fee that families currently pay.

Cavanaugh said many families, especially those with multiple children, struggle to afford reduced-price lunches. She described LB966 as a focused, lower-cost alternative to her previous universal free school meal proposals.

“This fiscal note is \$1.2 million, and it’s significantly less than a full reimbursement program, but it at least will help those families that qualify for reduced lunch,” Cavanaugh said.

Tim Royers testified in support of LB966 on behalf of the Nebraska State Education Association. Hunger creates significant academic and behavioral challenges for students, he said, and can lead to a lack of concentration, disruptive behavior, lower academic achievement and more frequent illnesses.

“This bill represents a modest, targeted step forward in our mission to improve our ability to ensure that no child goes hungry in Nebraska,” Royers said.

Representing the Omaha Education Association, Kathy Poehling testified in support of the measure. The cost of reduced-price meals can add up quickly, she said, exceeding \$200 to \$300 per school year for a family of four living paycheck to paycheck.

“This bill provides immediate breathing room for working-class families who are struggling with the rising cost of groceries and housing,” Poehling said.

Anahí Salazar of Voices for Children in Nebraska also spoke in favor of the bill. She said 105,000 Nebraska households were food insecure in 2023 – up 8,000 from the previous year and close to the state’s 2011 peak of 112,000.

With food insecurity on the rise, Salazar said, LB966 would support children’s health and learning readiness by helping families who are on the cusp of poverty to access meals.

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Measure would give voters final approval on initiative changes

The Executive Board heard testimony on a proposed constitutional amendment Feb. 18 that potentially would mitigate the impact of legislative changes to initiative petition measures passed by Nebraska voters.

A two-thirds majority is required in the Legislature to make changes to laws adopted through the initiative petition process.

Under LR297CA, sponsored by Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh of Omaha, any legislation passed that would amend, repeal, modify or impair a law enacted through the initiative process must be referred to voters for final approval before taking effect.

If approved by the Legislature, the measure would be put before voters at the 2026 general election.

Cavanaugh said there is a “deep, growing frustration” among Nebraska voters when the Legislature makes significant changes to laws that are “overwhelmingly approved” through the initiative process. The perception that the will of the people can be undone by senators damages the public trust, she said.

The measure would not remove senators’ ability to modify such measures, she said, but would simply reinforce the state’s “long and proud” history of direct democracy.

“The initiative petition remains a critical tool for Nebraskans when they feel the Legislature is not responsive,” Cavanaugh said. “If we want to preserve confidence in this institution, we should strengthen, not weaken, the initiative process. LR297CA does exactly that by reinforcing the partnership

between the Legislature and the voters, and by making it clear that the ultimate authority still rests with the people.”

Spike Eickholt, representing the ACLU of Nebraska, testified in support. He said there has been a trend in recent years of lawmakers implementing voter approved initiatives in ways that are contrary to the will of the people.

LR297CA still would allow the Legislature to alter voter-approved initiatives, he said, but would give voters the opportunity to approve or reject those changes.

Also testifying in support was Christa Eggers, speaking on behalf of Nebraskans for Medical Marijuana. Enacting policy through the initiative process is not ideal, Eggers said, but advocates often must resort to it when the Legislature is unable or unwilling to resolve an issue.

She acknowledged that it can be challenging for senators to interpret the will of voters after an initiative is passed.

Eggers said the single-subject rule for initiative petitions has contributed to that problem. While intended to promote clarity, she said, in practice, the rule results in important implementation information not being included in ballot language and “dwindling faith” among voters that lawmakers will remain faithful to the will of the people.

“When significant policy questions arise after voters have spoken – or when lawmakers believe meaningful changes are necessary – the single most democratic solution is to return those questions to the very people that approved them in the first place,” Eggers said.

No one spoke in opposition to the proposal and the committee took no immediate action.

GOVERNMENT, MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS

Conditional use permit measure clears final round

A bill that sets new requirements for county boards and commissions when considering a conditional use permit or special exception for livestock siting received final approval Feb. 20.

Introduced by Whitman Sen. Tanya Storer last session, LB663 makes a number of changes to the application process for such permits.

Among other provisions, the bill:

- sets an educational requirement of two hours per term for certain county officials on matters relevant to the bill’s provisions;
- requires county officials to base conditional use permit decisions solely on county zoning regulations;
- adds county zoning administrators to the application review process;
- prohibits requiring a federal, state or other local permit when deciding on a conditional use permit; and
- sets a timeline for county commissions to follow when processing an application.

County officials will have 30 days to determine if an application is complete and 10 days to relay that information to the applicant. Once an application is deemed complete, counties will have 90 days to approve or deny the application.

If officials obtain information that materially affects an application before

the 90-day deadline for its approval, they may require submission of a new application. Doing so will restart the approval deadline time clock, providing an additional 90 days for officials to review the new application.

If a county fails to act within the 90-day timeline, an application automatically will be deemed approved.

LB663 passed on a 43-5 vote.



Sen. Tanya Storer

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Intergenerational care facility, home visiting services bills advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 19 to two measures heard by the Health and Human Services Committee this session.

Currently, the state’s Intergenerational Care Facility Incentive program provides one-time startup grants of \$100,000 for child care programs in nursing and assisted living facilities that are certified for Medicare or Medicaid, with priority given to facilities located in rural communities for applications filed on the same date.

LB721, introduced by Grand Island Sen. Dan Quick, would remove that priority designation and require the state Department of Health and Human Services to award grants to both nonprofit and proprietary facilities based on their date of application. The measure also would allow facilities to use grant funding for expansion costs.

Quick said intergenerational care

facilities offer a unique approach to addressing the growing need for child and elder care services in Nebraska. He said limiting grant funding to startup costs for nonprofit facilities has resulted in just one grant being awarded since the program began in 2024 despite interest from established proprietary facilities.

“[Intergenerational care] facilities provide shared care and programming for young children and older adults in one location, addressing multiple challenges facing service providers in both industries,” Quick said. “[LB737] ensures for-profit facilities who service a significant portion of our Medicaid population can have access to these resources.”

A Health and Human Services Committee amendment, adopted 30-0, would prohibit a facility from applying for more than one grant. Senators advanced LB721 to select file on a vote of 36-0.

LB903, sponsored by Sen. Tanya Storer of Whitman, would allow child welfare case managers to refer at-risk families with children under two to home visiting services under the Family Home Visitation Act.

Under a committee amendment, adopted 31-0, case managers also could refer at-risk families with children three or younger to early intervention services.

Storer said home visiting programs connect young families who are at risk for system involvement with trained professionals who tailor their services to meet the needs of each family.

The measure would increase access to these services by providing agencies with another source of funding under the Families First Prevention Services Act, which only becomes available through a direct referral from a case manager, she said.

“Home visiting is an evidence-



Sen. Dan Quick

based service that supports the health and well-being of families with young children,” Storer said. “The referral mechanism is permissive and [increases] case manager awareness of available home visiting supports while allowing professional discretion in determining when those referrals are appropriate.”

Following adoption of the committee amendment, senators advanced LB903 to select file on a 38-0 vote.

Joint hearing proposed to review state Olmstead Plan

The Health and Human Services Committee considered a bill Feb. 18 that would require an annual joint legislative hearing to review the progress of community integration for individuals with disabilities in Nebraska.

LB737, introduced by Bellevue Sen. Victor Rountree, would require the Legislature’s Health and Human Services and Urban Affairs committees to conduct a joint hearing to review progress on the state Olmstead Plan. The plan is mandated by a 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision and requires states to ensure that people with disabilities are integrated into their communities.



Sen. Victor Rountree

Under the bill, the joint hearing would assess plan progress from the previous calendar year in the areas of housing, employment, education, community support and transportation and recommend legislative solutions.

The committees would be required to meet annually on or before Oct. 1 and submit an annual report of findings to the Clerk of the Legislature no later than Dec. 31 of each year.

Rountree said each committee would bring a unique perspective on

issues regarding accessibility, affordability and infrastructure development.

“We do our best work when we communicate and collaborate,” Rountree said. “By collaborating and being intentional in our approach, we can deliver results for those in need in our state.”

Dianne DeLair of Disability Rights Nebraska testified in support of LB737. Olmstead plans are a mechanism to provide states time to implement systemic changes required under the Olmstead decision, she said, and can be used as a defense against alleged violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“These plans are how states will implement changes to the system so that people with disabilities have access to the services and support they need in the community rather than having to be confined to an institution or a facility,” DeLair said.

Kathy Hoell, co-chair of the Nebraska Olmstead Advisory Committee, also testified in support of the measure. She said updates regarding Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan currently are provided every three years, which makes it difficult to make substantive changes or identify areas of integration that need additional support.

“Without good data ... we don’t know what needs fixing,” Hoell said. “By passing LB737, the Legislature will have an annual review and be able to decide if legislation is needed to make this happen.”

Proponent Joni Thomas, also a member of the advisory committee, provided recommendations to ensure the measure serves as a “powerful tool of accountability” rather than a “procedural exercise.” She said establishing clear benchmarks and centering the experiences of individuals with disabilities is critical to ensuring Nebraska moves beyond compliance and toward true community integration.

“Without measurable outcomes

and transparent data, there is a risk that agencies control the narrative instead of demonstrating real progress toward Olmstead compliance,” Thomas said. “LB737 has the potential to create real accountability with strong reporting, clear definitions and disability led participation.”

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

Bill would require full Medicaid reimbursement for hospice care

A bill that seeks to increase hospice care reimbursement for certain Medicaid recipients was considered by the Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 19.

LB944, introduced by Sen. Myron Dorn of Adams, would require the state Department of Health and Human Services to provide full reimbursement for hospice care services provided to a Medicaid eligible individual who resides in a nursing or intermediate care facility, beginning no later than Aug. 1.



Sen. Myron Dorn

The bill also would require such reimbursement be provided directly to the care facility rather than to the hospice care provider.

Dorn said nursing facilities currently receive full reimbursement for the cost to provide room and board to eligible Medicaid recipients, but only 95% of expenses are reimbursed when the same patient elects to enter hospice care at the facility.

“It is the hospice provider who bears the financial burden of the reduction in reimbursement,” Dorn said. “The state needs to accept this financial responsibility and not pass

it off to providers.”

Marilee Malcom, director of the Nebraska Hospice and Palliative Care Association, testified in support of the measure. She said many nursing facilities have been unable to absorb the additional costs associated with the reduced reimbursement rate, resulting in several choosing not to accept or refer certain Medicaid recipients to hospice care.

“LB944 addresses a structural flaw in Nebraska’s Medicaid payment process,” Malcolm said. “The result is a system in which hospice agencies are fronting Medicaid room and board payments at a loss [and] absorbing administrative burden and financial risk that was never intended under the hospice benefit.”

Proponent Anne Paulmeyer, a physician’s assistant and co-owner of Cottonwood Hospice, said the level of care provided to a patient is not reduced once they enter hospice care. In fact, she said, state and federal regulations require that residents continue receiving the exact same care they previously received in addition to hospice services.

“So, while nothing about the patient’s care decreases, payment to the facility does,” Paulmeyer said.

Matthew Ahern, deputy director of the DHHS Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care, opposed the provision that would change the state’s billing mechanism to allow direct payments to nursing facilities for hospice care.

He said federal law requires that reimbursement for room and board be paid to the hospice agency for patients eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare to prevent inconsistent and duplicative billing.

“The law and communication from our federal partners clearly [states] that we have to pay a hospice provider first,” Ahern said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB944.

JUDICIARY



Medical debt protections considered

Interest on medical debt would be capped in Nebraska under a measure considered Feb. 18 by the Judiciary Committee.

LB779, introduced by Lincoln Sen. Danielle Conrad, would prohibit health care facilities from charging interest or late fees on medical debt until 90 days after a final invoice is issued and would cap interest at 3%. The measure also would bar creditors from placing liens on or foreclosing upon a patient’s primary residence to collect medical debt.



Sen. Danielle Conrad

Conrad said the rising rates of uninsured and underinsured individuals – many due to loss of Medicaid coverage and federal policy changes affecting Affordable Care Act tax credits – are increasing out-of-pocket medical costs for Nebraskans.

LB779 would provide a state-level response to these federal health care challenges, she said, helping families manage medical bills while protecting their primary residences from liens or foreclosure.

“Medical debt has become one of the most common forms of consumer debt in our state and nation and, far too often, hardworking families are [faced] with high interest charges that can escalate otherwise manageable bills into long-term financial stress,” Conrad said.

Cami Bergman, a Nebraska mother of four from Valley County, supported the measure. Despite having insurance

and community support during her daughter’s cancer treatment, she said, medical debt continued to mount even after treatment ended, creating lasting financial strain and stress for the family.

LB779 would give families facing serious illness breathing room, she said, and help ensure that doing what is necessary to survive cancer does not also involve a family risking financial ruin or losing their home.

“No parent should have to choose between follow-up care and keeping a roof over their child’s head,” Bergman said.

Testifying in support of the bill on behalf of Nebraska Appleseed, Sarah Maresh said medical debt is a major barrier to health care even for those with insurance.

Debt is expected to rise due to Medicaid cuts and the loss of marketplace tax credits, she said, which will disproportionately affect people of color, rural residents, new mothers and those in poor health.

“Medical debt is just different than other types of debt and it should be treated that way,” Maresh said. “Health care is a necessity, but people rarely have choice or power when it comes to their spending. We can’t predict [when] we’re going to need care.”

Tessa Stevens opposed the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Collectors Association, saying hospitals and collection agencies generally do not charge interest on initial medical bills or foreclose on primary residences.

Stevens said capping interest at 3% could threaten small, rural hospital loan programs, and the bill fails to distinguish between patients in financial hardship and those who are able to pay.

Representing the Nebraska Health Care Association, Abbie Widger also testified in opposition to LB779. She said the association is willing to work with Conrad on an amendment, but

that the bill as written could unintentionally harm elderly Nebraskans in long-term care by interfering with Medicaid spend-down rules.

Widger said that when a resident has an outstanding medical bill and a deed of trust on their home, Medicaid considers that debt for eligibility purposes and the provider is paid when the home is sold. The bill's broad language could disrupt that process and limit seniors' access to Medicaid, she said.

The committee took no immediate action on the proposal.

Proposal would ban street camping, direct unhoused to shelters

The Judiciary Committee considered a proposal Feb. 18 that would ban unauthorized camping on public property across Nebraska.

LB925, introduced by Sen. Bob Andersen of Omaha, would adopt the Safe Parks and Public Spaces Act and make unauthorized camping on public property and public rights-of-way a Class V misdemeanor unless the area is officially designated for such use. Law enforcement would be required to direct first-time offenders to the nearest appropriate shelter instead of prosecution.

The proposal also would bar cities and counties from allowing regular camping in public spaces or discouraging enforcement of the law. Residents, business owners and the Nebraska attorney general could sue local governments that fail to comply with the law after notice.

Under the bill, the state treasurer could withhold certain funds from jurisdictions that remain out of com-

pliance for six months or more.

Andersen said the measure is not intended to criminalize homelessness, but to provide safer conditions for everyone.

"Those living on the streets are 10 times more likely to experience drug overdoses and nine times more likely to experience sexual assault than the general public," Andersen said. "Unauthorized street camping is unacceptably dangerous for both the homeless and the local residents."

Douglas County Sheriff Aaron Hanson testified in support of the measure, saying homelessness involves financial hardship, unstable housing, mental health challenges and addiction, problems local government alone cannot solve.

Under LB925, individuals experiencing homelessness would be directed to shelters, Hanson said, providing greater access to care while helping maintain community safety.

Chris Sharp also supported the proposal on behalf of Cicero Action, a nonprofit advocacy organization.

Sharp said that from 2013 to 2024, the most visible segment of Nebraska's homeless population — those struggling with mental illness and addiction — grew from 40% to 85%. Closures of psychiatric beds and limited access to treatment programs have exacerbated the problem, he said, leaving many vulnerable people without options, which LB925 would help address.

"The reality is that the unsheltered homeless represent the most in need and the most abandoned by continuums of care," Sharp said.

Tamara Dwyer, homeless services coordinator for the City of Omaha, testified in opposition to the measure, saying it would undermine local, data-driven efforts to address homelessness.

She said Omaha has implemented a coordinated encampment-response pilot program focused on outreach, housing

navigation and connecting people to mental health and substance use treatment. Increased enforcement would be costly, she said, and would displace people without solving the underlying issues that lead to homelessness.

"Policies should address root causes like the lack of services — including health care services, mental health care services, job assistance — among many other things, instead of merely moving people or destroying encampments," Dwyer said.

Chris Knauf also opposed LB925 on behalf of the Stephen Center, an Omaha nonprofit that provides emergency shelter, addiction treatment and transitional housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, poverty and addiction.

Knauf said emergency shelters are the primary entry point for stabilizing people experiencing homelessness and connecting them to case management and other supports.

Providers already are near capacity and have turned away thousands due to limited space, he said, warning that enforcing camping bans without expanding shelter availability would strain resources, increase instability and ultimately be more costly.

"Shelter is the entry point, it's not the end goal," Knauf said. "It is the most cost-effective path to housing available and it costs taxpayers a fraction of what even one day in jail costs."

Michael Fletcher, a street outreach specialist, testified in opposition to LB925, saying he was born into homelessness and spent years living in unsafe conditions on the streets and in shelters. His survival would have been criminalized if the proposal had been law when he was homeless, he said.

"Punishing people for being without a home will not end homelessness," Fletcher said. "It will only deepen trauma, increase instability



Sen. Bob Andersen

and push people further away from the very supports that they need.”

The committee took no immediate action on the bill.

Bill would allow lawsuits against child porn websites

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony Feb. 19 on a bill that would allow individuals depicted in or exposed to obscene material or child sexual exploitation content to sue entities that distribute such material online.

LB978, introduced by Whitman Sen. Tanya Storer, would allow individuals depicted in or exposed to obscene material, child sexual abuse material or content promoting child sexual exploitation to sue entities that intentionally distribute such content on publicly available websites. The bill also would ban the sale or distribution of child sexual exploitation devices.

A child exploitation device is defined as an anatomically correct mannequin, robot, doll, device or image that has the features of a minor and is intended for use in sexual acts.

Under the bill, internet providers would not be held liable solely for offering access or connection services unless they actively create, develop or intentionally distribute illegal content. The attorney general could bring civil actions to stop violations, and civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation could be enforced by the attorney general or county attorneys.

Currently, Storer said, individuals depicted in child sexual abuse material and obscene content have no legal recourse against websites that publish or profit from it. She said LB978 would allow those harmed to

sue website owners for damages and removal of illegal content, and the threat of lawsuits could encourage sites to proactively limit such material.

“We need every available tool to rein in these heinous materials,” Storer said. “Given the extreme and degrading nature of obscenity and child sexual abuse material and the scope of the problem, the need for a civil remedy for victims is urgent.”

Trey Dellinger testified in support of LB978 on behalf of AFA Action, the government affairs arm of the American Family Association. He said the measure is urgently needed to respond to predators who lure children through social media and video games.

The U.S. hosts more child sexual abuse material online than any other country, Dellinger said, with Nebraska alone reporting more than 6,600 cases in 2024.

“We’re told that child sexual exploitation is just the price we pay for living in the internet age, that we’re powerless to solve this problem,” Dellinger said. “But we don’t have to accept that.”

Nate Grasz also supported the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Family Alliance. Behind every statistic regarding online child sexual abuse is a real child whose exploitation is recorded, uploaded and monetized, he said.

“[LB978] isn’t about frivolous lawsuits. This is about recognizing that when a child’s abuse is distributed online, the harm doesn’t end when the camera stops,” Grasz said. “And we need every tool at our disposal to fight it.”

Representing the Nebraska Association of Trial Attorneys, Elizabeth Govaerts spoke in favor of LB978, saying the measure would hold social media and AI platforms as well as porn websites accountable for harmful sexual content.

No one testified in opposition to

the proposal and the committee took no immediate action on it.



Natural Resources omnibus clears first round

An environmental agency cleanup measure advanced from general file Feb. 19 after lawmakers amended it to include several other bills related to natural resources.

Plymouth Sen. Tom Brandt, sponsor of LB759, said the bill contains several changes requested by the state Department of Water, Energy and Environment, which was created last year by the merger of two agencies.

It would add the department’s Chief Water Officer or their designated representative to the Water Well Standards and Contractors’ Licensing Board and eliminate a public hearing requirement related to distributions from the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund.

The bill also would allow the department to enter upon property to conduct surveys, investigations and other activities related to the siting and construction of the Perkins County Canal Project.

A Natural Resources Committee amendment, adopted 26-1, replaced the bill with a modified version of the original proposal. It would require the department to notify a landowner before entering onto their property.

The amendment also added provisions of three other measures considered by the committee this session.



Sen. Tanya Storer



Sen. Tom Brandt

The amended provisions of LB760, also sponsored by Brandt, would transfer the authority to permit, license and inspect swimming pools, mobile home parks and recreation camps from the department to counties, cities, villages or local public health departments.

The measure would require local governments to adopt and enforce minimum sanitary and safety requirements for the equipment and operation of swimming pools that meet or exceed minimum requirements adopted by the department.

Local governments would be required to inspect swimming pools and could collect fees to cover their actual costs.

The proposal also would authorize local governments to inspect and set minimum health and safety requirements for recreation camps as well as adopt minimum requirements for the establishment, operation and maintenance of mobile home parks.

Brandt said the amended provisions of his LB761 would raise fees for four programs overseen by the department.

Water well registration and permit fees would increase from \$40 to \$200.

Additionally, the proposal would modify the fee structure for livestock waste control facility permits. As introduced, the bill would have required the department to ensure that fees are adequate to meet 40% of the previous fiscal year's program costs instead of the current 20%. Under the amendment, fees would have to cover 30% of the costs.

Under the measure, a schedule of fees paid by hazardous waste generators would be based on an annual fee determined by the quantity of hazardous waste generated by weight or volume. Fees would be directed to the Integrated Solid Waste Management Cash Fund rather than the General Fund.

The fee schedule could not exceed

the amount necessary for the department to pay for the direct and indirect costs of the regulation of hazardous waste management.

The measure also would require the department to collect application fees for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits as well as annual fees for permit holders. The fees could not be more than the amount necessary to reimburse the department for administering applications or cover the cost of services provided.

Brandt said the amended provisions of his LB1076 would codify the authority of the Nebraska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission to take administrative action and impose penalties for actual or threatened violations of the Nebraska Geologic Storage of Carbon Dioxide Act.

Under the measure, any person who knowingly and willfully violates any provision of the act, makes any false statement in an application or falsifies a monitoring device used for compliance would be guilty of a Class I misdemeanor.

Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln opposed LB759, saying it would infringe on private property rights, repeal an opportunity for public input and increase fees on livestock producers and Nebraskans who rely on well water.

Brandt said those fees have not been increased in approximately 20 years and that the proposal is intended to ensure that users, rather than all taxpayers, shoulder each program's costs.

After voting 26-2 to adopt a technical amendment offered by Brandt, senators advanced LB759 to select file on a vote of 26-5.

Proposal to 'reaffirm' environmental trust offered

Voters could amend the state constitution to ensure that funds

dedicated to conserving the state's natural resources are used exclusively for that purpose under a measure heard Feb. 19 by the Natural Resources Committee.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust, created by the Legislature in 1992, receives a portion of state lottery proceeds to fund projects that conserve, enhance and restore Nebraska's natural environment.

Plymouth Sen. Tom Brandt, sponsor of LR298CA, said lawmakers in recent years, however, have transferred trust funds for other purposes. He said Gov. Jim Pillen's current budget proposal would transfer more than \$40 million from the trust, threatening funding for grants that already have been awarded.

"If the people of Nebraska choose to adopt this amendment," Brandt said, "it would reaffirm their original intent and provide long-term certainty for one of our state's most recognized conservation tools."

Brandt's proposal would specify that trust funds could be used exclusively to administer the trust and fund competitively awarded grants to tax-exempt entities, political subdivisions or state agencies for the conservation, enhancement or restoration of the natural, physical and biological environment in Nebraska.

The trust could not award a grant to a project proposed by a state agency unless at least 50% of the project's funding is provided by a political subdivision, the federal government or private donors.

If approved by the Legislature, the measure would go before voters at the November 2026 general election.

John Bender testified in support of the resolution on behalf of the Friends of the Nebraska Environmental Trust. He said the governor's budget proposal would leave the trust unable to fund

worthwhile conservation projects.

“If adopted, [LR298CA] will prevent such raids on trust fund dollars,” Bender said. “It would stop the gradual erosion of the purpose for which the trust was originally established, and it would make sure the trust operates in a manner keeping with why citizens voted to establish it.”

Matthew Gruntorad testified in support of the measure on behalf of the Nebraska Chapter of the Wildlife Society. He said the governor’s proposal, in LB1072, would direct \$32.5 million to a marina project at Lewis and Clark Lake and an additional \$10 million to support state Department of Water, Energy and Environment operations.

“Using the trust to fulfill existing contractual obligations or to offset general fund spending contorts the Nebraska [Environmental] Trust Act and skirts the state’s responsibility to fund its own commitments,” Gruntorad said.

Traci Bruckner of Audubon Great Plains also testified in support of LR298CA. She said placing the trust’s competitive grantmaking process in the state constitution is the “only adequate response” to repeated transfers of trust funds to help balance the state budget.

“When trust fund dollars are diverted to fund state agency operations designed to be supported by the General Fund,” Bruckner said, “the trust is no longer complementing the state’s efforts — it’s supplanting them.”

Agencies still could receive trust funds under LR298CA, she added, but they would have to compete for them.

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

REVENUE

Relaxed creative district grant requirement clears first round

A measure intended to give the state Department of Economic Development more flexibility when granting certain funds advanced from general file Feb. 19.

Currently, the department may award grants to municipalities under the Civic and Community Center Financing Act. Grants are funded by a portion of the state sales tax revenue generated by arenas and associated hotels and retailers.

Municipalities currently must partner with a certified creative district to be eligible for a grant. Authorized by the Legislature in 2020, creative districts are certified by the Nebraska Arts Council and distinguished by geography and artistic or cultural activities or facilities.

LB778, introduced by Lincoln Sen. George Dungan, instead would require the department to give preference to any municipality that is partnered with a creative district when awarding grants under the act from July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2028.

Dungan said the change would prioritize communities that partner with creative districts without preventing otherwise eligible cities from receiving grants.

The bill advanced to select file on a vote of 31-0.

Deputy county assessor authorization advanced

A bill intended to modernize county government processes advanced

from the first round of debate Feb. 19.

Omaha Sen. Kathleen Kauth, sponsor of LB834, said the measure includes several changes requested by the Nebraska Association of County Officials.



Sen. Kathleen Kauth

The bill would allow a county assessor, when authorized by the county board, to appoint one or more deputies who would perform the assessor’s duties in their absence.

Among several other technical updates, Kauth said, LB834 also would eliminate a \$5 mobile home park permit fee and allow delinquent taxes on mobile homes, cabin trailers and manufactured homes to be extinguished after 15 years.

The bill advanced to select file on a 26-0 vote.

Grant requirements for historic building demolition advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 19 to a bill intended to preserve Nebraska’s historic buildings without hindering economic development.

Omaha Sen. Bob Andersen, sponsor of LB883, said he introduced the measure at the request of the Nebraska State Historical Society, which conducts historic preservation reviews for two state grant programs.



Sen. Bob Andersen

Currently, Andersen said, if a property is historic, it cannot be demolished with state funds even if it threatens public health and safety.

Although the demolition of a historic building still would be the “last resort” in most cases, he said, LB883

would allow certain grant funds to be used for that purpose as long as a city or village also provides a public benefit by documenting the property, erecting a historical marker or using other methods that commemorate the lost resource.

“LB883 seeks to protect historic property but ensures communities can continue to develop,” Andersen said.

The bill would allow the state Department of Economic Development to provide grants to assist in the demolition of historic buildings or districts under the Civic and Community Center Financing Act. Grant applications would have to document that the applicant and the State Historic Preservation Officer have agreed to preservation-based mitigation strategies.

LB883 also would update requirements for demolition grants to cities and villages under the Revitalize Rural Nebraska Grant Program, which is administered by the state Department of Water, Energy and Environment.

If the State Historic Preservation Officer has determined that a property to be demolished is listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, an applicant would have to demonstrate that:

- the property has been deemed a substandard and abandoned commercial property by a certified building professional with the approval of the State Historic Preservation Officer; or
- the applicant and the State Historic Preservation Officer have agreed to preservation-based mitigation strategies.

Finally, LB883 would allow the rural grant program’s fund to be used to pay the costs incurred by the State Historic Preservation Officer in carrying out their duties under the new requirement.

The bill advanced to select file on a vote of 28-0.

Employee recalculation requirement for tax incentives advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 19 to a proposal intended to ensure that Nebraska companies do not lose certain tax incentives when they spin off part of their business operations.

Elkhorn Sen. R. Brad von Gillern, sponsor of LB954, said that when companies sign agreements to receive incentives under the Nebraska Advantage Act, they agree to add new workers and maintain the number of jobs they have in Nebraska the year before their application.

He said LB954 would apply when a taxpayer that has signed an agreement under a specific project category sells a part of their business operations to another entity.

The bill would require the state Department of Revenue to recalculate the taxpayer’s base-year employees by subtracting the number of employees at the sold business operation from the number of base-year employees calculated prior to the sale.

The recalculation would not be allowed if the business that was sold ceases operations within two years after the sale or if the primary business purpose of the sale was to close a location. The provision would apply to agreements entered into after Dec. 31, 2016.

Von Gillern said the change would ensure companies are not punished for making “sensible and practical” business decisions while still creating and maintaining jobs in Nebraska.

LB954 advanced to select file on a vote of 29-1.



Sen. R. Brad von Gillern



Sen. Ashlei Spivey

URBAN AFFAIRS

Virtual inspections authorized

A bill authorizing virtual inspections of certain residential buildings received final approval from lawmakers Feb. 20.

Under LB441, introduced last session by Omaha Sen. Ashlei Spivey, any state agency, county, city or village that requires an inspection as part of a building permit may allow for virtual inspection by an authorized inspector under certain conditions.

The inspection must be of an area of a single-family or two-family residential building that is less than three stories in height and under 10,000 square feet.

The bill also requires the individual requesting or holding the permit to provide the name of the licensed or registered contractor who is completing the work to be virtually inspected.

In most cases, the inspection must be conducted live with both the individual requesting or holding the permit and the inspector. Inspections required for building permits of a non-structural nature may be conducted using video or photo documentation for any reinspection.

LB441 passed on a vote of 47-1.

Public works bid requirements, at-large election measure advance

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 19 to a pair of measures intended to benefit some of Nebraska’s smaller communities.

Currently, first and second class cities and villages are required to approve and advertise for bids for certain public works contracts of over \$30,000. LB797, introduced by the Urban Affairs Committee, would increase the minimum amount to \$90,000.

The bill also would raise the minimum amounts at which municipal electric utilities are allowed to enter into contracts for the enlargement or improvement of the electric system or for the purchase of equipment.

Currently, required minimum bid amounts increase depending on a utility's gross annual revenue from retail sales. LB797 would create additional tiers for utilities with revenue in excess of \$20 million, \$30 million and \$75 million.

LB797 advanced to select file on a vote of 29-1.

Under LB798, also introduced by the committee, planning commissions for second class cities and villages could have three members rather than the current options of five, seven or nine.

Sen. Stan Clouse of Kearney supported the measure, saying the additional option would help rural communities fill leadership roles.

The bill also would allow second class cities that elect city council members by ward to elect some members on an at-large basis if the method is first approved by voters at a general election.

At least two members could be elected on an at-large basis, and no more than one-half of the city council could be at-large members.

Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney, chairperson of the committee, said LB798 also contains provisions to ensure that at-large members serve staggered terms.

Senators advanced LB798 to the second round of debate on a 33-0 vote.

Constitutional amendment to expand TIF use considered

Nebraska municipalities would have greater flexibility to use tax-increment financing under a proposed constitutional amendment heard Feb. 17 by the Urban Affairs Committee.

Municipalities currently may use TIF to fund the redevelopment of areas designated as substandard and blighted. For a period of up to 15 years – or up to 20 years in extremely blighted areas – the property tax revenue from the redevelopment area is divided.

School districts and other taxing entities continue to receive property taxes based on a property's original value. The "increment," or new tax revenue generated by the property's increased value after development, is dedicated to repaying bonds or loans used to cover certain costs, including land acquisition, site preparation and public infrastructure like streets and utilities.

Under LR312CA, sponsored by Kearney Sen. Stan Clouse, municipalities could use TIF specifically for residential development projects and related public improvements. Taxes could be divided for up to 30 years for residential development purposes and up to 20 years for redevelopment.

Clouse said the proposal also would eliminate the constitutional requirement that an area be designated as blighted and substandard before TIF could be used.

If approved by the Legislature, the measure would be placed on the November 2026 general election ballot.

Clouse said the changes would make TIF more suitable for residential development, helping to address

Nebraska's shortage of more than 120,000 housing units.

He said residential housing projects typically generate tax increments more slowly than commercial or industrial projects, making the current 15-year TIF limit insufficient to cover infrastructure costs. Extending the limit to 30 years would allow for better financing terms and lower annual repayment costs for developers, Clouse said.

"This translates into lower overall project costs and, ultimately, more attainable home prices," he said.

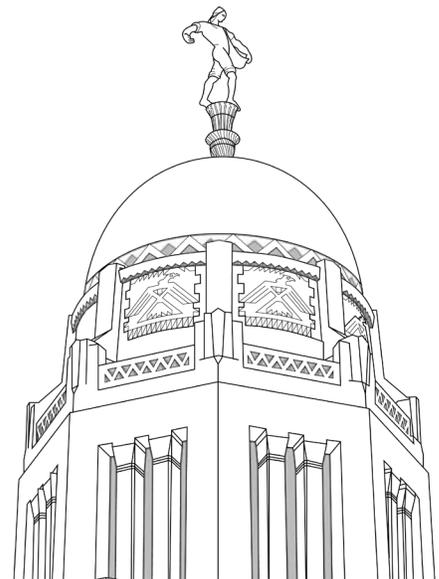
Trevor Lee testified in support of LR312CA on behalf of the Development Council for Buffalo County and the Nebraska Economic Developers Association. He said eliminating the blighted and substandard requirement might be even more important than extending the allowable TIF term.

"Removing that language and that requirement eliminates the legal fiction of labeling healthy neighborhoods or growth corridors as blighted just to unlock much-needed housing development tools," Lee said.

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



Sen. Stan Clouse



COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Monday, Feb. 23

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

- LB987 (Lonowski) Adopt the Vision Benefit Plan Act
- LB793 (Spivey) Change liability insurance and financial responsibility requirements relating to motor vehicles
- LB1042 (Rountree) Change provisions of the Uninsured and Underinsured Motorist Insurance Coverage Act relating to stacking of coverage
- LB1035 (M. Cavanaugh) Change and provide limitations on the rating system an insurer can file under the Property Casualty Insurance Rate and Form Act
- LB1157 (Hansen) Provide payment method requirements for health insurers, health insurer vendors, and care management organizations
- LB728 (Kauth) Require proxy advisors for companies to disclose whether a financial analysis was used for proxy services
- LB1198 (Prokop) Require paper tickets for certain large public events

Business & Labor Room 1200 - 1:30 p.m.

- *NOTE: LB1009 and LB1011 will be a combined hearing*
- **NOTE: LB1133 and LB1170 will be a combined hearing*
- LB1056 (Conrad) Change provisions of the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
- *LB1009 (Dungan) Change provisions relating to the date when compensation begins under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
- *LB1011 (Dungan) Change provisions relating to compensation for temporary disability under the Nebraska Workers' Compensation Act
- LB1077 (Brandt) Change provisions relating to workers' compensation insurance policies and deductibles
- **LB1133 (Kauth) Provide for payment of claims against the state
- **LB1170 (Wordekemper) Change provisions relating to filing and appealing claims against the state

General Affairs

Room 1023 - 1:30 p.m.

- Appointments:* Boyd L. Pedersen; Tyler C. Ritz - State Electrical Board
- Appointment:* Randall Conroy - State Racing & Gaming Commission
- Appointments:* Brenda Davis; Crystal Dunning; Shari Hofschire; Timothy Jeffrey; Lori Williams - Neb. Arts Council
- LB725 (Quick) Change provisions of the State Electrical Act
- LB1120 (Hansen) Authorize a progressive jackpot form of lottery and raffle under the Nebraska Lottery and Raffle Act and the Nebraska Small Lottery and Raffle Act

Tuesday, Feb. 24

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

- LB805 (Lonowski) Require insurance coverage for infant cranial helmets
- LB1142 (Hardin) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Visitors Development Act
- LB780 (Dungan) Require insurance coverage of eating disorders
- LB971 (Guereca) Require insurance coverage for rescue and maintenance asthma inhalers
- LB1069 (Dover) Require emergency care providers to submit claims to third-party payors
- LB1222 (Prokop) Require insurance coverage of acquired brain injury services and require insurance and medicaid coverage of certain testing and treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia
- LB939 (Murman) Adopt the Saving Human Connection Act

Education

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

- Appointment:* Jon Abegglen - Board of Educational Lands & Funds
- LB1262 (Andersen) Adopt the Foreign Adversaries Out of Postsecondary Education Act
- LB1051 (Education) Change a definition relating to the University of Nebraska
- LB1052 (Education) Change terminology relating to the Student Discipline Act

Urban Affairs

Room 1200 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1134 (Kauth) Change and provide limitations on updates to state and local building codes, electrical codes, and energy codes
- LB1227 (Andersen) Change provisions relating to local energy codes and local electrical codes
- LB1168 (Wordekemper) Authorize the issuance of conduit revenue bonds under the Community Development Law
- LB1250 (Guereca) Authorize certain cities and villages to sell waterworks, sewer systems, and water systems
- LB1129 (Dover) Change provisions of the Community Development Law

Wednesday, Feb. 25

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

- LB1159 (Lonowski) Require the naming of a person to the Nebraska Hall of Fame
- LB1019 (Dorn) Provide immunity from prosecution for trespass for county assessors
- LB1203 (Clouse) Provide for the treatment of uncashed checks issued by counties

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

- Appointments:* Kate Hesser; Katherine Kusek; Myra Stoney; April Dexter - Rural Health Advisory Commission
- LB777 (M. Cavanaugh) Provide for eligibility and reporting requirements under the medical assistance program
- LB949 (Ballard) Change provisions relating to the prescription drug monitoring program, the statewide health information exchange, and the Health Information Technology Board
- LB296 (Hallstrom) Urge the President of the United States and members of Congress to make permanent changes to the Child and Adult Food Programs

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Judiciary

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1084 (Storer) Change provisions relating to persons taken into emergency protective custody
- LB1040 (Kauth) Change provisions of the Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Act relating to grounds for civil commitment and inpatient treatment and allow for interested parties to file petitions
- LB1055 (DeBoer) Provide training requirements for an adult protective services official under the Adult Protective Services Act
- LB1060 (Murman) Adopt the Child Placement Services Preservation Act
- LR316CA (M. Cavanaugh) Constitutional amendment to provide for certain rights of persons with disabilities

Natural Resources

Room 1023 - 1:30 p.m.

- Appointments:* Lynn Mayhew; Amy Staples - Environmental Quality Council
- Appointment:* Dallen R. Juelfs - Oil & Gas Conservation Commission

Revenue

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1165 (von Gillern) Change provisions relating to the Key Employer and Jobs Retention Act, the ImagiNE Nebraska Act, and the Site and Building Development Act and create a grant program to help employers retain or attract employees
- LB974 (Conrad) Provide for an excise tax on individual incomes and create the Tax Equity Cash Fund
- LB1150 (Hunt) Prohibit the approval of certain applications under the ImagiNE Nebraska Act
- LB1037 (Raybould) Change provisions relating to negotiations and agreements between the Governor and federally recognized Indian Tribes relating to the collection and dissemination of any cigarette tax or certain other tobacco products tax collected on sales of such products made or sold on a federal recognized Indian tribe's Indian country
- LB931 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide an

- income tax credit related to premium payments for a qualified health plan
- LB802 (Revenue) Change individual income tax rates
- LB803 (Revenue) Change provisions relating to the listing of taxable tangible personal property
- LB901 (Revenue) Change the sales and use tax rate and provisions relating to fund distributions

Thursday, Feb. 26

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

- LB1081 (G. Meyer) Require state agencies and political subdivisions to purchase flags made in the United States
- LB1215 (McKinney) Adopt the Political Subdivision Contracting Transparency Act
- LB1256 (J. Cavanaugh) Redefine a term under the Emergency Management Act

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 12:30 p.m.

- Appointment:* David Owens - Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee
- Appointments:* Jim Ulrich; Tracy Zamora - Rural Health Advisory Commission
- LB746 (Hardin) Eliminate obsolete provisions of the Population Health Information Act
- LB796 (DeKay) Change provisions relating to the practice of pharmacy
- LB958 (M. Cavanaugh) Provide a requirement for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to 1915(c) waivers and define nursing facility level of care under the Medical Assistance Act
- LB734 (Hunt) Change waiver of work requirements under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- LB1200 (Guereca) Require industrial integrators to submit an annual disaster mitigation plan to the Department of Health and Human Services

Judiciary

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB943 (Dorn) Provide immunity from claims of public or private nuisance for motor vehicle racing facilities

- LB952 (Dorn) Create the Supreme Court Operations Cash Fund and terminate the Supreme Court Reports Cash Fund and the Court Appointed Special Advocate Fund
- LB909 (Hardin) Prohibit sexual abuse by a law enforcement officer
- LB910 (Hardin) Require defendants convicted of sexual offenses against children to pay a fee for electronic devices seized during prosecution
- LB1254 (Bostar) Prohibit sale of electronic smoking devices without a child safety feature
- LB1255 (Bostar) Prohibit public power suppliers from exercising the power of eminent domain

Friday, Feb. 27

Education

Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB1216 (McKinney) Provide for educational services for prisoners

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

- LB1002 (M. Cavanaugh) Change provisions relating to filings under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act
- LB1017 (Raybould) Provide a limit on contributions made to a candidate committee under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act
- LB1018 (Raybould) Change provisions relating to prohibited expenditures by committees under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act

Health & Human Services

Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

- 1115 Waiver on Retro Eligibility Period (as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-604)*

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

Judiciary

Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.

NOTE: This hearing will operate under annotated committee guidelines

**NOTE: LB854 & LB906 will be a combined hearing*

***NOTE: LB881 & LB963 will be a combined hearing*

*LB854 (Hunt) Prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings or disguises and require them to wear appropriate identification

*LB906 (Juarez) Prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings or disguises and require officers to wear appropriate identification

**LB881 (Guereca) Require law enforce-

ment agencies, jails, and the Nebraska State Patrol to receive approval prior to entering into agreements to enforce immigration law

**LB963 (McKinney) Prohibit agreements by state agencies relating to immigration enforcement without legislative approval and change provisions relating to the use of state prisons

LB907 (Juarez) Prohibit law enforcement officers from entering community safe spaces to enforce immigration law

Nebraska Retirement Systems

Room 1525 - 12:00 p.m.

LB1095 (Andersen) Change provisions relating to the duties of the Nebraska

Investment Council, the state investment officer, and the State Treasurer LB885 (Andersen) Allow the Governor to remove the state investment officer from office and eliminate the need for cause for removal of the state investment officer

Rules

Room 1200 - 12:00 p.m.

**NOTE: Rule Changes #1 & #2 will be a combined hearing*

*Rule Change #1 (found on page 610 of the legislative journal)

*Rule Change #2 (found on page 611 of the legislative journal)

Rule Change #3 (found on page 777 of the legislative journal) ■

GET LEGISLATIVE NEWS ONLINE

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

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- Bill would require insurance coverage for certain pediatric disorders
- Constitutional amendment to expand TIF use considered
- Deputy county assessor authorization advanced

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- Legislative calendar

LEGISLATIVE GLOSSARY

“A” Bill - see Appropriation Bill.

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

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

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

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

Bill - see Legislative Bill.

Bracket - to delay consideration of a bill.

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

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

Chair - the presiding officer.

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

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

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

“E” Clause - see Emergency Clause.

E&R - see Enrollment and Review.

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

Engrossment - the process of preparing a bill for Final Read-

ing by incorporating all adopted amendments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indefinitely Postpone (IPP) - to kill a bill.

Interim - the period between regular legislative sessions.

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

IPP - see Indefinitely Postpone.

Journal - see Legislative Journal.

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

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

Legislative History - the committee and floor debate records



for any bill. A history includes transcripts of the bill's hearing and all floor debate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Override a Veto - see Veto Override.

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

Presiding Officer - the senator currently presiding over legislative proceedings.

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

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

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

Resolution - see Legislative Resolution.

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

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

may be printed in the Legislative Journal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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