

## Gaming updates clear first round

Lawmakers amended and advanced a bill from general file Feb. 9 that would make a series of changes to the state's racetrack gaming industry.

LB1001, introduced by the General Affairs Committee at the request of the Nebraska Racing and Gaming Commission, would update laws governing racetrack operations, wagering distribution, horse registration, simulcasting and problem gambling oversight.

Among other provisions, the bill would:

- allow racetracks to petition the commission for waivers or modifications of minimum race requirements under specific circumstances;
- mandate timely registration of Nebraska-bred thoroughbreds and quarter horses;
- update racetrack licensing and simulcasting regulations;
- transfer oversight and funding of the Nebraska Commission on Problem Gaming from the state Department of Revenue to the Racing and Gaming Commission;
- authorize gaming tax proceeds to support problem gambling programs; and
- allow 19-year-olds to participate in keno at licensed racetrack enclosures in an area separate from the casino gaming floor.

A committee amendment would limit the commission's authority to waive or modify race requirements to only cases in which a racetrack is un-



Sen. Rick Holdcroft said LB1001 would clarify and strengthen horse racing rules in Nebraska.

able to conduct the required number of live racing days due to "natural events" beyond its control or conditions that make the track unsuitable for racing.

The amendment also would remove a 30-day residency exception for certain mares and instead allow the residency requirement to be waived, and would provide for a waiver from the 90-day requirement that a dam be in Nebraska continuously prior to foaling.

Bellevue Sen. Rick Holdcroft, committee chairperson, said the measure would modernize Nebraska laws governing a number of aspects of racetrack operations in the state and includes funding for problem gambling programs.

"LB1001 improves problem gam-

bling oversight by ... adding annual gaming tax proceeds as a funding source for treatment and prevention programs," he said.

The committee amendment also adds provisions of two additional bills, LB828 and LB1047.

LB828, originally introduced by Niobrara Sen. Barry DeKay, would broaden the definition of "operator" in laws governing gift enterprises and savings promotion raffles.



Sen. Barry DeKay

DeKay said Nebraska is one of only two states that prohibit nonprofits from operating gift enterprises, also known as sweepstakes, and that the amend-

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ment would allow such entities to use gift enterprises as a fundraising tool.

LB1047, sponsored by Holdcroft, would expand the Nebraska Bingo Act to include music bingo, in which winning outcomes are based on song titles, musical artists or music genres. It also would increase the amount that can be charged for each bingo card from 25 cents to \$1 and the maximum prize amount that a licensed organization may award from \$25 to \$50 per game.

Music bingo could be conducted only under a special event bingo permit and the amendment would increase from two to four the number of special event bingo permits a qualifying nonprofit could obtain annually.

Following adoption of the committee amendment on a 34-0 vote, lawmakers advanced LB1001 to select file 37-0. ■

# Executive Board issues reprimand of Cavanaugh

The Executive Board issued a formal reprimand of Omaha Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh Feb. 12 for removing parts of a Capitol poster display earlier this year.

In January, Cavanaugh removed posters outside her Capitol office that are part of a display to celebrate the upcoming 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Her actions prompted Gov. Jim Pillen to call for an investigation into possible criminal charges related to the incident, and prompted David City Sen. Jared Storm to ask the Executive Board to reprimand her.

Cavanaugh apologized soon after, saying she did not realize that the display had been approved by the Capitol Commission, and that the posters were promptly returned undamaged.

In a letter signed unanimously by the Executive Board and read into the Legislature’s official record, the committee called Cavanaugh’s actions “unbecoming of a member of the Nebraska Legislature.”

“This incident has sparked significant public controversy and criticism from Nebraska citizens who hold their elected officials to a higher standard of professionalism,” the letter continued.

In a floor speech following entry of the letter into the record, Cavanaugh reiterated her apology. She said she remained concerned that a criminal investigation might be ongoing, however, in spite of the Executive Board letter indicating that it was not.

“That is not a small thing,” Cavanaugh said. “It is serious, and it should concern every member of this body when disagreements within this building escalate to that level.”

No further action was taken in regard to the reprimand. ■

## UNICAMERAL UPDATE

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# APPROPRIATIONS

## Changes sought to Medicaid long-term care program

The Appropriations Committee heard testimony Feb. 9 on a measure that seeks to provide greater funding flexibility for Medicaid beneficiaries who choose to transition from institutional long-term care settings to alternative home and community-based settings.

LB1143, sponsored by Sen. Brian Hardin of Gering, would require the state Department of Health and Human Services to submit an application to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, no later than Dec. 31, to establish a Money Follows the Person program to assist qualified individuals in transitioning from an institutional setting to a community setting while continuing to receive long-term care.



Sen. Brian Hardin

In addition, if the department uses an amount that differs from the identified appropriation in calculating nursing facility rates for a prospective rate period, the bill would require that information to be included in the department’s annual report to the Legislature on nursing facility rate calculations.

Hardin said the bill would align with DHHS’s priority of “person-centered care” for individuals who need long-term services and would provide responsible management of Medicaid resources.

“The bottom line is that most people don’t really want to be institutionalized,” he said. “They would prefer to age in place, to age at home if they can.”

Drew Gonshorowski, director of

the DHHS Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care, testified in favor of the proposal. He said the department currently lacks discretion to direct funds appropriated for long-term care to settings other than nursing homes.

“DHHS supports a [Money Follows the Person] program, as it focuses on ensuring that patients who require long-term care are served in their preferred setting – whether at home or in a long-term care facility – so long as it is clinically appropriate,” Gonshorowski said.

Opposition focused on the portion of the bill that would allow the department to use an amount different from the identified legislative appropriation for calculating nursing home provider rates.

Heath Boddy, president of Vetter Senior Living in Omaha, opposed the bill. He said specific language was put in state law requiring rates to be set using the dollar amount earmarked by the Legislature for that purpose after approximately \$30 million was appropriated for provider rates but used by DHHS for other priorities over a number of years.

Jay Colburn spoke against LB1143 on behalf of the Nebraska Health Care Association, Nebraska Hospital Association and York General Health Care Services. Also focusing on the proposed change to provider rate calculations, he said the bill would “shroud what would be a revenue grab from skilled nursing providers under the guise of a Money Follows the Person [program].”

“Before 2019 ... the department would utilize funds intended for nursing home rates to fill other gaps in programs they preferred,” Colburn said. “What the Unicameral appropriated was not directed to where it was intended and the dollars were lost in the formulas used by the [department].”

The committee took no immediate action on the proposal.

# BANKING, COMMERCE & INSURANCE



## AI safety regulations considered

The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee heard testimony Feb. 9 on two bills aimed at regulating companies that provide artificial intelligence services.

LB1083, introduced by Whitman Sen. Tanya Storer, would require “large frontier” AI developers and large chatbot providers to create and publicly post plans describing how they assess and attempt to reduce “catastrophic” risks to the public and to children specifically.



Sen. Tanya Storer

A large frontier developer is defined as an AI developer who, together with its affiliates, had a collective annual revenue in the preceding calendar year of \$500 million or more.

Catastrophic risk is defined as a risk that would contribute materially to the serious injury or death of more than 50 people or cause more than \$1 billion in damage or property loss arising from a single incident involving a frontier developer.

A covered chatbot service is one that is likely to be accessed by minors and has at least one million active users monthly.

Finally, the bill would require certain AI safety incidents be reported to the attorney general, authorize the AG to update key definitions beginning Jan. 1, 2027, allow enforcement through civil penalties and prohibit retaliation against employees who provide “good faith” warnings about potential risks.

Storer said the measure takes a “light approach” to AI regulation and

would not stifle startups or innovation because it applies only to the largest developers. The bill also would comply with President Trump’s recent executive order regarding AI regulation, she said, which specifically allows states to put parameters around the technology as it relates to minors.

AI presents particular risks to children, Storer said, noting several recent cases where teens have taken their lives with the encouragement of chatbots. Parents need to know that the state is addressing these risks, she said, and companies that already are doing the right thing should not have difficulty complying with the bill.

“Nebraska has an opportunity to lead, not with heavy-handed regulation, but with transparency,” Storer said. “We owe it to families in our state and especially to children, to know that companies deploying the most powerful AI systems in history are being honest with us about the risks.”

Andrew Doris of the Secure AI Project testified in support of the proposal. AI developers need room to innovate and improve safety practices, he said, and most legislators lack the expertise to write highly technical regulations specific to the industry.

“We think that the smart way to balance these two truths is to allow AI developers to write their own safety standards, but require them to be transparent about what they are, so we can hold them to their own promises” Doris said.

Bebe Strnad of the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office also testified in favor, saying the bill strikes the right balance between the interests of industry and consumers. LB1083 leaves all technical decisions up to developers and experts, she said, but gives the state the tools to hold companies accountable if they fall short of their own standards.

“We’ve heard many stories about AI products encouraging alarming conduct

and even inducing tragic outcomes,” Strnad said. “As a state, we can’t ignore these stories and do nothing.”

The committee also considered LB1185, sponsored by Sen. Eliot Bostar of Lincoln, which would adopt the Conversational Artificial Intelligence Safety Act.



Sen. Eliot Bostar

Bostar said minors can easily become confused about whether they are in conversation with a chatbot or an actual human being, leading to exposure to adult content or emotional reliance on technology that was not created to act in their best interests.

“Conversational AI tools are increasingly designed to simulate human conversation in ways that can feel personal, emotional and real,” Bostar said. “For minors, those design features can create real risks.”

LB1185 would require disclosure when a user reasonably could believe that they are interacting with a human being and would add additional safeguards for minor account holders, including:

- recurring AI disclaimers;
- limits on engagement-based rewards; and
- deployment of reasonable measures to prevent sexually explicit or sexualizing content and to prevent the system from presenting itself as human or fostering emotional or romantic dependence.

The bill also would require a protocol to respond to prompts involving suicidal ideation or self-harm that includes referral to crisis services, and would prohibit a service from claiming to be designed to provide professional mental or behavioral health care.

The attorney general would be empowered to enforce the bill’s provi-

sions through civil action.

Mary Pipher, a clinical psychologist, supported the measure. She said social media has exposed a generation of young people to an array of dangers and that children seeking mental health guidance from chatbots is particularly concerning.

“When children use chatbots as therapists, they’re likely to be in a great deal of trouble,” Pipher said.

Also speaking in support of LB1185 was Emily Allen, executive director of Tech Nebraska, a statewide industry association under the umbrella of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The bill “strikes a workable balance” between safety and industry flexibility, she said, by not creating a private right of action and not making AI developers automatically liable for how third parties use their products.

“We view this bill as a constructive starting point for smart regulation — policy that protects people while still allowing innovation to move forward,” Allen said.

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

**Bill would target fraudulent social media ads**

The Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee heard testimony Feb. 10 on a measure that seeks to hold accountable social media platforms that accept paid advertising.

LB1118, sponsored by Sen. Carolyn Bosn of Lincoln, would update the state’s Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act to treat certain



Sen. Carolyn Bosn

conduct by social media platforms that

accept paid advertising as a deceptive trade practice.

A fraudulent advertisement is defined as one that misrepresents material facts or unlawfully impersonates another in order to induce a transaction or extract a benefit. A platform that knowingly permits fraudulent advertising or ignores credible reports would be guilty of a deceptive trade practice.

Bosn said deceptive advertising is “everywhere” online and often targets and exploits seniors, young people and those who are in financial distress. Enforcement gaps have emerged in the fight against this type of fraud, she said, because existing consumer protection laws weren’t designed to guard against it.

“These ads don’t just waste people’s money, they cause real harm,” she said.

Bosn said social media platforms use sophisticated algorithms to target users, and those same systems easily could be used to target fraudulent advertisers. LB1118 would provide clear expectations, accountability and an incentive for social media platforms to go after bad actors, she said.

Under the bill, a platform that accepts any form of compensation or thing of value for advertising would be in violation for failure to establish and implement the following:

- identity verification for advertisers;
- an unlawful impersonation detection and mitigation program;
- automated and manual fraud detection systems;
- measures to prevent repeated offenses by the same advertiser;
- a clear and conspicuous tool for users to report suspected fraud; and
- a process for law enforcement to report suspected fraudulent advertisements.

The measure also would require platforms, within seven days, to investigate

and determine if a reported ad is fraudulent and remove it from the platform.

Paul Benda, executive vice president for risk, fraud and cybersecurity at the American Bankers Association, testified in favor of the proposal. He said online scams have cost many people their life savings and that social media platforms must do more to protect their users because banks cannot fight fraud alone.

For example, he said, up to 10% of Meta’s revenue, over \$16 billion, can be linked to scam ads.

“Unless every player in the fraud ecosystem accepts their responsibility, the criminals will continue to victimize America on an unprecedented scale,” Benda said.

Also speaking in favor of LB1118 was Joyce Beck. Testifying on behalf of AARP Nebraska, she said many fraudulent ads target older Americans and often remain online even after they’ve been reported, continuing to deceive others.

For example, she said, the Federal Trade Commission reports that fraud losses among those 60 and older quadrupled from 2020 to 2024, rising from \$600 million to \$2.4 billion – with those originating on social media accounting for the most significant losses.

“Gaps in advertising verification and platform oversight have allowed fraudulent, impersonation-based ads to flourish, causing devastating financial and emotional harm,” Beck said.

Megan Stokes, representing the Computer and Communications Industry Association, testified in opposition. She said social media platforms take fraud seriously by investing heavily in protecting users, working closely with law enforcement and financial platforms and removing millions of pieces of harmful content each year.

By not allowing enough time for platforms to complete thorough in-

vestigations into fraud reports, Stokes said, LB1118 could harm legitimate businesses and advertisers and limit consumer access to lawful products.

In addition, she said, online fraud is an interstate problem that would best be addressed through coordinated federal action that also involves banks and payment processors.

“Targeting a narrow slice of online advertising will not stop bad actors,” Stokes said, “It will simply push them elsewhere.”

The committee took no immediate action on the proposal.



**Workplace safety committee bill amended, advanced to final round**

A bill that would eliminate an unfunded state program was amended to allow for optional public-sector workplace safety committees before being advanced to final reading Feb. 9.

LB397, as introduced last session by Columbus Sen. Mike Moser, would repeal the

Workplace Safety Consultation Program. Under the program, the state Department of Labor is authorized



Sen. Mike Moser

to conduct workplace inspections and consultations to determine whether employers are complying with standards issued by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

During select file debate, Omaha Sen. John Cavanaugh offered an amendment that would reinstate workplace safety committee require-

ments for public sector employers to ensure that the department could provide direct oversight to employees not covered by OSHA.

“We need to ensure that our firefighters, our police officers [and] our public works [employees] ... have some workplace safety protections,” he said.

The amendment was adopted on a 44-0 vote. Cavanaugh then offered another amendment, adopted 38-1, to instead allow, but not require, public sector employers to establish such committees.

Moser supported the amendment to make workplace safety committees voluntary for public sector employers.

“By making it [optional] ... it is acceptable to me and it is acceptable to the Department of Labor,” Moser said.

Sen. Dunixi Guereca of Omaha supported both amendments, saying the change would help address the bill’s “unintended consequence” of leaving public sector employees without proper protections. Safety committees exist to address seemingly small safety concerns within the workplace that could lead to potentially dangerous or fatal incidents, he said.

“Let’s make sure these checks and balances are in place to [ensure] our workers are safe,” Guereca said. “We’re talking about a program that is a minimal cost to the employer, but it could potentially save lives.”

Following adoption of the Cavanaugh amendments, senators advanced LB397 to final reading 42-0.

### Civil action proposed for paid sick leave violations

The Business and Labor Committee considered a proposal Feb. 9 to reinstate protections against employers who violate provisions of a voter-approved paid sick leave ballot initiative.

In November 2024, voters ap-

proved the Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act to provide eligible employees the right to earn and use paid sick leave for family health needs based on the size of their employer — up to 40 hours annually for employers with fewer than 20 employees and 56 hours for businesses with more than 20 employees.

Among other changes, the act was amended last session to remove protections for workers who face retaliation from their employer for using paid sick leave and the ability for employees to seek restitution for earned sick leave that was not granted.

LB1089, introduced by Seward Sen. Jana Hughes, would reinstate those protections under the act and allow employees to bring a civil action up to one year after a violation.



Sen. Jana Hughes

Hughes said the current “loophole” could prevent workers from receiving the paid leave to which they are entitled. For example, she said, employers could pay less in fines under existing law for an initial violation of the act than it would cost them to provide a week of paid sick leave to a minimum wage worker.

“[Reinstating] the private cause of action ... serves as a strong deterrent to violating the Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act,” Hughes said. “Without [it], bad actors could deny their employees paid leave.”

Jo Giles of the Women’s Fund of Omaha supported the proposal, saying 75% of Nebraska voters supported providing those protections to workers. Many employees have shared with the organization that they have not used their paid sick leave due to fear of reduced hours, losing their jobs or other retribution, she said.

“While we know most employers in

Nebraska ... would not operate in such an unscrupulous manner, there could potentially be some instances where employees need to be protected from these predatory employment practices,” Giles said. “[LB1089] addresses this by providing a mechanism for employees to pursue legal action in these instances.”

Ryan McIntosh testified in opposition to the measure on behalf of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a number of other business organizations.

He said the bill’s “broad” protections could result in actions against employers who do not comply with other portions of the Nebraska Healthy Families and Workplaces Act, such as failure to display a poster outlining leave policies.

“The act continues to be a compliance trap for employers and confusing for employees,” McIntosh said. “We would request the cause of action be limited only to the failure to supply sick leave or for retaliatory conduct, not for mundane, unintentional violations of the act.”

The committee took no immediate action on LB1089.

## EDUCATION



### Elimination of GED age requirement advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 9 to a bill that would remove an age requirement for obtaining a general education development diploma.

Current state law allows 16 and 17-year-olds to take the GED exam, but requires a person to be at least 18 to receive their diploma.

LB745, sponsored by Sen. Margo Juarez of Omaha, would allow an

individual who has completed all GED requirements to receive their diploma from the Commissioner of Education no matter their age.



Sen. Margo Juarez

Juarez said the issue was brought to her attention by a constituent whose daughter finished her GED requirements at age 16 but was unable to receive her diploma because she was not yet 18.

“This statutory delay creates unnecessary burdens on young people who have met all the academic requirements and are ready to move on to the next stage of their lives,” Juarez said.

Seward Sen. Jana Hughes supported the bill, saying she was surprised that the age requirement was still in Nebraska law.

“Home-school kids sometimes take this GED test for their high school degree and ... waiting until you’re 18 [to receive the diploma] absolutely makes no sense,” Hughes said.

Lawmakers advanced LB745 to select file on a 42-0 vote.

**Nest program expansion advanced**

Senators gave first-round approval Feb. 10 to a bill that would expand eligible uses of Nebraska educational savings plan trust accounts.

Under LB748, introduced by Elkhorn Sen. Tony Sorrentino, families could use NEST accounts for education-related expenses beyond K-12 and postsecondary tuition, including books, tutoring and online instructional materials, beginning Jan. 1, 2029.



Sen. Tony Sorrentino

The bill would increase the an-

nual withdrawal cap from \$10,000 to \$20,000 and expand eligible uses to qualified postsecondary credentialing programs, such as career and technical certifications.

Additionally, the measure would allow the State Treasurer’s Office to enter agreements with recognized postsecondary credentialing programs, excluding those related to investment of program funds, and to make payments directly to those programs on behalf of beneficiaries.

Sorrentino said LB748 would align Nebraska law with federal changes to 529 plans enacted in July of 2025 as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, provide uniformity and make Nebraska’s 529 program more attractive to families nationwide, potentially increasing participation and state revenue.

Seward Sen. Jana Hughes spoke in support of the measure, saying it would help families afford rising education costs, including things like room and board, which, she said, has risen in recent years at University of Nebraska campuses.

Sen. Fred Meyer of St. Paul also supported LB748. Nebraska needs to ensure that students and parents can access the education that best suits their needs, he said.

Lincoln Sen. Danielle Conrad said the measure offers practical benefits and highlights that career paths are not limited to the traditional four-year college route.

“I think that is very good for addressing workforce challenges and providing additional opportunities for Nebraskans to utilize a pathway for building careers in the trades,” she said.

Conrad noted, however, that 529 plans tend to benefit wealthier families and can be harder for rural and less wealthy families to access.

Lawmakers advanced LB748 to select file on a 29-0 vote.

**Early intervention system considered for at-risk students**

A measure aimed at helping Nebraska schools identify and support students showing early signs of trauma, disengagement or other risk factors was considered by the Education Committee Feb. 10.

LB855, introduced by Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney, would establish the Youth Early Intervention and Support Act and create a statewide framework for schools to identify and assist students experiencing chronic absenteeism, academic decline or other warning signs.



Sen. Terrell McKinney

Under the bill, the state Department of Education, in consultation with the state Department of Health and Human Services, would develop an early support system for public school districts to identify students who exhibit two or more indicators, including:

- chronic or sudden changes in attendance;
- declining academic performance or incomplete work;
- persistent or unusual behavioral challenges;
- lack of classroom engagement;
- observable hygiene concerns, such as body odor or unwashed clothing; and
- documented or disclosed exposure to adverse childhood experiences.

School districts would establish youth support teams made up of counselors, teachers, community health workers, public health liaisons and family advocates to review data, assess needs, engage families, coordinate services and monitor interventions.

Additionally, LB855 would provide

student privacy protections, require compliance with federal privacy laws and prohibit referrals to law enforcement or child welfare agencies based solely on early warning indicators unless there is imminent risk.

McKinney said signs of distress such as chronic absenteeism, falling grades and behavioral changes frequently go unaddressed, and LB855 would encourage earlier support that could help keep some youth out of state systems.

“Too often our response doesn’t come until those warning signs escalate into juvenile justice involvement or child welfare intervention,” McKinney said. “By that point, the harm is deep, the response is more expensive and the outcomes are worse.”

Chloe Fowler testified in support of the measure on behalf of the Nebraska Children’s Commission, saying the bill would fill a critical gap in early intervention, since schools frequently are the first place that issues appear. Too often, she said, problems go unaddressed until families are in crisis, resulting in punitive measures rather than support.

“Children should not be punished for struggling,” Fowler said. “They ought to be supported by the systems provided by the government and from those in their community.”

Connor Herbert, representing the Nebraska Commission on African American Affairs, also testified in support of the bill. Black youth make up about 8% of Nebraska’s youth population, he said, but account for 28% of arrests and 24% of juvenile court filings, highlighting their disproportionate involvement in the justice system.

Earlier identification and support could help reduce that disparity and prevent unnecessary system contact, Herbert said.

“By investing earlier and responding to root causes, Nebraska can reduce later involvement in costly sys-

tems, support families more effectively and improve long-term educational and life outcomes,” he said.

No one testified in opposition to LB855 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

**Bill advanced to end human relations teaching certificate requirement**

Prospective teachers, substitutes and administrators no longer would be required to complete human relations training in order to be certified in Nebraska under a bill advanced from general file Feb. 10.

Glenvil Sen. Dave Murman, sponsor of LB1022, said he introduced the measure after receiving a call from a Nebraskan hoping to become a substitute teacher. In spite of a long career in the armed forces, he said, the individual had to complete a human relations course before earning their certification.



Sen. Dave Murman

Such barriers exacerbate the state’s teacher shortage and are redundant, Murman said, because a college degree also is a precondition for certification and university general education requirements already include courses about interaction with diverse cultures.

He said the Education Committee has been “laser focused” in recent years on creating incentives and removing state-level barriers that keep qualified Nebraskans from entering the teaching profession.

“Our schools need more teachers,” Murman said. “There’s no doubt about it.”

Supporting the proposal was Seward Sen. Jana Hughes, who said she obtained a substitute teaching

certificate during the pandemic to assist her local school district when many teachers had to be absent due to coronavirus exposure.

Hughes said the human relations course did not help her prepare to manage a classroom and that such requirements are barriers to individuals who want to serve their communities.

Sen. Terrell McKinney of Omaha opposed the measure. Human relations training leads to better understanding of the diverse society we live in, he said, and enables classroom leaders to address racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

Nebraska does not have a “pipeline” full of future teachers from diverse backgrounds, he said, and making sure that teachers understand the ways in which bias impacts educational achievement is critical, especially given the country’s current political climate.

“How is a teacher who doesn’t understand human relations supposed to connect with a student whose parent was just pulled away by ICE ... who went to sleep hungry last night ... a student whose parent is incarcerated?” McKinney said.

Bennington Sen. Wendy DeBoer agreed. She said her sister, who took a human relations course to earn her substitute teaching certificate, learned important insight into how students’ life experiences impact their learning styles.

Sen. Ashlei Spivey of Omaha suggested that a means of demonstrating competency in human relations might be a better alternative than eliminating the existing requirement altogether based on the possibly mistaken assumption that everyone with a college degree already has been exposed to important human relations concepts.

Murman, however, indicated that he was not interested in amending LB1022 in that manner.

Lawmakers then voted 28-7 to advance the measure to select file.

**Tribal college investment program considered**

A bill aimed at increasing funding for Nebraska’s tribal colleges through a public-private partnership was discussed by the Education Committee Feb. 9.

LB1184, introduced by Omaha Sen. John Fredrickson, would establish the Nebraska Tribal College Investment Act and a fund to be administered by the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.



Sen. John Fredrickson

Under the measure, eligible tribal colleges, which are federally recognized land-grant institutions, could apply annually for state grants if they raise an equal amount in new private funding through donations, gifts or grants.

Fredrickson said the bill was crafted with the state’s current fiscal constraints in mind and does not appropriate any general funds at this time. Instead, the measure would create a framework for future investment when budget conditions allow, he said, through a public-private partnership model that encourages philanthropic support while preserving legislative oversight.

Leaders from Nebraska’s two tribal colleges – Little Priest Tribal College and Nebraska Indian Community College – testified in support of LB1184, describing longstanding funding gaps that limit infrastructure development, student services and program growth.

Manoj Patil, president of Little Priest Tribal College, called the measure a fiscally responsible way to strengthen educational opportunities and support long-term sustainability.

“Predictable, affordable funding

is vital for tribal colleges to continue serving our students and communities,” Patil said.

Michael Oltrogge, president of Nebraska Indian Community College, said the state’s tribal colleges generate \$19.2 million annually for Nebraska’s economy and support 337 jobs while operating with far fewer resources than other higher education institutions.

LB1184 would help address funding gaps and allow tribal colleges to expand their impact in rural and underserved communities without requiring immediate state spending, he said.

Also testifying in support was Laila Petite, Little Priest Tribal College student senate president. Tribal colleges offer smaller class sizes and hands-on learning while providing culturally relevant education for Native American students, she said, but they are limited by budget constraints.

“LB1184 would make a meaningful difference by keeping Little Priest affordable, supporting high-quality faculty, updating learning spaces and expanding academic support so students like me can graduate prepared for the workforce,” Petite said.

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



**Recall option proposed for statewide office holders**

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee considered a proposed constitutional amendment Feb. 11 that would allow Nebraska voters to recall statewide office holders.

If passed by the Legislature, LR-

305CA, introduced by Central City Sen. Loren Lippincott, would put the question before voters at the 2026 general election. If approved by voters, the Legislature would have to adopt enacting legislation to establish procedures for the process.



Sen. Loren Lippincott

Current state law allows for the recall of local elected officials. State senators, the governor and lieutenant governor, secretary of state, state treasurer, attorney general and auditor of public accounts would be covered under the proposed constitutional amendment.

Lippincott said an elected official who is acting in bad faith could do considerable harm before voters have an opportunity to vote them out of office at the next regular election. In light of that, he said, the recall option should apply equally to all who serve in public office.

Other states with similar rules have shown that the power of recall is rarely exercised and even more rarely successful, Lippincott said, noting that only two governors have ever been successfully recalled.

“At its core, this resolution is about reinforcing a fundamental principle of Nebraska government,” he said, “and that is that ultimate authority rests with the people.”

Jessie McGrath testified in favor of the proposal. She said recall powers would give voters another option for action if, for example, a statewide elected official engaged in self-dealing and the attorney general refused to investigate.

“It is an effective way to have the citizenry hold elected officials accountable and hold those officials to doing their job” McGrath said.

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

# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

## Pre-approval for certain public health measures passed

Lawmakers gave final approval Feb. 12 to a measure that puts constraints around community-wide directed health measures.

LB203, introduced last session by Omaha Sen. Kathleen Kauth, requires approval by a board of health before a community-wide directed health measure can take effect.



Sen. Kathleen Kauth

The bill defines a community-wide directed health measure as a public health action or intervention by a local public health department involving the total population of the department's jurisdiction when there are no known epidemiological links.

LB203 requires a public health director to receive written approval from a majority of the publicly elected representatives who are appointed to the city-county health department prior to a measure being issued. Such approval will expire seven days after issuance unless renewed by a vote of the local health board, and continuing approval will be required every seven days thereafter.

Emergency meetings may be called to vote on such measures and virtual conferencing may be used to carry out the bill's provisions.

Senators approved LB203 on a 35-12 vote.

## Health care certificate of need timeline extended

A bill that extends an application

timeline for Nebraska health care facilities seeking to expand or increase capacity was approved Feb. 12.

The Nebraska Health Care Certificate of Need Act requires providers to demonstrate a need for their projects before opening new facilities, expanding existing facilities, increasing bed capacity or purchasing advanced technology.

Currently, applicants have one year to demonstrate certificate of need compliance with the option to appeal to the state Department of Health and Human Services for a one-year extension.

LB437, sponsored by Sen. Merv Riepe of Ralston, extends the timeline for compliance to three years, while retaining the possible one-year extension.



Sen. Merv Riepe

Lawmakers approved the bill on a 47-0 vote.

## Central registry, prevention case changes approved

Lawmakers gave final approval Feb. 12 to a bill that establishes an appeals process for individuals before their names are added to either of two state registries dealing with abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults and children.

Current Nebraska law requires the state Department of Health and Human Services to keep records of individuals whom the department or courts have found responsible for abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult in what is known as the central registry.

The registry includes both the Adult Protective Services Central Registry and Central Registry of Child Protection Cases.

LB668, sponsored by Sen. Tanya Storer of Whitman, prohibits an

individual from being entered on the registry prior to being notified of the right to contest the determination.



Sen. Tanya Storer

The bill requires notification by certified mail at least 14 calendar days prior to a person's entry on the central registry, offering them an opportunity for appeal pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act.

LB668 also allows DHHS to provide information to families with prevention cases about community resources to assist them in situations that are alleged in a report but that an investigation has found do not require further action by the department.

A prevention case is defined as one in which:

- at least one juvenile in the home is a candidate for foster care;
- there is not an ongoing juvenile court case or a case with the department;
- ongoing child welfare services are not required to maintain the child's safety; and
- the family is voluntarily engaging with services through community resources.

The measure passed on a 47-0 vote.

## Temporary event license for visiting body artists amended, advanced

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 9 to a bill that would create a temporary event license for body artists visiting Nebraska from other states.

LB720, introduced by Grand Island Sen. Dan Quick, would require the state Department of Health and Human Services to create a temporary, nonrenewable event license for body artists licensed in other states to prac-

tice for no more than seven consecutive days at a Nebraska licensed body art facility.

Under the bill, an individual who applies for a temporary event license must provide a form of photo identification, a copy of their body art license and a sponsorship letter from the owner or operator of the licensed facility at which they will practice.

Temporary event licenses would cost \$50 and the department would be authorized to conduct in-person inspections of the body art facility where an event will occur.

Quick said the state's current licensing structure makes it difficult to attract tattoo conventions and specialty events to Nebraska, which results in a loss of revenue.

Offering a temporary event license would bring new dollars directly into the local economy and make Nebraska more competitive with other states that already provide a workable licensure pathway for visiting artists, he said.

"[LB720] supports small businesses, encourages tourism and positions Nebraska as a welcoming, well-regulated destination for body art events — all without compromising safety or increasing regulatory burdens," Quick said.

A Health and Human Services Committee amendment, adopted 38-0, would allow body artists to obtain up to two temporary event licenses within a 12-month period.

Senators advanced LB720 to select file on a 38-0 vote.

### Midwifery measure considered

The Health and Human Services Committee heard testimony Feb. 12 on a proposal that seeks to expand birthing options for Nebraska mothers.



Sen. Dan Quick

LB1234, introduced by Blair Sen. Ben Hansen, would create the Freestanding Birth Center Act, which would establish an accreditation process for birth centers with the primary purpose of midwifery practice.



Sen. Ben Hansen

Among other provisions, the bill would require birth centers to be accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers, or be in the process of obtaining accreditation, to be eligible for a license. In addition, it would require birth centers to employ a clinical director who is a certified nurse midwife.

Admission to a birth center would be limited to low-risk, uncomplicated pregnancies with anticipated vaginal delivery. Birth centers would be prohibited from providing epidurals or other general anesthesia, inducing labor during the first or second stages and using vacuum extractors, vaginal forceps or continuous fetal monitoring.

Hansen offered an amendment at the hearing that would replace the bill with a modified proposal, which also would expand the practice authority of certified nurse-midwives, establish licensure for certified professional midwives, require the state Department of Health and Human Services to provide Medicaid coverage for doula services and allow doulas to practice in freestanding birth centers.

Hansen said that although freestanding birth centers already are licensed in Nebraska, current midwifery restrictions have made the centers "unworkable," limiting women's birthing rights. He noted that 73% of birth centers are staffed by certified practical midwives and 39 states already provide CPM licensure.

"We need to join the rest of the

country and let [women] birth in birth centers [with the] midwives and doulas they desire," Hansen said.

Joy Kathurima of I Be Black Girl testified in support. She said the bill and proposed amendment would remove "bureaucratic red tape" that currently prevents women — especially those from underserved and underrepresented communities who may feel unsafe in a hospital setting — from receiving the care they want and deserve.

"Freestanding birth centers create an option for lower-risk clients to choose [to experience] their prenatal care and birth in an environment where they feel safe, listened to and cared for," Kathurima said.

Chandra Stewart, a certified professional midwife, also testified in support of the bill. She said freestanding birth centers provide low-risk individuals with an affordable birthing option in a state that has the highest out-of-pocket childbirth costs in the country.

"Nebraska hospitals have an absolute monopoly on birth in [the state]," Stewart said. "Midwifery care and out-of-hospital births reduce costs for families and for Medicaid, reduce unnecessary interventions for women and reduce NICU stays for newborns."

Timothy Tesmer, chief medical officer for DHHS, opposed the bill as introduced. He said the department does not have a relationship with the commission that would oversee the accreditation process and, as a result, would have no control over accreditation requirements.

"Consistent standards create value in the provision of health care and enable the regulation of health care facilities and services in a coherent manner," Tesmer said. "In essence, [LB1234] would divest the state licensing authority and surrender this authority to a third-party commission."

Robert Wergin, president of the

Nebraska Medical Association, also testified in opposition. The bill and the amendment would pose significant risks for Nebraska mothers and infants, he said, noting that CPMs have no formal medical training. Their standards fall far short of what is required to provide safe maternal care, he said, especially in obstetrical emergencies.

Wergin said many life-threatening situations that occur during and after childbirth – such as hemorrhaging, shoulder dystocia and fetal distress – can happen suddenly in what were previously normal pregnancies and labors.

The committee took no immediate action on LB1234.

## JUDICIARY

### Peer support confidentiality protections advanced

Lawmakers amended and advanced a measure from general file Feb. 11 aimed at protecting the confidentiality of communications between certified peer support team members and public safety personnel.

LB816, introduced by Whitman Sen. Tanya Storer, would establish legal protections for peer support counseling involving law enforcement officers, first responders and other emergency services employees.



Sen. Tanya Storer

Under the bill, communications made during peer support sessions, which pair trained colleagues with shared experience with public safety personnel in need of help, could not be used in disciplinary or legal proceedings.

By protecting these communications,

Storer said, more first responders may use the service and connect with peers who understand their experiences, especially when support is most needed.

“First responders trust their peers,” she said. “They trust someone who has been in the same situation, who understands what it’s like to carry the weight of that work.”

A Judiciary Committee amendment, adopted 28-0, replaced the bill with a modified version that incorporated two similar proposals. Lincoln Sen. Carolyn Bosn, committee chairperson, said the amendment was a collaborative effort among all three bill introducers to create a single, unified measure.

The amendment adds provisions of LB755, introduced by Fremont Sen. Dave Wordekemper, which would apply peer support confidentiality to EMS personnel, and LB804, sponsored by Sen. Dan Lonowski of Hastings, which would apply the same to law enforcement personnel.



Sen. Dave Wordekemper

“Each of those bills reflected a shared concern that Nebraska should do more to support the mental well-being of the men and women who routinely experience traumatic incidents and extreme job stress in the course of serving the public,” Bosn said.

The amendment also would expand protections to hospital personnel who provide direct patient care or emergency services and would specify that a public safety agency must develop written guidelines for the team and its members if it chooses to establish a peer support program.

Sen. Myron Dorn of Adams supported the bill and the committee amendment, saying his experience as an EMT and rescue squad member

showed him the value of peer support programs for first responders.

He said the legal protections in LB816 would address some first responders’ fear of professional repercussions by clarifying legal immunity, giving them the confidence to seek support.

Senators advanced LB816 to select file on a 28-0 vote.

### Stricter penalties proposed for burn permit violations

A measure aimed at strengthening Nebraska’s open burn laws was discussed by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 11.

Under LB897, introduced by Hastings Sen. Dan Lonowski, municipalities and rural and suburban fire departments could charge individuals a fee to cover the cost of extinguishing a fire caused by a violation of burn



Sen. Dan Lonowski

permit requirements. The bill also would raise the penalty for violating burn permit rules from a Class IV to a Class III misdemeanor.

At the hearing, Lonowski offered an amendment to clarify that any cost recovery for extinguishing a fire would be handled as a civil special assessment against the property, not as part of a criminal penalty, and would follow existing municipal assessment procedures.

Lonowski said Nebraska has seen increasingly severe wildfires in recent years, partly because some landowners burn without permits or after being denied one. LB897 is meant to target those who ignore burn bans and local fire conditions, he said, while sending a stronger message to prosecutors.

“Although [LB897] does not carry an increase in fine threshold or maximum jail sentence, our hope is that it

increases the seriousness of the offense when a county attorney decides how to prosecute these crimes,” Lonowski said.

Kenny Krause testified in support of LB897 on behalf of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association, saying fire chiefs carefully evaluate weather, fuel types and staffing before issuing burn permits.

He said county attorneys rarely prosecute violations, however, when individuals deliberately burn without permits, which strains the resources of volunteer fire departments. The bill would provide another way to attempt to recover those costs, Krause said.

Ryan McIntosh also testified in support of the measure on behalf of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association and the Nebraska Fire Chiefs Association, saying unauthorized burns often demand extensive personnel and resources to contain.

By allowing fire departments to recoup costs when individuals deliberately disregard burn regulations, he said, departments won’t be left shouldering the financial burden for preventable fires.

No one testified in opposition and the committee took no immediate action on LB897.

**Bill seeks to increase adult liability for gun access, unsafe storage**

A proposal aimed at strengthening legal liability for adults who allow children under 14 to access firearms in certain situations was considered by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 12.

LB957, introduced by Omaha Sen. John Cavanaugh, would make it a Class I misdemeanor to leave a loaded, unsecured firearm where a



Sen. John Cavanaugh

child under 14 could access the weapon, if the child obtains the gun and displays it in public or uses it to injure or kill someone. The law would not apply in cases of self-defense or if the child obtained the gun during a robbery.

Additionally, the measure would allow someone injured by a child under 14 to sue a parent, guardian or their spouse for damages if the adult knowingly allowed the child to possess a handgun or ammunition.

Cavanaugh said the bill would not prevent parents from taking their children hunting, teaching them how to handle firearms safely or how to use force when legally justified. Instead, he said, the measure would promote responsible gun ownership by requiring loaded firearms to be stored safely and holding adults accountable if children illegally access handguns and cause harm.

“[LB957] is simply a way to ensure that loaded weapons are stored safely and securely, and that if children are allowed to illegally use handguns, their parents and guardians [are held] responsible for the injuries that result,” Cavanaugh said.

Mary Kelly testified in support of the measure on behalf of the League of Women Voters, saying it could help reduce preventable child deaths and firearm injuries.

Research shows that states with more permissive firearm laws have higher pediatric gun death rates, she said, and safe storage requirements are a common-sense way to protect children while also respecting constitutional rights.

“If adopted, this bill will communicate to families the safest way to exercise their Second Amendment rights and protect vulnerable children from loaded guns,” Kelly said.

Representing the Nebraska Children’s Commission, Chloe Fowler also supported the bill. She said unsecured

firearms often increase minors’ involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and pose risks to children through accidental shootings, suicide, homicide and long-term trauma.

Comparing firearm safety to car seat laws and restrictions on controlled substances, Fowler said LB957 would place accountability on adults, prevent avoidable injuries and reduce strain on state systems.

“This bill enforces a basic child safety principle,” Fowler said. “Adults are responsible for creating safe environments.”

Dara Delahant of the Douglas County Attorney’s Office testified in opposition to LB957, saying the proposal could make it harder to prosecute cases in which a child gains access to a firearm.

She said those cases currently are adjudicated under existing felony child abuse laws, which have fewer elements to prove and carry harsher penalties. She warned that the bill could weaken enforcement because parents and guardians will view a misdemeanor as a lesser consequence.

Spike Eickholt, representing the Nebraska Criminal Defense Attorneys Association, also opposed the measure. He said it could potentially result in stacked or overlapping charges by creating duplicate offenses for conduct already prohibited under existing child neglect laws.

The committee took no immediate action on LB957.

**Bill would expand liability in certain sexual abuse cases**

The state of Nebraska and its political subdivisions could be held legally liable for claims of child sexual abuse or sexual abuse of individuals with developmental disabilities under a measure discussed by the Judiciary Committee Feb. 12

LB1097, introduced by Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln, would adopt the State and Political Subdivisions Sexual Abuse Liability Act, creating a civil cause of action for minors



Sen. Danielle Conrad

or individuals with developmental disabilities who experience sexual assault by an employee or someone under the supervision of a political subdivision.

The measure would remove such claims from the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act and the State Tort Claims Act, constituting a waiver of sovereign immunity for state agencies and political subdivisions and providing a legal pathway for victims outside the current tort framework.

Additionally, LB1097 would eliminate time limits for claims against individuals and set the statute of limitations for claims against agencies at four years after the abuse or 12 years after the plaintiff's 21st birthday, whichever is later.

Conrad said the bill is narrowly focused to give one subset of victims a chance to pursue civil remedies.

"Children and individuals with developmental disabilities are some of the most vulnerable people in society," Conrad said. "And particularly, when [they] are placed under the care, trust, supervision, custody and control of government entities, they deserve the utmost protection."

Sam Colwell, testifying in support of the bill on behalf of the Nebraska Association of Trial Attorneys, said Nebraska is one of the few states that prevent victims of sexual abuse from suing schools or other political subdivisions for negligence.

Victims in 47 other states can pursue damages from negligent institutions, he said, even though tort claims law varies widely — including differences in jury

trials, damage caps, notice requirements and statutes of limitations.

"Despite all of these differences, there is one overwhelming consistency," Colwell said. "The courthouse doors are not shut for victims of sexual assault."

Elizabeth Eynon also testified in support of the proposal on behalf of Education Rights Counsel, which she said has handled cases of children who were sexually assaulted by peers or staff in schools, often in poorly supervised or unsecured areas.

Under current Nebraska law, Eynon said, schools cannot be held accountable for safety lapses that may have contributed to abuse, even though children rely on adults and institutions for protection.

"By creating a clear avenue for possible liability, in the very limited circumstance of sexual assault of a child, we can reinforce the standard that protecting students isn't optional," she said.

Chuck Wilbrand testified against the measure on behalf of ALICAP, an insurer of Nebraska public school districts. Federal remedies for victims already exist, he said, and removing damage caps could expose local governments to large, potentially unsustainable judgments.

Brandy Johnson, general counsel for the Nebraska Intergovernmental Risk Management Association, which insures 85 of Nebraska's 93 counties, also testified in opposition. She said LB1097 could shift the financial burden of judgements from criminal perpetrators to taxpayers.

Large judgments, she said, also could divert funds from essential services, raise property taxes or force counties to seek additional state aid.

Representing the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, Civil Litigation Bureau Chief Jennifer Huxoll also opposed the bill, saying it would erode the protection that sovereign immunity affords to taxpayers.

"Sovereign immunity ... is essential to the ongoing operation of our government by limiting potential claims for damages that may be brought against the government, claims that must be paid by our tax dollars," Huxoll said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB1097.



**Municipal natural gas sales authorization amended, advanced**

A bill that would allow certain Nebraska cities to contract with large-scale natural gas users advanced to the final round of debate Feb. 12 after lawmakers narrowed its scope.

LB548, introduced last session by Central City Sen.



Sen. Loren Lippincott

Loren Lippincott, would allow Nebraska political subdivisions that own natural gas systems to take advantage of a federal tax exemption to make discounted natural gas sales to certain large industrial users.

As amended on general file, the bill would require an industrial consumer to be located in Nebraska within 200 miles of the political subdivision. The facility would be considered within the natural gas distribution system's service area for the term of the contract, which would be for at least two years.

Lippincott introduced an amendment on select file decreasing that radius to 100 miles.

At the request of Black Hills Energy and Omaha's Metropolitan Utilities District, Lippincott said, the amendment would allow only first or second

class cities or villages that own and operate a natural gas system to contract with industrial consumers. Contracts would have to be signed on or before Jan. 1, 2027.

Under LB548, the industrial user could not be a consumer of any investor-owned or governmentally owned gas system at the time the contract is signed.

Lippincott said the amendment would strengthen that provision, which is intended to ensure that cities could not compete with private natural gas suppliers. The amendment would specify that the industrial consumer could not have received gas service from any investor-owned or governmentally owned gas system within five years prior to the contract's execution.

The amendment also would add protections for private natural gas marketers by preventing cities from contracting with industrial consumers that already receive service from a competitive natural gas provider, Lippincott said. Contracts would require the consumer to receive natural gas through a competitive natural gas provider registered in Nebraska.

Finally, Lippincott's amendment would require a city council or village board of trustees to adopt a resolution stating that a contract with an industrial consumer does not pose an unreasonable financial risk to the city or village or its taxpayers.

Sen. Bob Hallstrom of Syracuse supported the amendment. He said the proposal would allow Central City to partner with a specific industrial consumer but then "close the door" to contracts beyond the sunset date, easing concerns about potential competition between government and private businesses.

After voting 36-0 to adopt the amendment, senators advanced LB548 to final reading by voice vote.

**Open burn permit update advanced**

A bill intended to help policymakers better understand the use of prescribed burning in Nebraska advanced from general file Feb. 11.

LB823, introduced by Fremont Sen. Dave Wordekemper, would update the definition of land-management burning to include both controlled burning and prescribed burning and create definitions for the latter two practices, which he said are "fundamentally different."

Controlled burning is intended primarily for cleanup of debris or vegetation in situations where the spread of fire is limited to a small area, Wordekemper said, whereas prescribed burning is the systematic application of fire to manage vegetation, control weeds and pests, prevent wildland fires and carry out certain other activities.

He said prescribed burning is the "most effective and cost-efficient tool" for managing Nebraska's grasslands at a time when eastern redcedar continues to spread across the state, threatening rangeland and increasing wildfire risk.

LB823 would require open burning permits issued by fire chiefs to specify whether land-management burning is to be a prescribed burning or a controlled burning as well as the approximate number of acres to be burned.

Landowners would be required to provide the same information when filing an application for a permit and a plan for conducting a burning.

Wordekemper said the requirements would help policymakers, researchers, conservation groups and landowners collect data on where and how frequently prescribed burning is



Sen. Dave Wordekemper

happening in Nebraska.

"That information will inform future policy decisions about how we support this critical land management practice," he said.

LB823 advanced to select file on a vote of 30-0.

**Game Law update amended, advanced**

A bill updating several provisions related to the state Game and Parks Commission received first-round approval from lawmakers Feb. 11 after it was amended to remove a proposed penalty for wildlife trafficking.

Plymouth Sen. Tom Brandt, sponsor of LB979, said the bill would make a series of changes to Nebraska's Game Law.



Sen. Tom Brandt

He said the measure would clarify how funds are used for wildlife damage abatement and authorize the commission to use the Game Law Investigation Cash Fund for vehicles, equipment, digital services and training needed to help conservation officers investigate "complex and organized poaching activity."

LB979 also would increase fee caps for various licenses, permits and applications and allow the commission to establish and collect reasonable fees for providing fish and wildlife education programs.

Brandt said the proposal also would increase motorboat registration fees to reflect increased enforcement and access costs.

The bill as introduced includes a provision to address what Brandt called "organized wildlife commercialization and trafficking schemes." Under the provision, a person who possesses, transports, sells, purchases, barter,

trades, imports or exports wildlife taken in violation of the Game Law would be guilty of a Class I misdemeanor.

If the aggregate value of the wildlife exceeds \$10,000 within a period of three consecutive years, the person would be guilty of a Class III felony.

A Natural Resources Committee amendment, adopted 26-0, removed the felony penalty enhancement.

LB979 then advanced to select file on a 25-0 vote.



**Retirement changes clear first round**

Senators advanced three bills Feb. 11 that would make changes to the state’s retirement systems.

Currently, members of the School Employees Retirement System and the Class V School Employees Retirement System must wait 180 days from the time of their separation from service before they can return to the classroom, with exceptions for intermittent work as a volunteer or substitute employee at a school district or educational service unit.

LB824, introduced by Hastings Sen. Dan Lonowski, would change the required separation of service period for retirees to 120 days with no exceptions. Lonowski said the current system has led to a great deal of extra



Sen. Dan Lonowski

paperwork and confusion about how the “intermittent days” are calculated.

He said the change would align the teachers’ retirement plan with other state retirement programs by requiring a “hard bona fide break” in service that is

easy to understand and help alleviate the state’s teacher shortage by getting retirees into classrooms sooner as substitutes.

Lonowski offered an amendment, adopted 29-0, that would make the bill operative May 1, to ensure that all plan members who retire after the current school year are under the same 120-day rule.

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee chairperson, Sen. Beau Ballard of Lincoln, supported the amendment and thanked Lonowski for his work on the proposal, which he said has been in process for nearly a full year.

Lawmakers advanced the bill to select file 34-0.

Also advanced was LB743, sponsored by Sen. Margo Juarez of Omaha, which would amend the Police Officers Retirement Act to require that benefit forms include the option of partial payments in an amount and frequency elected by the police officer.



Sen. Margo Juarez

Juarez said the bill, which would take effect Oct. 1, mirrors changes enacted in a proposal she introduced in 2025 that made the same change for firefighters in first class cities.

“LB743 builds on that [measure] and promotes fairness and consistency across public safety retirement systems,” she said.

The bill advanced on a 37-0 vote.

Finally, LB822, introduced by the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee, would update references and eliminate obsolete language in the retirement system for first class city police officers. Nebraska cities are classified as first class if they have a population of at least 5,000 and less than 100,000.

The bill also would rename the Police Officers Retirement Act as the Cities of the First Class Police Officers

Retirement Act.

Ballard said the current name could give the mistaken impression that the retirement plan applies to all police officers statewide.

Senators advanced LB822 to select file 29-0.



**Distress warrant fee increase clears first round**

A measure intended to help counties cover the cost of collecting delinquent taxes advanced from general file Feb. 11.

County sheriffs currently collect a \$2 fee for distress warrants issued to collect delinquent taxes on personal property, plus a \$1 levy fee, a mileage charge and a commission on any taxes collected.

The charges are assessed against the debtor and are credited by a county treasurer to the county’s general fund.

Hastings Sen. Dan Lonowski, sponsor of LB900, said the proposal would increase the fee for issuing a distress warrant to \$20 to better reflect the cost incurred by county sheriffs when collecting delinquent taxes.

He said the bill also would eliminate the \$1 levy fee as well as a “convoluted” requirement to prorate mileage among trips when sheriffs serve multiple warrants at the same time.

For taxes collected by distress and sale, counties could collect a 10% commission on amounts not exceeding \$500, an increase from \$100. An 8% commission would apply to amounts exceeding \$500, also an increase from \$100.

Sen. Robert Clements of Elmwood supported the bill, saying he proposed a similar fee increase in his LB468. That measure, introduced last session,

would cut county inheritance tax rates while also distributing replacement revenue to counties.

Clements said the fee for issuing distress warrants has not been increased in over 30 years.

Lawmakers voted 25-1 to advance LB900 to select file.

**Two-tier property valuation system proposed**

The Revenue Committee heard testimony Feb. 12 on a proposal to change Nebraska’s property valuation system and limit annual property tax increases.

LR292CA, introduced by Omaha Sen. Bob Andersen, would allow voters to amend the state constitution to require two valuations for each parcel of real property in Nebraska. If approved by the Legislature, the measure would be placed on the November 2026 general election ballot.



Sen. Bob Andersen

Under the proposal, real property would be valued for property tax purposes at its taxable market value, which would be set at its 2026 assessed value. Except in certain circumstances, the taxable market value could not increase from year to year by more than an allowable growth percentage, equal to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.

A property’s taxable market value would be adjusted to its fair market value when it is purchased, when it is newly constructed, when parcels are combined or when a change of ownership occurs after the 2026 assessment.

Andersen said LR292CA would lead to more predictable property tax bills for Nebraskans at a time when tax increases by local governments have made home ownership unaffordable.

“It is paramount that we stop taxing people out of their homes and provide them a fair path forward,” he said.

As introduced, Andersen’s proposal would allow for an election to authorize a bond levy during an officially declared emergency. The authorization would require at least half of registered voters of the applicable taxing entity to vote in the election and at least two-thirds of votes to be cast in favor.

Andersen brought an amendment to the hearing that would remove the election provision from the proposal.

Jack Baum of Americans for Tax Reform testified in support of the measure, saying property valuations in Nebraska continue to increase faster than inflation and wage growth.

“Meaningful reform will require multiple policy changes,” he said, “but tying assessed value increases to the Consumer Price Index is a strong step in the right direction, one that brings predictability back into the system, restores a measure of fairness for taxpayers and ensures property taxes grow in line with what families can actually afford.”

Also in support was Doug Kagan of Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom. He said the measure would protect Nebraskans from unexpected increases in their property tax bills and force local governments to cut spending.

Testifying in opposition to LR292CA was Meg Harris on behalf of an association of cities in Sarpy County. She said local governments currently at or near the maximum levy limit would not be able to make up for lost property tax revenue under the new valuation system, requiring them to cut spending on public safety, infrastructure and services.

Colby Coash testified in opposition to the measure on behalf of the Nebraska Association of School Boards. He said LR292CA would “engrain” the new valuation system in the constitution, making it dif-

ficult for the Legislature to address any unintended negative effects on Nebraska’s public schools, which are heavily reliant on property taxes.

Nicole Fox of the Tax Foundation gave neutral testimony on LR292CA. Although assessment limits benefit existing property owners, she said, they shift the tax burden to new homebuyers, resulting in houses with similar fair market values having substantially different tax bills based only on when they were purchased.

Fox said the proposal also could exacerbate Nebraska’s affordable housing shortage by disincentivizing new housing construction and discouraging current homeowners from moving or downsizing.

The committee took no immediate action on the measure.

**TRANSPORTATION & TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Rideshare dynamic pricing measure amended, advanced**

Lawmakers gave first-round approval Feb. 11 to a bill intended to give the governor more discretion over where rideshare companies are permitted to use dynamic pricing during a state of emergency.

Current law prohibits transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft from using dynamic pricing statewide during any state of emergency declared by the governor.

Lincoln Sen. Beau Ballard, sponsor of LB771, said the governor must then take an extra step to clarify that



Sen. Beau Ballard

the prohibition applies only to a certain area. When prices are capped during a statewide ban, he added, fewer drivers want to drive, limiting their earnings and decreasing the number of rides available.

Under the bill, dynamic pricing would be permitted in any political subdivision that is specified as the subject of a state of emergency declared by the governor unless specifically prohibited in the governor's emergency proclamation or an executive order. Any prohibition would be for the time period specified in the proclamation or the executive order.

Dynamic pricing would be permitted in any political subdivision that is not specified as the subject of a state of emergency declared by the governor.

Ballard offered an amendment, adopted 32-2, under which the bill would go into effect when signed by the governor.

Sen. John Fredrickson of Omaha supported LB771, saying a statewide ban on dynamic pricing during a localized emergency "doesn't always make sense."

However, he said, the bill as introduced would eliminate an automatic consumer safeguard and allow rideshare companies to impose dynamic pricing in an affected area unless the governor takes additional action to prohibit it.

Fredrickson introduced an amendment that instead would prohibit dynamic pricing for seven days after the governor declares a state of emergency. The prohibition would be confined to the areas outlined in the emergency proclamation.

Fredrickson said the amendment would give the governor discretion to further regulate dynamic pricing during a state of emergency through executive order.

After voting 37-0 to adopt Fredrickson's amendment, senators advanced LB771 to select file on a vote of 35-0.

### **Regulatory framework proposed for recreational vehicles**

The Transportation and Telecommunications Committee heard testimony Feb. 9 on a measure intended to ensure certain RV dealers in Nebraska are treated fairly by manufacturers.

LB1121, sponsored by Lincoln Sen. Beau Ballard, would regulate franchise agreements between manufacturers and dealers of RVs, which the bill defines as motor homes, travel trailers, fifth-wheel travel trailers, truck campers and folding camping trailers.

Unlike motor homes, Ballard said, towable RVs are not regulated as motor vehicles, meaning manufacturers are not required to sign franchise agreements with dealers.

"This leaves local dealers of those vehicles unprotected from manufacturers and manufacturers who have no forcible guarantee for dealers," he said. "There is no way to police disputes between the two."

LB1121 would authorize the Nebraska Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board to regulate the issuance and revocation of licenses to dealers, manufacturers and distributors of new RVs.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, a manufacturer or distributor could not sell a new RV in Nebraska to or through a dealer without first entering into a manufacturer-dealer agreement specifying the parties' rights and responsibilities.

An agreement would include a designation of the area of sales responsibility within which the dealer would have the exclusive right to display or sell the manufacturer's new RVs of a particular line-make. A manufacturer or distributor would be prohibited from terminating an agreement unless they can show that good cause exists.

Among other provisions, LB1121 would create requirements for dealers

and manufacturers related to warranty service and compensation.

The bill also would add one licensed RV dealer and one licensed RV manufacturer to the nine-member Motor Vehicle Industry Licensing Board.

Nicholas Staab, a Grand Island RV dealer, testified in support of the measure. He said his dealership sells mostly travel trailers and fifth-wheel trailers under "handshake" agreements with various manufacturers.

Requiring manufacturers to sign franchise agreements outlining a specific sales territory would protect established dealers that have purchased millions of dollars' worth of inventory from upstart dealers looking to sell the same models, Staab said.

No one testified in opposition to LB1121 and the committee took no immediate action on it.

## **URBAN AFFAIRS**

### **Expanded authority to create land banks considered**

The Urban Affairs Committee heard testimony Feb. 10 on a proposal intended to accelerate the redevelopment of abandoned properties statewide.

Currently, only metropolitan and primary class cities may form stand-alone land banks, which are tax-exempt political subdivisions that acquire, manage and develop vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties. Omaha is the state's only metropolitan class city, and Lincoln is the only primary class city.

A municipality also may join an existing land bank or enter into an agreement with another municipality to create a land bank.

LB811, introduced by Norfolk Sen. Robert Dover, would authorize all Nebraska municipalities to form stand-alone land banks.



Sen. Robert Dover

“Communities of all sizes ... across Nebraska are dealing with stalled prop-

erties that slow housing development and neighborhood reinvestment,” he said. “This bill gives those communities the same tool that larger cities already have to prepare land for redevelopment and housing construction in a timely and locally controlled manner.”

Christy Abraham testified in support of LB811 on behalf of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, saying

member cities have indicated that they would prefer to form their own land banks rather than partner with others. Several first class cities, such as Grand Island, Bellevue and Hastings, have the resources to create stand-alone land banks, Abraham said.

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

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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

## Tuesday, Feb. 17

### Agriculture

#### Room 1023 - 1:30 p.m.

*Appointment:* Mark Hesser - State Fair Board

*Appointment:* Susan J. Connell - Neb. Brand Committee

LB1187 (DeKay) Change certain fees and surcharges under the Livestock Brand Act

LB1258 (Hansen) Rename the Livestock Brand Act as the Livestock Protection Act, eliminate the Nebraska Brand Committee, and change, provide, and eliminate provisions relating to livestock branding and livestock protection

### Appropriations

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

LB1248 (Dover) Change appropriations to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment

Agency 28: Dept. of Veterans' Affairs

Agency 21: State Fire Marshal

Agency 31: Military Dept.

Agency 65: Dept. of Administrative Services

Agency 84: Dept. of Water, Energy, and Environment

LB968 (Prokop) Appropriate funds to the Military Department for grants for equipment for emergency events

LB989 (Sanders) Appropriate funds to the Military Department for the Nebraska Nonprofit Security Grant Program

### Banking, Commerce & Insurance

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

AM1710 (Jacobson) Amending LB525

LB1003 (G. Meyer) Adopt the Renewable Energy Consumer Protection Act and provide a deceptive trade practice

LB1246 (Dover) Provide duties for the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and change reporting requirements under the Nebraska Affordable Housing Act

LB810 (Dover) Provide for a deputy director and eliminate notice requirements for cease and desist orders under the Nebraska Real Estate License Act

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

LB1251 (Dover) Change provisions relating to liens of homeowners' associations and unit owners associations

LB762 (Dungan) Require insurance coverage of pediatric autoimmune disorders

### Education

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

LB960 (McKinney) Provide a requirement to include nonvoting student members on school boards

LB966 (M. Cavanaugh) Adopt the Hunger-Free Schools Act

LB1034 (Dungan) Prohibit school staff

from allowing federal immigration enforcement officers to access schools without a judicial warrant

LB1207 (Juarez) Require school districts to provide mental health leave for school employees

LB1247 (Dover) Require postsecondary institution participation in the Nebraska Statewide Workforce and Education Reporting System for the Nebraska Career Scholarship Act

### Transportation & Telecommunications

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

LB1073 (Bosn) Require commercial motor vehicle driver training to include antitrafficking training

LB1158 (DeBoer) Change provisions relating to certain motor carriers

LB1162 (Ballard) Change powers and duties of the Public Service Commission relating to railroad safety

LB1180 (DeBoer) Provide for licenses to engage in intrastate medicaid nonemergency medical transportation services and provide that certain rates charged by certain motor carriers are not subject to regulation by the Public Service Commission

### Urban Affairs

#### Room 1200 - 1:30 p.m.

LB915 (Lippincott) Change the number of authorized inland port districts under the Municipal Inland Port Authority Act

LB988 (G. Meyer) Change provisions of the Community Development Law

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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LR312CA (Clouse) Constitutional amendment to authorize cities and villages to incur indebtedness for residential development projects and pledge taxes for such indebtedness and to change provisions relating to redevelopment projects  
LB976 (Andersen) Change provisions relating to sanitary and improvement districts  
LB1113 (Urban Affairs) Change provisions relating to certain notices under the Community Development Law

## Wednesday, Feb. 18

### **Appropriations**

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

Agency 3: Legislative Council  
Agency 9: Secretary of State  
Agency 10: Auditor of Public Accounts  
Agency 11: Attorney General  
Agency 12: State Treasurer  
Agency 23: Dept. of Labor  
Agency 37: Workers' Compensation Court  
Agency 67: Equal Opportunity Commission  
Agency 77: Commission of Industrial Relations  
Agency 85: Public Employees Retirement Board

### **Executive Board**

#### **Room 1524 - 12:00 p.m.**

LR304 (Fredrickson) Designate the Legislative Oversight Committee to review, investigate, and assess the effect of child welfare efficiency practices on child safety, quality of services provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, and public and private workforce stability  
LR297CA (M. Cavanaugh) Constitutional amendment to change provisions related to amending, repealing, modifying, or impairing a law enacted by initiative petition  
LR311CA (J. Cavanaugh) Constitutional amendment to create a Commission on Redistricting and provide requirements for drawing district boundaries

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

LB969 (Hallstrom) Establish a database of financial information from counties

and municipalities  
LB1147 (Conrad) Require the Auditor of Public Accounts to investigate impoundment of funds by the Governor and submit a quarterly report  
LB776 (M. Cavanaugh) Provide a duty for each state agency to examine fees charged

### **Health & Human Services**

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

*Appointments:* Linda Mentink, Cheryl Livingston - Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired  
*Appointments:* Jeremiah Rethwisch, Jaime Dodge - State Board of Health  
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  
LB737 (Rountree) Require a joint public hearing to evaluate the progress of the Olmstead plan for individuals with disabilities  
LB1012 (Hansen) Provide for a lien for professional services rendered by a physical therapist  
LB1233 (Hansen) Adopt the Developmental Disabilities Provider Excessive Training and Cost Reduction Act  
LB1057 (Ballard) Redefine adult day service under the Health Care Facility Licensure Act

### **Judiciary**

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

LB779 (Conrad) Provide requirements for health care facilities and collection agencies relating to medical debt  
LB925 (Andersen) Adopt the Safe Parks and Public Spaces Act  
LB1242 (Murman) Provide for the establishment and enforcement of child support for an unborn child  
LB908 (Storm) Require courts to consider certain research in determining the best interests of the child under the Parenting Act  
LB935 (Bosn) Provide for the award of costs and attorney's fees in certain actions involving political subdivisions  
LB1139 (Hallstrom) Change provisions relating to liens arising from child and spousal support orders

### **Natural Resources**

#### **Room 1023 - 1:30 p.m.**

LB1197 (Storer) Change provisions relating to limited landowner hunting permits  
LB1226 (Andersen) Provide for issuance of a combination hunting and fishing permit and certain stamps to certain veterans  
LB1232 (Strommen) Provide for mountain lion hunting permits

### **Revenue**

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

LB1023 (Murman) Eliminate the sales and use tax exemption for zoo and aquarium admissions  
LB1116 (Ibach) Change provisions relating to the Sports Arena Facility Financing Assistance Act  
LB918 (Conrad) Change provisions relating to limitations on state assistance under the Sports Arena Facility Financing Assistance Act  
LB851 (Dungan) Change income tax provisions relating to certain income or loss received from S-corporations and limited liability companies  
LB990 (Dover) Rename the School District Property Tax Relief Act as the Live Here Thrive Here Act and the School District Property Tax Relief Credit Fund as the Live Here Thrive Here Credit Fund and change the distribution of property tax credits under the act  
LB1025 (Bosn) Provide for an excise tax on certain social media platform businesses  
LB856 (McKinney) Adopt the Community Reinvestment and Equity Act, establish an excise tax, and create a fund and a grant program

## Thursday, Feb. 19

### **Executive Board**

#### **Room 1524 - 12:00 p.m.**

LB1066 (Fredrickson) Require members of the Legislature to complete a civics assessment  
LB917 (Conrad) Change provisions relating to the disposition of property by the University of Nebraska  
LB1125 (Sorrentino) Require legislative approval of certain University

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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of Nebraska contracts and restrict ownership of certain facilities

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

- LB919 (Sanders) Allow for the use of durable accessible mediums for public records
- LB923 (Clouse) Change and eliminate provisions relating to county records
- LB896 (Lonowski) Change fees related to marriage licenses and records
- LB1058 (Hallstrom) Provide for an additional grant under the Nebraska Visitors Development Act and state intent relating to funding

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

- Appointments:* Ryan Palmer, Mark Bertch, Patricia Kucera - State Board of Health
- LB933 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide immunity for health care practitioners under the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection Act
  - LB1016 (Raybould) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a demonstration project waiver for traditional healing services
  - LB944 (Dorn) Require direct reimbursement to certain facilities for hospice care services under the Medical Assistance Act
  - LB843 (Rountree) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to file a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program waiver for refugees and immigrants
  - LB1217 (Hardin) Authorize schools to maintain epinephrine for emergency first aid

**Judiciary  
Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.**

- LB1136 (Dungan) Require political subdivisions to identify authorized recipients of tort claims filed under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act
- LB1171 (Moser) Provide for certain claims relating to sewer systems under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act
- LB978 (Storer) Provide for civil actions for conduct relating to obscene

- material, child sexual abuse material, and child sexual exploitation devices
- LB993 (McKinney) Provide a cause of action for deprivation of constitutional rights by a law enforcement officer, eliminate the defense of qualified immunity as prescribed, and change provisions of the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act and State Tort Claims Act

- LB983 (DeBoer) Change civil procedure provisions relating to third-party practice and deposition subpoenas
- LB1175 (DeBoer) Change provisions relating to civil actions under the Parental Rights in Social Media Act

**Natural Resources  
Room 1023 - 1:30 p.m.**

- LB1141 (Spivey) Create the Nebraska Youth Pre-Apprentice Conservation Program, provide powers and duties to the Game and Parks Commission, and transfer funds from the Workforce Development Program Cash Fund
- LB1028 (Juarez) Provide requirements for nutrient management plans and the application of livestock waste or litter
- LR298CA (Brandt) Constitutional amendment to create requirements for the use of the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund

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

- LB1021 (Ibach) Change provisions related to penalties, proceeds, and distributed revenue of the nameplate capacity tax
- LB1008 (Brandt) Change provisions relating to the amount of relief granted under the School District Property Tax Relief Act
- LB998 (Andersen) Change provisions relating to the state income tax deduction for members of the Nebraska National Guard
- LB846 (Dungan) Change provisions relating to individual income tax deductions
- LB853 (Dungan) Provide an income tax adjustment related to certain federal tax deductions
- LB857 (Dungan) Change federal references related to taxation under the

- Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967
- LB1186 (J. Cavanaugh) Adopt the Affordable American Energy and Jobs Act and change distribution provisions relating to the nameplate capacity tax

**Friday, Feb. 20**

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

- LB1149 (Hunt) Require disclosure of proposed state agency contracts with private entities that have contracts with United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- LB975 (Conrad) Adopt the Private Attorney Retention Sunshine Act
- LB1108 (Clouse) Change provisions related to contracts entered into by and bidding requirements and exceptions for joint entities and public power districts

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

- Appointments:* David Reese, Jacob Sikes, Dan Vehle - State Board of Health
- LB970 (Guereca) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to submit a state plan amendment to include a program of early literacy promotion and intervention in well-child visits under the early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment services program
  - LB1213 (McKinney) Adopt the Case Management Licensure Act
  - LB1033 (Spivey) Require the Department of Health and Human Services to make crisis assistance payments under the low-income home energy assistance program
  - LB740 (McKinney) Adopt the Housing First Supportive Services Act and require the Department of Health and Human Services to seek federal approval for coverage under the Medical Assistance Act

**Judiciary  
Room 1525 - 1:30 p.m.**

- LB1225 (Raybould) Change provisions of the Nebraska Juvenile Code relat-

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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ing to expedited appeals of motions to transfer to county or district court  
LB739 (Rountree) Change notice requirements for a petition to change an individual's name  
LB995 (Rountree) Require appointment of counsel for juveniles and provide duties for juvenile courts  
LB996 (Rountree) Prohibit the use of shackling or restraints on juveniles  
LB962 (McKinney) Adopt the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act

## Nebraska Retirement Systems Room 1524 - 12:00 p.m.

LB1103 (Bostar) Change the mandatory retirement age and provisions relating to deferred retirement option plans under the Nebraska State Patrol Retirement Act  
LB1101 (Nebraska Retirement Systems) Change the amount of the state contribution to the Nebraska Retirement Fund for Judges

## Revenue

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

LB849 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide a sales and use tax exemption for over-the-counter drugs  
LB930 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide an income tax deduction to retired firefighters and law enforcement officers for annual retirement benefits  
LB932 (J. Cavanaugh) Provide an income tax adjustment for tip income and income received from overtime compensation  
LB872 (Conrad) Eliminate an income reduction for extraordinary dividends and certain capital gains for income tax purposes

## 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*  
*\*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*  
LB1056 (Conrad) Change provisions of 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 progres-

sive 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  
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  
LB1142 (Hardin) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Visitors Development Act  
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

# COMMITTEE HEARINGS

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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**

### **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  
 LR296 (Hallstrom) Urge the President of the United States and members of Congress to make permanent changes to the Child and Adult Food Programs

### **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**

### **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

## **Friday, Feb. 27**

### **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 ■



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The colors were posted Feb. 12 by members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War in recognition of Abraham Lincoln's birthday.