

Nebraska Association of County Officials Legislative Report



March 27, 2009

Law Enforcement Retirement Bill Heard by Committee

County sheriffs and representatives of police unions presented **LB 427**, a proposal for a revised retirement plan for county law enforcement officers, to the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee on March 25. Last week the committee heard **LB 426**, a proposal for a retirement plan for law enforcement officers in first-class cities. In prior years, city and county proposals have been combined into a single bill.

LB 427 would increase total employer and law enforcement employee retirement contributions to 16 percent of income in

October 2009 and 18 percent in 2012. Total contributions by the county and other county officials and employees would remain at 11.25 percent of wages. A committee appointed by the NACO president reviewed the proposal and the NACO board voted to oppose the bill due to concerns about cost and inequity with other county officials and employees.

Although LB 426 was designated as a Retirement Committee priority bill, neither measure has been advanced from committee.

Snapshots of County Issues

• **Jail Reimbursement:** The Revenue Committee advanced a bill to combine funds currently appropriated for county jail reimbursement, state aid to counties and County Property Tax Relief into a single program. A committee amendment would delay implementation of the program from 2009 to 2011. **LB 218** was introduced at NACO's request and designated as a Speaker priority. A listing of priority bills of interest to counties appears on the reverse.

The Revenue Committee also killed several bills to provide or eliminate sales tax exemptions.

• **State Assessment:** Furniture, computers and other equipment

used by the Department of Revenue in state-assessed counties would be transferred to the county when the assessment function is returned to counties under a proposed amendment to **LB 121**. The amendment also addresses payment for leave and health insurance for transferred employees. The bill, which was prioritized by Sen. John Wightman, is on Select File.

• **Motor Vehicle Titles:** Motor vehicle dealers could apply for a certificate of title under a proposed amendment to **LB 202**. The bill, which provides for electronic titles if a lien has been filed, is on Select File and is a Transportation and Telecommunications Committee priority bill.

Register for Legislative Day, Equalization Workshop

County officials can register on the NACO website (www.nacone.org) for two upcoming events. On April 16, all county officials are invited to meet with their senators and observe the Legislature in session. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. at the NACO office. Governor Heineman, Speaker Flood and several committee chairs will address county officials in the morning. After a luncheon with senators, participants can visit senators and state agency offices, view floor debate, and

tour the Capitol and Governor's Mansion.

On May 14, NACO will host a County Board of Equalization Workshop in Kearney. A tentative agenda includes sessions with representatives of the Tax Equalization and Review Commission and Property Tax Administrator, as well as guidance from an appraisal specialist and several county officials, including a former county attorney involved in a recent Supreme Court decision on exemptions.

No Legislative Report Next Week

Because debate next week will focus on bills with limited county impact, no Legislative Report will be issued next week.

The Legislature will be in recess on March 27 and 30. Full days of debate will begin on March 31.

Priority Bills of Interest to Counties

Senator Priorities

<u>Bill</u>	<u>Designator</u>	<u>Description (Introducer)</u>
LB 63	Ashford	Change provisions relating to assault, firearms, graffiti, gang affiliation, juveniles, and jailhouse informers (Friend)
LB 98	Carlson	Change noxious weed grant programs and the Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force (Carlson)
LB681	Christensen	Provide for refund of unconstitutional taxes, assessments, and penalties (Flood)
LB615	Cornett	Adopt the Family Entertainment and Sports Attraction Act and rename the Municipal Infrastructure Redevelopment Fund Act and authorize a county sales tax (Cornett)
LB356	Dubas	Direct distribution of General Funds for Nebraska children in need of behavioral health services (Dubas)
LB 54	Fischer	Change integrated management plan provisions under the Nebraska Ground Water Management and Protection Act (Fischer)
LB285	Friend	Change Sex Offender Registration Act provisions (Pirsch)
LB603	Gay	Adopt the Behavioral Health Workforce Act and provide funding (Health and Human Services Committee)
LB334	Giese	Designate the state expressway system and change provisions relating to highway planning (Giese)
LB517	Hansen	Change provisions relating to family reunification and termination of parental rights (Hansen)
LB346	Howard	Adopt the Children and Family Behavioral Health Support Act (Gay)
LB111	Janssen	Change provisions relating to fines for speeding in a construction zone (Fischer)
LB568	Karpisek	Provide requirements for wind leases and easements (Dubas)
LB483	Langemeier	Change provisions relating to water well permits (Langemeier)
LB160	Nelson	Authorize issuance of flood protection and water quality enhancement bonds by natural resources districts (Gay)
LB601	Nordquist	Provide for a medicaid waiver for community-based mental health services (Nordquist)
LB385	Pahls	Terminate sales tax provisions (Pahls)
LB134	Pankonin	Change natural resources districts eminent domain powers (Pankonin)
LB671	Pirsch	Provide powers and duties and change membership of the Nebraska County Attorney Standards Advisory Council relating to death investigations (Pirsch)
LB532	Price	Provide for the adoption of ordinances by counties (Price)
LB646	Schilz	Adopt the Livestock Growth Act (Christensen)
LB68	Wallman	Provide procedures for closure of state residential facilities for persons with developmental disabilities (Wallman)
LB121	Wightman	Provide for reassumption of property tax assessment functions by certain counties (Wightman)

Committee Priorities

<u>Bill</u>	<u>Designator</u>	<u>Description (Introducer)</u>
LB 16	Executive Board	Adopt the Taxpayer Transparency Act (White)
LB361	Government	Authorize and change requirements for videoconferencing, telephone conferences, and electronic voting devices for public meetings (Avery)
LB 35	Judiciary	Adopt the Violence Prevention Act, prohibit certain gang activity, and change certain firearm provisions (Ashford)
LB403	Judiciary	Require verification of lawful presence in the United States for certain public benefits, public employment, contracting with public bodies, and tax incentive programs (Karpisek)
LB561	Natural Resources	Provide for restriction of eminent domain for wind energy projects (Lathrop)
LB188	Retirement	Change provisions of the County Employee Retirement Act and the State Employee Retirement Act (Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee)
LB426	Retirement	Name and change provisions relating to the Police Officers Retirement Act (Pankonin)
LB213	Revenue	Change Tax Equalization and Review Commission provisions (Cornett)
LB202	Transportation	Provide for electronic certificates of title and lien notification (Transportation and Telecommunications Committee)

Speaker Priorities

<u>Bill</u>	<u>Description (Introducer)</u>
LB56	Change the Livestock Waste Management Act (Fischer)
LB92	Require vehicles to move over upon approach of stopped emergency vehicles (Howard)
LB218	Change, eliminate, and provide state aid to various political subdivisions (Cornett)
LB503	Adopt the Nebraska Shooting Range Protection Act (Langemeier)
LB626	Change prohibited activities for public officials and public employees use of public resources (Karpisek)