

Nebraska Association of County Officials Legislative Report



February 23, 2007

Jail Reimbursement Cuts Proposed by Appropriations Committee

Approximately \$2 million, more than half of last year's appropriation, would be cut from jail reimbursement to counties under the state budget proposed by the Appropriations Committee. Last year, the program was fully funded to its \$3.91 million statutory cap and language was added to the state's budget bill to require additional funds for jail reimbursement to be included within the state budget in FY07-08 and FY08-09 so that senators could be aware of the cost to counties for maintaining state prisoners. The bill also required the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) to encourage counties to submit claims for the entire year in order to determine the total amount needed to fully fund the program. Because the funds usually run out before all counties have been reimbursed for the third quarter, many counties

do not currently submit claims for the entire year. Under the program, counties are reimbursed at a rate of \$35 per day for holding persons who have been convicted and sentenced as an adult to a DCS facility, and certain persons on parole or probation.

The implications of this funding cut will be raised during an Appropriations Committee hearing on **LB 587** on Feb. 28. Sen. Abbie Cornett has introduced LB 587 at NACO's request to eliminate the statutory \$3.91 million cap so that all restrictions on funding the program would be removed. The hearing will begin at 1:30 p.m. in Room 1003 of the State Capitol. Please contact members of the Appropriations Committee to express your opposition to cuts in funding and your support of LB 587.

Homestead Exemption Notice and Tax Cleanup Advance

County assessors would mail notices to prior homestead exemption recipients by April 1 under a bill that advanced to the second round of debate on Thursday. **LB 145** would not require the notices if applications had already been filed or the assessor has reason to believe that there has been a change of circumstances so that the claimant is no longer qualified. The notice would include the claimants name, application deadlines, assessor's office address and phone number, and a list of the documents that must be filed with the application. Many counties already mail notice to homestead recipients.

Senators eliminated special notice provisions for spite protests under a second round amendment to **LB 166**. As advanced from General File, the bill required persons filing property tax protests who were not record owners of the property to send notice of the protest by certified mail to the owner and provide evidence of service before the county could take action on a protest. This language was removed on Select File and an interim study will be conducted on the issue. Other sections of the bill clarify greenbelt recapture provisions and revise membership on the Greenbelt Advisory Committee, among other things.

NACO Scholarship Application Deadline – March 1

Children and stepchildren of Nebraska county officials and employees are eligible for one of 12 NACO scholarships in the amount of \$1,000. Students must graduate from a Nebraska high school this spring and plan to further their education at an in-state

educational institution. The application deadline is March 1. Application forms are available through the NACO office at 402-434-5660 or on the NACO website at www.nacone.org.

Selected Hearing Schedule for Weeks of Feb. 26 and March 5

The following is a list of some of the bills with county impact that have been scheduled for public hearing next two weeks. Please check the Legislature's website (www.nebraskalegislature.gov) each Friday for a full listing. Some committees have concluded their public hearings for the session. The Legislature will be in recess on March 2.

Monday, February 26

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee - Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

- LR 28 - Provide the Legislature opposes enactment or enforcement in the State of Nebraska of the REAL ID Act
- LB 486 - Adopt the Local Community Rail Security and Employee Education Act
- LB 676 - Prohibit the blocking of railroad crossings for more than a specified time and to provide penalties

Tuesday, February 27

Appropriations Committee - Room 1524 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 55 - Change provisions governing funding of home visitation, child, and parenting programs

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee - Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 182 - Change grant provisions under the public transportation assistance program
- LB 439 - Create the Highway Finance Task Force
- LB 447 - Require the Department of Roads to conduct a feasibility study for a Platte River bridge
- LB 276 - Rename the Department of Roads

Urban Affairs Committee - Room 1510 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 562 - Change provisions relating to the Community Development Law

Wednesday, February 28

Appropriations Committee - Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 587 - Eliminate limitations on appropriations for county jail reimbursement assistance

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

- LB 477 - Change contribution levels for state and political subdivision employee health plans
- LB 252 - Change land surveyor application and registration fees

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

- LB 37 - Change the number of district court judges
- LB 38 - Change the number of separate juvenile court judges
- LB 377 - Reallocate district court judgeships
- LB 533 - Remove a requirement of consent and waiver of physical appearance for audiovisual court appearances

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

- LB 458 - Require vegetation management in certain streams

Revenue Committee - Room 1524 - 2:30 p.m.

- LB 502 - Change inheritance tax rates

Thursday, March 1

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

- LB 686 - Provide for partisan ballots for unaffiliated voters at primary elections
- LB 528 - Change provisions relating to elections
- LB 646 - Change provisions relating to counting ballots

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

- LB 696 - Provide a fee increase and a waiting period for marriage licenses if marriage education requirements are not met

Thursday, March 1 – continued

- LB 164 - Change provisions of the Relocation Assistance Act
- LB 104 - Change age of majority from nineteen to eighteen
- LB 112 - Provide for the judicial emancipation of minors

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

- LB 416 - Exempt government retirement benefits from income tax

Friday, March 2 - Recess

Monday, March 5

Business and Labor Committee - Room 2012 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 31 - Change minimum wage provisions
- LB 175 - Require employer to provide employee a reason for termination
- LB 432 - Change the Act Prohibiting Unjust Discrimination in Employment Because of Age

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee - Room 1113 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 162 - Provide for an electronic lien system for certificates of title
- LB 415 - Change provisions relating to provisional operator's permits and other operator's licenses and permits
- LB 285 - Authorize compliance with the driver's license provisions of the federal REAL ID Act of 2005

Wednesday, March 7

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

- LB 293 - Redefine public safety official with respect to infectious disease exposure
- LB 623 - Change provisions relating to speedy trial
- LB 376 - Change felony complaint procedures
- LB 363 - Adopt the Legal Education for Public Service Loan

Repayment Act

Thursday, March 8

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

- LB 627 - Redefine real property and tangible personal property for purposes of taxation
- LB 688 - Provide for development of an income-based method of valuing agricultural land.
- LB 703 - Change use of the income-approach calculation in determining the assessed valuation for rent-restricted housing projects

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

- LB 47 - Create the offense of interference with child visitation

- LB 413 - Change provisions governing children born out of wedlock and the offense of violation of custody
- LB 554 - Adopt a new Parenting Act
- LB 682 - Change provisions relating to use of the Supreme Court child support guidelines
- LB 76 - Change provisions governing physical and legal custody arrangements of a minor child

Appropriations Committee - Room 1003 - 1:30 p.m.

- LB 42 - Change distribution of cigarette tax
- LB 446 - Require Department of Roads to let contracts for the construction of a Platte River bridge and for highway improvements