

State legislators kill 'do nothing' forecast

The 1972 session of Nebraska Unicameral got off to a rapid start, ending speculation by many state senators that it would be a "do nothing session."

A bill restricting state supported universities and colleges from collecting student activities fees is up for public hearing Monday in the Legislature's education committee.

The bill, LB 1271, was introduced by Senators Gerald Stromer, Kearney, and Ellen Craft, North Platte.

Three other bills will be aired by the committee which meets at 2 p.m. at the State Capitol. Any individual wishing to speak for or against any bill at a committee hearing is permitted to do so.

After the first 10 working days, the 49 senators had introduced 427 new bills to go along with the 123 remaining from last year's first session of the 82nd Legislature.

This is the first year since Nebraska achieved statehood that the legislature has met in regular session on an even-numbered year. Since previous unfinished business can still be considered, this year's Unicameral is called the 82nd Legislature, Second Session.

The 1972 session is limited by the state constitution to 60 working days unless 40 senators decide to extend the time limit. Last year's Legislature was also limited in time, but to 90 working days.

In an attempt to speed the session, senators set a limit of 10 new bills each senator could introduce. These bills must all have been introduced before the end of the tenth legislative day. Additional bills can be introduced through the various committees.

Prior to Lt. Gov. Frank Marsh's calling of the session to order on Jan. 4, it was anticipated by many senators and newsmen that little would be accomplished by the Legislature this year since 25 legislative districts are up for election and three state senators are running for U.S. Senate.

One senator said he expected his fellow colleagues to pass an omnibus appropriations bill and "get the hell home."

"Every day we stay here longer than necessary, we are going to spend a hell of a lot of money," Sen. Terry Carpenter of Scottsbluff said.

Carpenter, a candidate for the Democratic nomination to the U.S. Senate, admitted his decision to offer the adjournment motion may be for a "political" purpose. "I play politics 24 hours a day," the 71-year-old lawmaker told his fellow senators.

Besides Carpenter, Senators Wayne Ziebarth, Wilcox, and John DeCamp, Neligh, have all expressed plans to run for the Democratic nomination and oppose U.S. Senator Carl Curtis (Rep.) in November's general election.

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Senators kill publication fees bill

State senators did a complete turnabout and voted to kill Sen. Terry Carpenter's LB 70 which would have in its original form prohibited the use of student fees in financing student newspapers on the Lincoln and Omaha campuses of the University of Nebraska.

LB 70 said in part: "The University Cash Fund shall not be used to pay the expenses of editing, printing, or distribution of a university newspaper."

Legislators began discussing Carpenter's bill Jan. 11, spending much of the afternoon on numerous amendments to it.

An extended debate over the quality and need for a student fee supported newspaper on either the Lincoln or Omaha campus of the University of Nebraska followed.

"A newspaper ought to be a place where controversies can be brought to light," Sen. Ernest Chambers said.

Chambers, along with several other senators, contended it was not the Legislature's responsibility to regulate such an issue, but rather the duty of the Board of Regents.

Sen. DeCamp moved the bill be indefinitely postponed. This in effect would have killed the bill.

Sen. Orval Keyes, Papillion, requested a "Call of the House." When such a request is made, the sergeant-at-arms must attempt to bring all senators from the hallways, committee hearings and offices to the chambers to either vote or pass on the issue.

All but one senator was found, and the vote was 21-27 against killing Carpenter's bill. The bill was then advanced from General File by a vote of 27-18.

On the morning of Jan. 13, DeCamp offered a motion to return LB 70 to General File for an amendment. The legislature agreed to do so.

DeCamp then recommended the adoption of the Appropriations Committee's amendment appointing a professional adviser for student publications.

On a vote of 25-15 the amendment permitting the continued support of newspapers through student fees and appointing a professional adviser was adopted.

Sen. Chambers then moved to kill the bill again. This attempt was successful by a 24-21 vote.

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