

School aid measure provides equal support

When one muddles through the arguments for and against LB772, the recently passed state aid to education bill revolves around one basic question:

What is the fairest way to collect enough money so every Nebraska child can get an education of reasonably equal quality?

On Nov. 5 Nebraska voters will decide whether to keep LB772 on the law books. A vote for referendum Measure No. 300 will allow LB772 to stand, thus requiring great state sharing in the cost of public elementary and secondary education.

A vote against Measure 300 will retain the current system of determining state financial support for schools.

The bill became embroiled in controversy even before the Legislature overrode Gov. J. James Exon's veto of LB772 in March. Called the Public School Support Act of 1974, LB772 will increase state aid to schools from the current \$55 million a year to \$156,205,344 by 1976-77—about half the \$300 million needed to operate public schools.

Attaining fair methods of taxation and equal education opportunities is, of course, difficult, but LB 772 seems to be the best school aid law achievable now. Some of its advantages are:

—It allows for differences in school district wealth, indicated by property values. Spending per pupil now ranges from \$500 a pupil in some districts to more than \$2,000 in others. The bill helps equalize the dollar effect behind each school child.

—It reduces the unfair reliance on primarily one tax to finance schools. The property tax now provides about \$210 million of the \$300 million total school costs. Under LB772, the property tax will pay only half of the state aid to schools. Sales and income taxes will pay the other half.

—LB772 allows local districts to spend more than the minimum state spending level, if voters in the district approve. It also allows local school boards to set their own spending priorities.

—The bill guarantees every district foundation aid. In addition, special aid will be given to districts that need it for such factors as programs for the handicapped and busing costs. There is no hardship aid under the current law.

—LB772 allows school districts to choose plans and programs without having to rely solely on local district wealth to finance them.

In summary, LB772 provides the best way yet devised to give every Nebraska child's education equal dollar support.

To keep this equality, vote "For 33" on Nov. 5

Jane Owens

Attorney slots examined

Next week Nebraska voters will go to the polls to determine the outcome of various constitutional amendments and political races. A travesty of the Nth magnitude will occur if voters do not closely examine the race for Nebraska attorney general.

In that race are former gov. Frank Morrison and the current Lancaster County Attorney Paul Douglas. Let us look at their respective qualifications.

Morrison was governor of this state for six years. He says this qualifies him to be our next attorney general. But the one office and its duties have nothing to do with the other. Pragmatically speaking, Morrison was a terrible governor anyway. Since then, he has knocked around Nebraska politics, desperately trying to gain another political foothold.

What about his opponent? What are his qualifications? Paul Douglas has served for 18 years in the Lancaster County Attorney Office. The last 14 of those years have been as the elected county attorney. During his tenure in that office, professional excellence has been his trademark. The expertise Douglas has developed during his time in office is evinced by the fact that attorneys from other Nebraska counties continually have asked him for help. Through the years Paul Douglas has served as a special prosecutor in 14 Nebraska counties.

What besides merit qualifications should be an issue in this race? Nothing really. The law is the law and must be enforced as such.

Morrison has attempted to make an issue of the amount of money Douglas has allocated for his campaign, terming it excessive. This is a deceptive and misleading swipe by Morrison. Before the campaign, Douglas was virtually unknown to voters outside of Lancaster County. Running against a man with the name recognition of Morrison, Douglas obviously needed a high-powered campaign to make his name known

around the state.

Morrison also has decried the politically partisan nature of the race. At times he has advocated a gubernatorial-appointed attorney general. At others, he simply has called for a non-partisan race.

On this issue, I can't figure Frank out. Douglas only has campaigned against an opponent once—the first time he was elected to his Lancaster County office. He is hardly what one would call a creature of the harshly partisan political jungle.

mark b. rasmussen
right turn

Morrison, on the other hand, has engaged in partisan politics most of his adult life. Even now, his campaign includes radio spot endorsements by our fiercely partisan present governor.

Nebraska would have to search far and wide to find a more qualified attorney general than Paul Douglas. He deserves your vote on election day.

In a related area, Lancaster County voters will select a new county attorney to succeed Paul Douglas. One candidate is Ron Lahners, a business law lecturer at UNL.

More importantly, Lahners has worked in the county attorney's office for 13 years, the last two as Chief Deputy. The record of excellence Paul Douglas has achieved in this office is also due to the work of Ron Lahners.

The voters other choice is Jack Linder who best can be described as an opportunist. He is a former Nebraskan who returned to Lincoln in time to change his party affiliation and run unopposed in the primary.

The choice is obvious. Ron Lahners overwhelmingly deserves a promotion to Lancaster County Attorney.

