

Gardner favors political reform act

By Randy Blauvelt

Common Cause national chairman John Gardner Thursday supported Nebraska's first move to enact the Sunshine Initiative, a political reform law aimed at lobbyists' and political candidates' financial reports.

The petition drive for the initiative officially started Monday when Gov. J. James Exon signed the first petition of the Nebraska Political Reform Act of 1976—the Sunshine Initiative.

If 31,590 signatures are obtained, the act will appear on the 1976 Nebraska general election ballot. The act is supported by the Coalition for Open Government.

"I have come to Lincoln today because I am interested in the concern that our Nebraska members (of Common Cause)

have exhibited for the open and accountable functioning of their state government," Gardner said during a news conference.

The act's provisions require lobbyists to register, file activity reports and itemize all expenditures for lobbying with a non-partisan, fair practices commission. It also requires complete disclosure of campaign contributions and debts of more than \$1,000.

Peter Hoagland, coordinator for the Coalition for Open Government, said at the news conference that the commission will have five "part-time overseers." He said anyone who had registered as a lobbyist within one year of their nomination on the commission cannot be considered for a commission position. No more than three

commission members may be from the same political party and members cannot hold another political office or do any lobbying, he said.

Gardner said Common Cause is spearheading drives in most of the states, and supports two pieces of federal reform legislation.

"The present lobby disclosure law is a hoax and Congress should be ashamed to have it on the books," Gardner said.

One of the bills, now in the House of Representatives, would "replace the loophole-riddled Lobbying Act of 1946 with comprehensive and enforceable lobbying disclosure requirements," he said.

Another bill, H.R. 3249, would require federal public officials of both legislative and executive branches to disclose personal financial interests, he said.

"Common Cause is convinced that disclosure of the personal finances of public officials is a necessary step to restore accountability in government," he said. "Citizens have a right to know whether their elected or appointed representatives have a personal financial stake in the very matters on which they are acting officially."

Anti-secrecy mood

Gardner said the "mood of the country" is against secrecy in government, but the Senate's rules committee has "stubbornly held to its closed-door policy."

Gardner, who formerly was Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in President Lyndon Johnson's administration, said 46 states have adopted forms of major political reform bills since the Watergate scandal.

"In the last three years, Common Cause groups have taken the question of open government to the people in a number of states," he said. "Initiative petitions in California, Washington, Oregon, Missouri, Idaho and Alaska have been overwhelmingly approved by the voters."

According to Gardner, Common Cause received "\$50,000 to \$60,000" from J.D. Rockefeller III during the first year of its operation, and has since received \$1,500 from Nelson Rockefeller. The group is, itself, a lobby organization with more than 275,000 members, he said.



Photo by Steve Boerner

John Gardner, founder of Common Cause, was in Lincoln Thursday to support Nebraska's "Sunshine" initiative.

saucers & pickles

Fasting planned to demonstrate concern

By Sharon Johnson

Each year more than a billion metric tons of grain are produced and eaten. However at the Rome Food Conference last year, it was estimated there are 460 million severely under nourished people in the world and a 750 million increase was projected for 1985.

Increased death rates in several developing countries is blamed on malnutrition.

It is neither practical nor likely for remote villages of South Asia, Africa and Latin America to be fed by the wheat and cornfields of Nebraska and other North American states. They must depend on their own food harvests.

However, where people are starving, providing food is only a partial answer. It is necessary to ask why hunger has occurred and work to prevent its persistence.

An organization called Oxfam-America is asking those questions. Oxfam-America is an independent development and relief

agency affiliated with International Oxfam (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief). The international agency comprising Australia, Belgium, Canada and Great Britain has had 33 years of success.

Oxfam gives highest priority to helping small farmers grow more food for their families and local villagers. By putting funds into rural associations and community based projects, farm credit, water, management, seeds, fertilizers and village-level health care become possible.

Oxfam-America and Oxfam-Canada have set Thursday, Nov. 20 as the day for North Americans to contemplate the universal problem of the poor and hungry.

By fasting for 24 hours, you can show concern for the world's overlooked majority. The cost of one day's meals donated to Oxfam will be each person's share in increasing the world's harvest.

To fast for a world harvest, here are things to do on Nov. 20:

-Experience your own hunger, keeping

in mind that for you, the next day's breakfast can be counted on.

-Use time you would have spent on meals to join with others for serious discussion to plan future action on the world food problem.

-Consider simplification of your life-style for your own health and well being to develop awareness that our bountiful world is limited.

-Think about publicizing your participation in order to encourage other people to speak out about growing inequalities.

-Drink only coffee, tea, fruit juices and broth. Give your day's food money or what ever you can afford to help some of the poorest farmers grow more food in less developed countries.

Enlist support of friends and family, encouraging them to match your fasting commitment with their dollars or get them to fast with you.

Obtain information or send donations to Oxfam America, 302 Columbus Ave., Boston, Mass. 02116.

Wins — Losses
8 - 0
**Damned Good,
BIG RED!**

Falstaff Brewing Corp. Omaha

Coffee House
presents:

Mark Berenson

Thursday Evening Nov. 13
7:30
Cost: Free as Air!
Coffee House Committee sponsored by the Union Program Council