



Staff photo by Dave Bentz

Nebraska Secretary of State Allen Beermann talked to students about registering to vote in the Nebraska Union Wednesday.

Beermann urges students, peers to vote

By Eric Peterson

Nebraska Secretary of State Allen Beermann Wednesday explained voting and elections in Nebraska in the Nebraska Union. His appearance was sponsored by ASUN's Government Liaison Committee, the Nebraska State Student Association and the UNL College Republicans.

Beermann said there are 1.3 million potential voters in Nebraska, but only 850,000 of those are registered — and the average election turnout is about 500,000.

The 3rd congressional district in western Nebraska has by far the best voter participation in the state, Beermann said.

Asking himself the hypothetical question of what good does one vote do, Beermann answered, "Do you know of anyone that has two?"

He pointed out that many elections are very close. Rep. Virginia Smith of the 3rd Congressional district won her first election by about one vote per county, Beermann said, and he noted that many bond issue ballots are very close as well.

"Don't tell me that you can't make a

difference," Beermann challenged. Beermann said that if only 75 percent of Nebraskan aged 18 to 21 would register and vote, there could be a complete change of power.

"If 75 percent voted, they could control every election in the state of Nebraska," he said.

People have various reasons for not voting, he said. He pointed out that some people don't want to be on the public record — because they don't want to be picked for jury duty, or be caught receiving welfare at two addresses, or be plagued with bills or junk mail. Some people, Beermann said, just don't care. Others say it's difficult to vote.

Beermann took issue with the last excuse. He noted the availability of absentee ballots, disabled absentee ballots, overseas ballots handled by special couriers and special courier ballots that can be sent to hospitals on election day. Beermann emphasized that a U.S. Supreme Court decision says that students can vote either in their old precinct or at their college address.

The state spends nearly \$250,000 every election publishing sample ballots so that people know the issues and candidates, Beermann said. "It's the only legal crib note that I know of."

As secretary of state, one of Beermann's responsibilities is making predictions of the election turnout. He said most of his predictions have been within 0.5 percent accurate, and added that the half of a percent accuracy is achieved by extrapolating the turnout by the number of people asking for absentee ballots and by looking at the major races and issues.

Beermann said that Joe Swanson, a Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor, was disqualified to be on the ballot because too many of his petition signers weren't registered to vote.

Although about 3,700 signatures were submitted and only 2,000 valid signatures are required, Beermann said Swanson's petitions totaled only about 1,800 valid signatures. Most of the disqualified signers weren't registered; a few signed twice or illegibly, and some left off their address, Beermann said.

Lobbying increased pending abortion legislation

With the abortion issue pertinent in two pieces of legislation in the U.S. Senate, two UNL organizations are stepping up their lobbying efforts both for and against abortion.

UNL Students for Life president Sheila Cahill said the anti-abortion legislation isn't exactly what her organization is ultimately pulling for, but said group members would take anything they can get.

"Our goal is the passage of the paramount human life amendment. It's basically the same idea as the Helms bill. It says that the right to life is guaranteed from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death,"

she said.

UNL Students for Reproductive Freedom president Jan Deeds pointed out that her organization isn't in favor of women having abortions, only that they be given the right to decide for themselves.

"We are basically opposed to any legislation that takes away a woman's control over her own body," she said.

The measures in the Senate concerning abortion are the Hatch amendment and the Helms bill.

Keith Mueller, assistant professor of political science, explained the process that is now taking place in the Senate.

He said the Hatch amendment would do two things: it would say that women do not have a constitutional right to have an abortion and it would allow states to make their own abortion laws.

"The more controversial legislation is the Helms

bill," he said. "It is actually an amendment to the debt ceiling bill. The debt ceiling bill has to be passed by the end of the month for the next fiscal year, but the opposition to the abortion amendment has the bill in a filibuster. Something is going to have to give soon, either Sen. Jesse Helms will have to withdraw the amendment, or the debt ceiling bill will not be passed on time,"

Police Report

The following is a list of the calls and complaints received by police from 7 a.m. Tuesday to 7 a.m. Wednesday.

- 8:56 a.m. — Purse theft from Teacher's College. A suspect was arrested.
- 9:01 a.m. — Lost or stolen parking permit reported from Area 21 at 10th and Vine streets.
- 1:10 p.m. — Gas stolen from car parked in Area 1 at 17th and R streets.
- 4:13 p.m. Bicycle stolen north of Pound Hall.
- 4:20 p.m. — Book bag stolen from the Nebraska Bookstore at 12th and R streets.
- 4:47 p.m. — Car struck while parked at Area 16.
- 6:15 p.m. — Person was arrested at 19th and O streets. The person had several warrants out for his arrest.
- 9:37 p.m. — Car parked in the Nebraska Union metered lot was struck by another car.

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