

# Editorial

## Senators should keep expenses down

The Nebraska Supreme Court has given the Legislature a blank check, but the state's lawmakers would be wise to use it cautiously.

First, a little bit of history is in order. In 1981, the Legislature passed a bill over then-Gov. Charles Thone's veto that authorized repayment of work-related expenses accumulated during the regular session. Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers then filed claims totalling \$7,800 for session in 1981 and 1982. The attorney general's offices sued, saying that payment of such claims was not provided for in the state constitution.

Lancaster County District Judge Dale Fahrbruch agreed with the attorney general and declared the 1981 law unconstitutional. But Friday, the state's high court justices unanimously overturned Fahrbruch's ruling.

It seems only reasonable that senators receive a fair reimbursement for expenses incurred in the line of duty, but they must remember that any funding for those expenses must come from the already-over-burdened Nebraska taxpayers.

Unfortunately, the ruling handed down by the justices did not contain specifics. It says that senators are entitled to expenses that are "incurred by an employee in connection with the performance of his duties, and typically include transportation, meals and lodging while traveling."

It is up to the Legislature to fill the void left by the court ruling. If senators want to avoid the wrath of the state's voters, they should establish legitimate definitions and limitations on allowable expenses before any payments are made.

It is encouraging to hear that Omaha Sen. Vard Johnson already is making plans for guidelines to be established. Johnson is chairman of the Legislature's Executive Board. He told the *Omaha World-Herald* that the board will develop a policy recommendation and implement it, possibly by mid-year, or bring it before the full Legislature next January.

Considering the low salaries of Nebraska senators, it would be tempting for the Executive Board to set some rather liberal expense guidelines. That's a temptation that should be avoided.

The fact that proposed constitutional amendments to raise senatorial salaries have repeatedly been voted down should offer plenty of evidence that Nebraskans don't want to spend much money on their Legislature. The senators should abide by that wish and keep their expenses to a minimum.

## Registration nightmare will haunt April fools

According to the Schedule of Classes booklet distributed by the university, the absolute deadline for early registration is July 10.

However, to have any chance at all of getting the classes you want, it is suggested you register as soon as possible.

Of course, if you don't early register, there is only one avenue open to you

"This is the general registration line?"  
"What? Is there an echo here or are you a walking tape recorder?"

Terrific, of all the people to be stuck in line with, I ended up with a Don Rickles think-alike.

"But this can't be the general registration line. This is the Gateway Mall," I said, shoppingly.

"So the line's a little long. With any luck, we should be at the administration building in a couple of days."

"What then?"  
"Another line."  
"Oh."

Next scene: (two days later, walking around looking at class listings.)

"Excuse me," I said, "are you the faculty member assigned to tell me which classes still have openings?"

"No, I'm rehearsing to be a department store mannequin."

"Are you related to the guy who stood in front of me in line the last couple of days?"

"Huh?"  
"Nothing. Um, I just need a basic English class. Have you got any openings?"

"Well, let's see, how about 3916?"  
"Oh wow," I said, "3916. Why didn't I think of that? Come on, what does that mean in English?"

"Cute."  
"No, I didn't mean it that way. What course is it?"

"English 473."  
"473?"

"Yes, an Introduction to Comparative Renaissance and Native American Literature."

"Actually, I had something a little more basic in mind. You know, like Comp 150."

Oh, you've got to be kidding. Only the people that early register can get into those classes."

"But I had the flu."  
"You had the flu from March 19 to July 10?"

Next scene: (that night, talking on the phone to mother.)

"Hello, mom?"  
"Of course it's your mother, who else would accept a collect call from you?"  
She had a point.

"Well, what classes did you end up with?" she said.

"Real Estate Principles 382, Horticulture Insects 203, Computer-Aided Graphics 112, and a geology lab...and, oh yeah, a beginning soccer theory class."

"I thought you were an English major?"

"So did I, Mom. So did I."  
(Everything's fuzzy again as we fade back to the present.)

So, to avoid this nightmare called general registration, I urge you to fill out your class schedule today.

Now, for a witty finish, um...don't be an April Fool, early register now.



Bill Allen

—the dreaded general registration.

General registration should be avoided at all costs.

It's complicated, hectic and chances are you won't be able to get all the classes you want or need. Chances are even greater that you won't get these classes at the times you want or need.

Now, if you've never gone through general registration, you have no way of knowing how bad it really is and you probably think all the horror stories you hear are exaggerated. Let me give you a true life example: (Everything is getting fuzzy like it does on television when they go into a flashback.)

"Hi! Can I take your order, please?"

"Yes, thank you, I'd like to go through general registration."

"I'm sorry, sir, this is the Wendy's drive-through window. You'll have to go to the university to register."

Next scene:

"Hey, where's the beef?"

"Sorry, Jack, this is the general registration line. You'll have to go to the Wendy's drive-through window for the beef."

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## Rape trials show progress in our 'yes-no-maybe' culture

There are a few times when, if you watch closely, you can actually see a change of public mind. This is one of those times.

For as long as I can remember, a conviction for rape depended as much on the character of the woman involved as on the action of the man. Most

these six men guilty was that they had forced her. If she said no, it was rape.

The second of these cases involved a young woman soldier from Ft. Devens who accepted a ride with members of a local rock band, The Grand Slam. She was raped in the bus and left in a field hours later. Had she flirted with the band members? Had she told a friend that she intended to seduce one of the men? Had she gone on the bus willingly? The judge sentencing three of the men to jail said, "No longer will society accept the fact that a woman, even if she may initially act in a seductive or compromising manner, has waived her right to say 'no' at any further time." If she said no, it was rape.

The third of these cases was in some ways the most notable. An Abington, Mass., woman was driven from a bar to a parking lot where she was raped by four men, scratched by a knife, had her hair singed by a cigarette lighter and then left half naked in the snow. The testimony at the trial showed that the woman had previously had sex with three of the men, and with two of them in a group setting. Still, the jury was able to agree with the district attorney: "Sexual consent between a woman and a man on one occasion does not mean the man has access to her whenever it strikes his fancy." If she said no, it was rape.

Not every community, courtroom or jury today accepts this simple standard of justice. But ten years ago, five years ago, even three years ago, these women might not have even dared press charges.

It was the change of climate which enabled, even encouraged, the women to come forward. It was the change of attitude which framed the arguments in the courtroom.



Ellen Goodman

often, the job of the defense lawyer was to prove that the woman had provoked or consented to the act, to prove that it was sex, not assault.

In the normal course of events, the smallest blemish, misjudgment, misstep by the woman — did she wear a tight sweater? Was she a "loose" woman? Was she in the wrong part of town at the wrong hour? — became proof that she had invited the man's attentions. A woman could waive her right to say "no" in an astonishing number of ways.

But in the past few weeks, in Massachusetts, three cases of multiple rape have come into court and three sets of convictions have come out of juries. These verdicts point to a sea of change in attitudes. A simple definition seems to have seeped into the public consciousness. If she says no, it's rape.

The most famous of these cases is the New Bedford barroom rape. There, in two separate trials, juries cut through complicated testimony to decide the central issues within hours. Had the woman been drinking? Had she lied about that in testimony? Had she kissed one of the men? In the end, none of these points was relevant. What mattered to the juries that found four of

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