

**Weather:** Cloudy with strong southerly winds today. Good chance for showers and thunderstorms. High around 60. Tonight, cloudy and cooler with rain and lows in the mid-40s. Winds becoming north-easterly. Rain continues Thursday with a high around 50.

**Now Nebraska needs to find women's coach**

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**Romantics to bring riffs to Royal Grove**

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## Nebraskans' opinions vary on Contra aid

By Ad Hudler  
Editorial Page Editor  
The Daily Nebraskan

When it comes to giving aid to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua, Nebraskans' opinions appear to vary as much as Midwestern spring temperatures.

Farmers in the western half of the state seem to be more concerned with the agricultural economy and have little opinion on the issue.

At the other end of the state, Lincoln residents appear to lean toward the left and favor rejecting aid, according to spokespeople in U.S. senators' and representatives' offices in Nebraska and Washington.

**'If they've got \$100 million, why don't we give it to the farmers. . . out here . . . who are feeding the country?'**  
— Edi McGinley

Contras are the U.S.-backed revolutionary troops who are trying to overthrow the Marxist-backed Sandinista government. The argument in Congress right now is whether the U.S. should continue to support the Contras. The issue also has grabbed Nebraskans' attention.

### Dozen letters

Fran White of Sen. J.J. Exon's Lincoln office says she can't remember fielding this many phone calls about one issue since "the Alaskan seal thing," which was legislation aimed at protecting rare seals from hunters. Exon's Lincoln office took in about 200 phone calls in the past two weeks, along with "a couple of dozen letters" regarding the Nicaraguan issue, she said.

White says callers to the Lincoln office oppose Contra aid by a 4-to-1 margin. But that doesn't reflect Nebraskans' attitude as a whole, she said.

For example, the Lincoln office always receives more liberal-type calls because the city has strong chapters of Nebraskans for Peace and the Central American Response team, two groups that oppose the aid, she said. Exon's Omaha office usually reports more conservative calls and letters mainly because that city has a strong, organized conservative group that frequently contacts its elected representatives, she said.

It's a different story at Exon's North Platte office.

Edi McGinley handles a lot of phone calls for Exon — sometimes so many that she has to put a caller on hold once or twice in a 10-minute conversation while she answers other lines.

The phone lines ring, but response to the Nicaraguan situation has been minimal, she said. People in the farm

communities appear to be more worried about the agricultural economy.

"They just aren't taking the time to get involved" with international issues like the Contras, McGinley said. People in the western part of the state, she said, question the importance of sending the \$100 million in aid abroad when it could be used at home.

"If they've got \$100 million, why don't we give it to the farmers. . . out here. . . who are feeding the country?" she asked, reflecting the type of phone calls she receives. McGinley said she has fielded about 20 Contra-related calls in the past week.

### Callers oppose

George R. Ferguson of Sen. Ed Zorinsky's Grand Island office also said most of his callers oppose Contra aid. He said several callers told him the money could be used in the United States.

"A lot of them feel that the money isn't gonna do much good," in Nicaragua, he said.

The \$100 million, however, would come from the Defense Department's existing budget. No money would be taken from other federal programs.

### Margins narrow

Reaction in Nebraska U.S. representatives' offices differs from that in Exon's and Zorinsky's offices.

Spokesmen in the offices of Reps. Hal Daub, Virginia Smith and Doug Bereuter report narrower margins between the pro- and anti-aid sides.

A spokeswoman in Smith's Washington office said they have received 130 responses in favor of aid and 120 against.

David Heineman of Daub's Washington office says his tally is now 2-to-1 in favor of aid. All three Nebraska representatives voted for the aid in first-round House debate. Exon and Zorinsky opposed the aid.

Whatever their opinions, Nebraskans have been calling their senators and representatives en masse.

### Politics

Heineman of Bereuter's Washington office attributes the influx of calls and letters to the media and Democrats' efforts to politicize the Nicaraguan situation.

In addition, spokespeople from several offices said President Reagan's pro-Contra speech last week on TV and the clash with Libya in the Gulf of Sidra last week also prompted reaction.

But, Heineman added, Nebraskans still appear to be more bothered by the problems in their backyard — the depressed agriculture economy and debates over whether to raise taxes.

"They're concerned about the economy and government spending," he said.

Although 80 percent of the calls in Sen. Zorinsky's Lincoln office deal with ag-related issues, the Contra issue has sparked more attention than other foreign issues, said Becky Deily of that office.



Exon

Paul Vonderlage/Daily Nebraskan

## Student loan and Pell Grant funds will be safe this year, Exon says

By Deb Hooker  
Staff Reporter

Students' federal aid is safe for the rest of this year, Sen. James Exon said Tuesday.

Exon told the Nebraska State Student Association that money for student loans and Pell Grants will remain about the same except for a "slight" increase to cover the cost of inflation. Exon said that Congress probably will appropriate \$700 million to \$1 billion more for student aid than last year.

Although the federal government

is cutting many state aid programs to meet the demands of the Gramm-Rudman budget balancing law, Exon said student aid will escape cuts.

"Student aid — aid to education in general — is an investment in the future and not an expenditure," Exon said.

Student loans benefit the country much more than they cost because students usually pay them back, he said.

"It's also good for government because it is true that the more we educate people, the better jobs that

they're able to do during their lives, the more money they make and consequently the more money they pay in the form of taxes," he said.

Under legislation Congress is considering, Pell Grants would be limited to students whose families' incomes are less than \$30,000. Students also would be required to have a C average after their second year to qualify for more loans or Pell Grants.

Exon said that he expects the student aid legislation to work its way to the President's desk with few changes by the end of the summer.

## School of Technical Agriculture

# Senators give Curtis extra cash

By Todd von Kampen  
Senior Reporter

The NU School of Technical Agriculture at Curtis got an April Fools' Day gift that wasn't a joke Tuesday when senators voted to give it extra state money to avoid teacher layoffs next year.

The Legislature voted 26-9 to adopt an amendment to the main budget bill, LB1251, that earmarks \$245,000 in state support for UNSTA's budget. Farnam Sen. Tom Vickers, sponsor of the amendment, had tried twice without success last week to get extra money for UNSTA besides \$1 million in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources budget.

During the morning session, senators rejected several attempts to reduce or eliminate a proposed 3 percent salary increase for NU and other state employees. LB1250, which allows the salary hike, and an accompanying bill that provides the money for it advanced to final reading on separate 26-0 votes.

The extra money for UNSTA would blunt the impact of permanent budget

cuts required by the Legislature last year, said Waverly Sen. Jerome Warner, appropriations committee chairman. The NU Board of Regents has been considering a plan that would cut the UNSTA budget by \$359,000 and force the school to lay off several faculty members. The Ad-Hoc Budget Review Committee has recommended closing UNSTA entirely.

The regents' plan says that UNSTA students would be able to pick up any courses lost at nearby community colleges in McCook and North Platte. Because courses still would be available at those schools, Warner said, cutting the \$245,000 from UNSTA makes more sense in light of the state's budget problems.

But Vickers, whose district includes UNSTA, argued that senators should remember the impact of budget cuts on those who depend on the school for their economy.

"When you live out in my part of the world, you know there's economic problems," he said. "But then you have to ask, 'Are we second-class citizens?'"

The move to eliminate the 3 percent salary increase for state employees was led by Bellwood Sen. Loran Schmit, who told the Legislature the state simply does not have the money to pay for it. But senators voted 19-15 against a Schmit amendment that would eliminate the salary increase and later refused, 28-10, to kill the accompanying appropriations bill. Other attempts to reduce or delay the salary hike were rejected.

In other action, the Legislature voted 25-10 to add \$100,000 to the NU Medical Center budget for establishment of a bachelor's degree nursing program at West Nebraska General Hospital in Scottsbluff. Scottsbluff Sen. William Nichol, speaker of the Legislature, sponsored the amendment.

Omaha Sen. Ernest Chambers withdrew an amendment that would have required UNL to phase out the College of Law within three years.

Beatrice Sen. Patricia Morehead's amendment to increase Nebraska Technical Assistance Center funding by \$42,000 failed on a 16-9 vote.