

## Senators introduce 5 new AIDS bills

By Lee Rood  
Staff Reporter

After the number of cases of acquired immune deficiency syndrome rose in Nebraska last year, state senators have introduced five bills to help protect Nebraskans from contracting the virus.

Although Nebraska's first AIDS case was reported in 1983, sponsors of the AIDS bills said that until recently, few people in the state realized the seriousness of the disease.

Recent AIDS figures and predictions have increased concern and spawned legislation, the sponsors said.

According to the State Health Department, 49 cases of AIDS have been reported in Nebraska since 1983. Twelve of the cases were discovered in the last quarter of 1987.

The first AIDS bills to make it to the floor of the Legislature, LB1012, would establish a statewide AIDS education/counseling program.

The bill, sponsored by the Legislature's Committee of Health and Human Services, was praised by members of the State Health Department AIDS task force.

Shannon Fiene, health director of the task force, said the bill would provide services with state funds it cannot provide with existing federal AIDS financing.

The bill was amended Thursday by the Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee to include a provision that requires statistical information on the AIDS antibody test to be reported to the Department of Health.

The statistical information would include only the results of HIV tests, which screen patients to determine whether they carry the AIDS virus, and AIDS antibody tests. The names of the individuals would not be included.

Medical professionals are required to report to the department the names of all confirmed AIDS patients.

Sen. Jerry Chizek of Omaha, who sponsored three other AIDS-related bills, said he hadn't confronted the AIDS issue before because there had been some confusion in Nebraska about the seriousness of the disease.

It wasn't until the number of AIDS cases increased in the last

year that people understood the impact of AIDS, he said.

"Nobody realized what we were dealing with," he said.

One of Chizek's bills would redefine first-degree assault to include someone who knowingly transmits AIDS to another person.

Chizek said he decided legislation was needed after talking to firefighters and police officers worried about contracting the disease.

There have been instances in Omaha and Sarpy County where AIDS victims have purposely tried to give the disease to police and highway patrolmen, Chizek said.

The same bill, LB1071, would make persons guilty who fail to inform (when able) doctors or morticians that a person they are treating has AIDS or other related communicable diseases.

Another bill, LB1070, would require the Department of Health to notify rescue personnel if they were exposed to a person with a reportable disease such as AIDS.

Individuals who work to protect people from the disease, especially those in the medical profession, should have the right to know if they have been exposed to AIDS, Chizek said.

LB1069, another of Chizek's bills, would require employers to provide workman's compensation to their employees if certain diseases, including AIDS, were contracted in the workplace.

Chizek said he introduced the bills because society has a responsibility to protect individuals from the threat of AIDS.

Omaha Sen. Chris Abboud introduced a bill that would require AIDS testing for anyone applying for a marriage license.

Abboud said LB928 would not require individuals to disclose the results of the test to a marriage clerk, only proof that they had been tested.

"This bill, which is similar to bills passed in Illinois, Louisiana and Texas, is an attempt to prevent the AIDS crisis from mushrooming in Nebraska," Abboud said.

Abboud said he looked to other states for guidance on the bill, tracking the rate at which AIDS has grown in other parts of the country.

Abboud, like Chizek, said the number of AIDS cases in Nebraska this year prompted him to take action.

## Minority report due this spring

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Affairs, said that often it's white, middle-class people who make decisions at universities.

Smith said the university has a fairly short history of black students.

1970 was the first year black students, besides athletes, attended UNL, he said.

Smith said black students weren't discriminated against in admissions before 1970, but didn't feel they had the opportunity or money to attend UNL.

Caranza said the commission will put out a report in the spring.

Members of the commission include: Hubert Brown, producer/reporter for public affairs, University Television; Dr. Mario Kelly, assistant professor of educational psychology; Dr. Esther Martinez, assistant professor of modern languages and literature; Gloria Cheney, staff secretary at the department of special education and communication disorders; Dr. Shashi Verma, professor at the Center of Agricultural Meteorology and Climatology; Dr. Richard Longsdale, director of international studies and professor of geography; Dan Paez, undergraduate student in business administration; and Sauni Wilson, political science graduate student.

## Celeste: Midwest overlooked; government biased toward coasts

By Anne Mohri  
Senior Reporter

The Midwest's ability to produce goods is overlooked because of a "profound bi-coastal bias in our country," Ohio Gov. Richard Celeste said Monday.

At a press conference in Lincoln, Celeste said coastal regions receive more federal research dollars.

Celeste, chairman of the Midwest Governors Association, is touring the 13 states in the Midwest region.

The Midwest receives 10 percent of federal research development dollars, 6 percent of federal defense dollars and 3 percent of federal research dollars pertaining to the Strategic Defense Initiative, he said.

"Out of the more and more advanced areas of development we seem to be getting less and less," he said. "One of the reasons for selling the Midwest is to encourage people to recognize this is the most productive part of the country."

Industries do not save money by locating on the coasts, because they are high-cost areas, he said.

Although economic development

incentive packages are desirable, he said, it is important to help already existing businesses in the Midwest to modernize and continue to be competitive. Seventy-five percent of fu-

growing appreciation for the Midwest, he said. The governors' association would continue to "try to bring home our concerns to our representatives in Washington and encourage them to work in a cooperative fashion," he said.

The type of business is not important, he said. The important issue is that small businesses are able to grow, particularly in an agriculture-based region.

Many of the companies are looking to locate in smaller towns, not in established metropolitan areas, he said.

Later in the day, Celeste spoke with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Martin Massengale and student leaders.

"What the world needs most, we have in extraordinary abundance in this region," he said.

He said Midwest students are leaving the region to find a future. Based on the skills and imagination of people in the Midwest, jobs will be created, Celeste said.

Although it will not be easy, the future of Midwestern students is right here, he said.

**'One of the reasons for selling the Midwest is to encourage people to recognize this is the most productive part of the country.'**

—Celeste

ture jobs will be created by already existing businesses, he said.

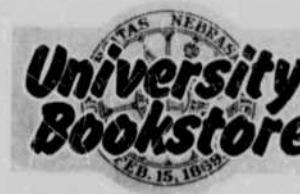
Therefore, Celeste said, a balance has to be made between a sufficient tax base for existing businesses and an attractive environment for investment opportunities.

Washington policy-makers have a

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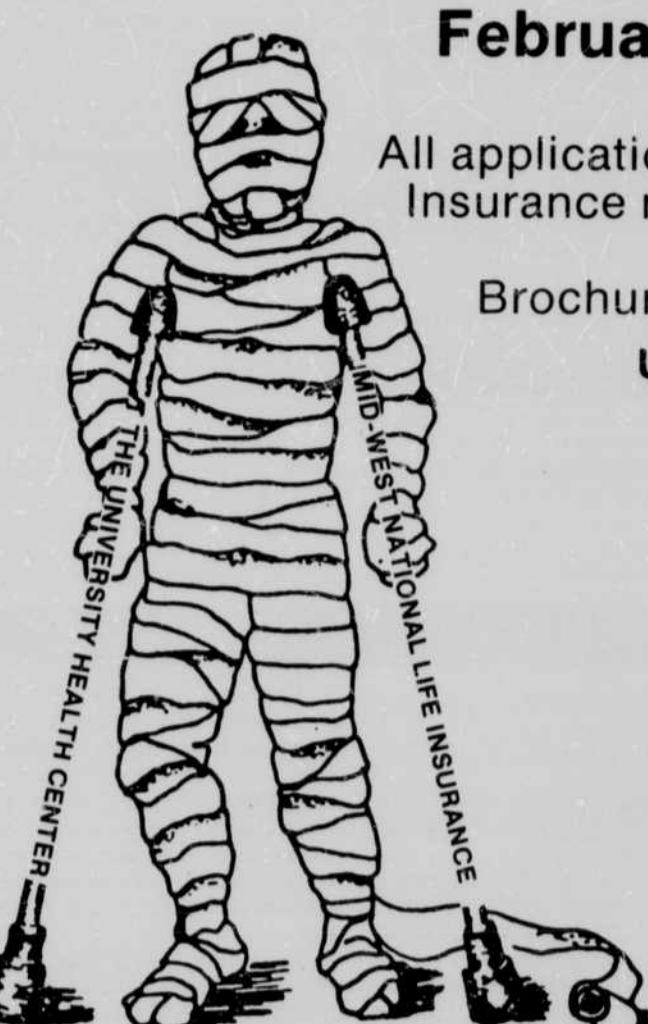
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