

LB 1029 would hike financial aid

Allocation to provide \$2.5 million for Nebraska students

By Anne Mohri
Senior Reporter

Ten school administrators and students told the Appropriations Committee Monday they supported a bill which would allocate \$2.5 million to public and private colleges and universities for financial aid.

Sen. Scott Moore of Stromsburg, sponsored LB1029 that would give public schools 78 percent and private schools 22 percent of the money for State Student Incentive Grants.

If passed, the bill would go into effect in the 1988-89 fiscal year.

Moore said in the past Nebraska raised \$500,000 in financial aid and the federal government matched it. The federal government will match up to \$500,000.

The state has about \$9 million in

its general fund. Gov. Kay Orr's new budget proposes to increase financial aid by \$250,000 to more than \$1.2 million with federal funds, he said.

"I think it only fair a small sliver of that (the budget) go to student aid," Moore said.

Supporters said the SSIG program would allow students to choose a college or university without monetary constraints.

Professor Gil Daenzer of Concordia College said the grant needs to be supported "because it supports Nebraska students for a free choice."

Bob Skochdopole, of the Association of Independent Colleges said, "student aid money is the best money you could spend on higher education." But, he said Nebraska does not allocate enough money to the grant program.

"We are not even on the same plane with surrounding SSIG states," Skochdopole said.

Cheri Clark, president of Nebraska Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, said Nebraska lags behind other states in state-supported financial aid financing.

She said federal aid has been declining since 1980 and the money for grants has shifted to loans. Students are having to take out more loans and the percentage of educational loans taken out by students from 1976 to 1986 has increased 35 percent.

Moore said university officials have not supported the increase in financial aid.

"It's threatening to their own priorities," he said.

Campaigners smother Iowa in preparation for 3rd caucus

By Mary Nell Westbrook
and Amy Edwards
Senior Reporters

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Iowa Caucuses drew more attention than in past elections as candidate supporters and media swarmed the streets and skywalks of downtown Des Moines.

Heavy snow and traffic didn't slow caucus campaigners as they weaved through media and commuters during the morning rush hour.

Supporters for former television evangelist Pat Robertson waved wet signs at motorists which asked them to "Honk if you're for Robertson," while falling snow faded the ink.

The snow let up in the afternoon, but supporters' enthusiasm did not. They vied with candidates for the media's attention.

Richard Hughes of Des Moines strolled the skywalk with a sign urging people to "Let Iowa be a mirror to the world and reflect everywhere."

Hughes, a campaigner for Democratic candidate Rev. Jessie Jackson, said he passed out 1,000 fliers and found about 90 percent support for Jackson.

Hughes said the time spent campaigning for Jackson was worth it,

no matter what the outcome. "I'm just scaring the death out of (Congressman Richard) Gephardt's people," he said.

During an afternoon press conference, media attention turned to a Soviet journalist who was critically questioning former Delaware Gov. Pete du Pont, who is running on the Republican ticket.

Media cameras focused on Vladimir Dounaev, one of Russia's most noted journalists.

Dounaev, chief of the Soviet television bureau in Washington, D.C., said Soviet people are eager to learn about American elections.

"We would like to see why Americans are wasting two years to find a president," he said.

He said Russians are interested in a "peaceful four years ahead of them."

Dounaev, who has been a television correspondent for 25 years, said he didn't know who would win the caucuses.

He said he favored Gephardt, Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., Vice President George Bush and Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., but would vote for Jackson if he were an American.

"But to say we love somebody is the best way to ruin someone's career," he said.

Pickle card bills debated on Monday

By Eric R. Paulak
Staff Reporter

More than 250 supporters and opponents of pickle cards squared off Monday on bills that would further regulate or eliminate the lottery game in Nebraska.

Four bills on pickle cards were debated at a public hearing at the Capitol Building. One bill, introduced by Sen. Patricia Morehead of Beatrice, would make the four-year-old industry illegal.

Morehead said sales of pickle cards should stop because of the trouble in regulating the industry, the potential and existing connection with criminal activities and the large amount of money that does not go to the non-profit organization sponsoring the sales.

Pickles sales, which started in Nebraska in 1983, have turned into a multi-million dollar industry. In 1987 Nebraskans spent more than \$135 million or the equivalent of \$85 for every person in the state.

Pickle card sales are intended to supplement the income of non-profit organizations, but, according to a Department of Revenue report, only 9 percent of the \$135 million goes to the charities.

Administrative costs account for 10 percent, 3 percent goes to state sales taxes and 78 percent goes back to the public in prizes.

Roger Hirsch, deputy tax commissioner with the Department of Revenue, spoke in favor of a bill introduced for Gov. Kay Orr to restrict the sale of pickle cards.

He said he was appalled that \$135 million was spent on the cards when only \$133 million was spent on higher education by the state.

He said pickle cards do help some non-profit organizations, "but charity gaming has little to do with charity, and little to do with gaming. It is gambling."

The governor's bill, LB1232, would eliminate hired sales agents and retailers, raise state taxes from 3 to 10 percent, confine pickle sales to

on the premises only, require a non-profit organization to be 10 years old to sell the cards and require at least half of the organizations financing to come from other sources.

Hirsch compared the card sales to the automotive industry in which the cars have exhaust problems. Those problems include payments to outside groups, kickbacks, embezzlement and fraud.

Walter Radcliffe, a lobbyist for the Pickle/Bingo Association, ridiculed Hirsch's analogy. He said the problem in the industry did not lie within the industry, but, the Department of Revenue.

The fraud charges, he said, were unfounded. Since July 1986, less than .5 percent of all licensed operators in the state have been investigated.

As far as the embezzlement charge, he agreed this has occurred, but the same thing happens at banks and they are not closed. The embezzler goes to jail in either case.

Hotel rooms filled and security increased in Des Moines, but no emergencies reported

DES MOINES from Page 1

Phillips said Des Moines' 6,000 hotel rooms were full, mostly because of the caucuses. Many hotel restaurants had extended operating hours, and he said rental cars were unavailable and restaurants were busy.

Because of the increased crowds, security was beefed up, said Sgt. Thomas Baaly, a Des Moines Police spokesman.

Greg Struve, director of operations for Sentry Security, said security in the skywalks above the city was the same — two people — but security personnel planned to stay on duty all night.

Baaly said traffic was congested and parking was tight Monday, but no major emergencies had resulted from the caucuses.

"We keep learning every four years," he said.

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