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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Thursday

WEATHER

Thursday, mostly sunny, high in the upper-40s, north wind 5-15 miles per hour. Thursday night, clear, low around 20. Friday, mostly sunny, high in the low 40s.

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Abortion bill testimony heard by committee

By Matt Herek
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee heard about five hours of testimony on four bills from anti-abortion and pro-choice supporters on Wednesday.

Most of the testimony was given by anti-abortion supporters. Three of the bills would restrict abortion rights; the other bill would broaden them.

About 30 people testified on all four of the bills, including LB854, sponsored by Sen. John Lindsay of Omaha, which would require a woman to sign an informed consent statement before getting an abortion.

The bill also would require a woman to wait 24 hours after signing the statement to have an abortion.

LB889, sponsored by Sen. M.L. "Cap" Dierks of Ewing, would prohibit the use of public funds for abortions except in cases of medical emergencies. The measure would take away state money and facilities for abortion.

LB1024, sponsored by Sen. Jim McFarland of Lincoln, would prohibit abortion at any stage during pregnancy for the sole purpose of gender selection.

LB1054, sponsored by Sen. Dave Landis of Lincoln, would eliminate emotional and religion-based wording in abortion-related statutes. The bill also would repeal an existing parental notification statute and would allow public employees to receive insurance for abortions if their lives are in danger.

Jim Cunningham, director of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, testified in favor of the anti-abortion bills.

Taxpayers should not have to pay for state-financed abortions if they do not believe in them, he said.

Cindy Nutter of Lincoln described herself as "a victim of Planned Parenthood," because the group only offers abortions and "they want money."

Nutter said she nearly died from an abortion and didn't realize the ramifications of the procedure.

Pam Yaksich, director of the Omaha Christian Action Council, testified in

favor of LB1024.

She said that if women started having abortions based on gender preferences it could lead to abortions for things like vision problems or obesity.

Claire Hartford, a member of the Christian Action Council, agreed with Yaksich.

"It is morally wrong to have an abortion on the basis of sex," she said.

Kyle Hanson, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln senior, said she is opposed to her tax dollars being used for abortions.

Public money could better be used for things like education, she said.

Peggy Truman, of Lincoln City Pro-Life, testified in opposition to Landis' bill.

"My concern is not only for the baby, but for the mother," she said.

"Abortion is murder," she said.

Truman also said that if the anti-abortion bills were passed it would "hit the pro-death people in the pocketbook."

A former teenage mother from Columbus said the proposed changing of language in LB1054 would confuse teenage mothers.

Marlene Viteck said she might have aborted her baby if she had been told it was just a fetus and not a living human being.

Rev. John Smelter, associate minister of the First Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln, testified in favor of Landis' bill, "to preserve women's rights to practice religion."

Smelter said not all religious people in Nebraska agree that life begins at conception, and language in the state statutes must respect those beliefs.

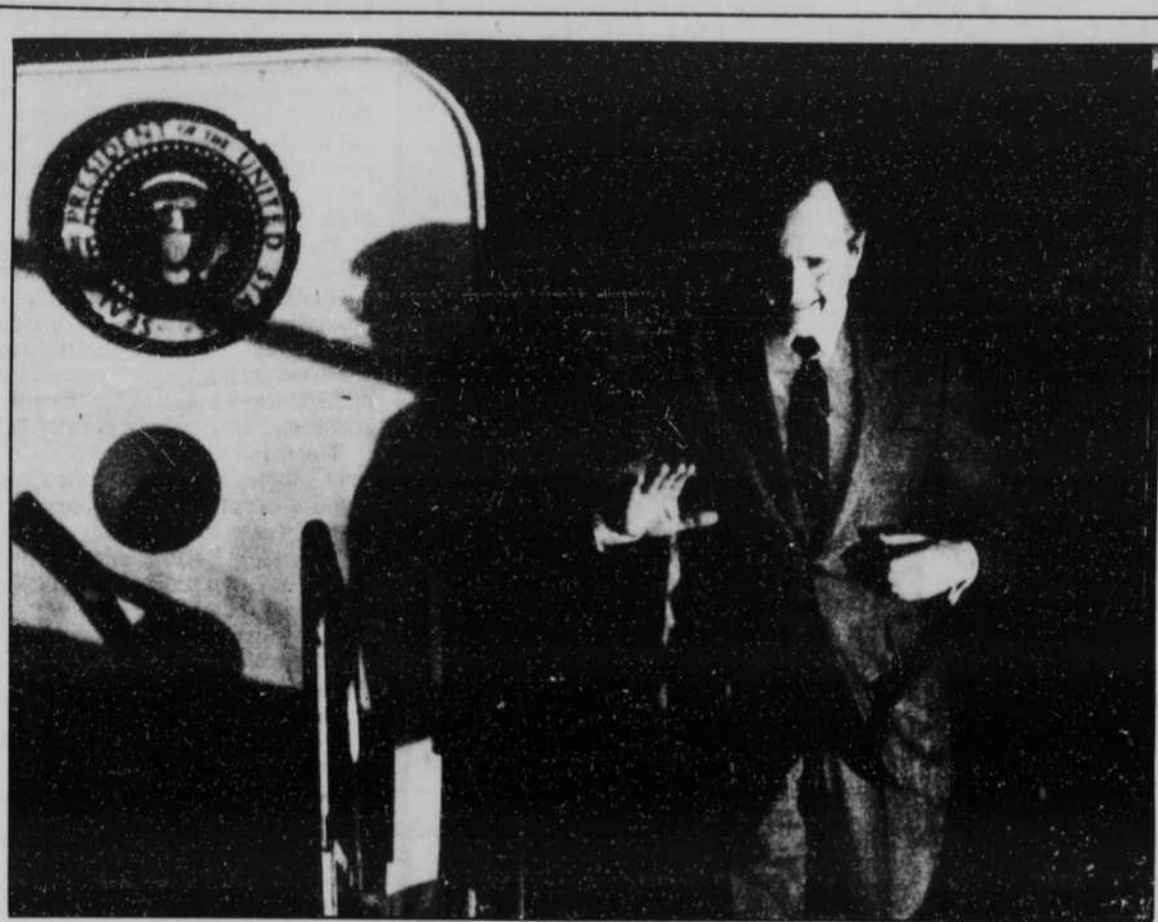
"The state's language must not set one religious preference over another," he said.

Virginia Johnson, president of the board of Planned Parenthood of Lincoln, said the anti-abortion bills cause legal problems, especially Dierks' bill.

LB889 violates the rights of free speech, the confidential relationship between a doctor and a patient and it denies a Constitutionally protected activity.

Gail Hanna, a "pro-choice rancher" from Valentine, said that if the anti-abortion laws are passed they would compound the problems of medical care in rural areas where doctors are unavailable.

She said of her 1953 abortion, "it's a choice I have never regretted."



President Bush waves as he debarks from Air Force One at Eppley Airfield on Wednesday evening. Bush is in Nebraska to boost Gov. Orr's re-election bid and to visit the Strategic Air Command headquarters.

Al Schaeben/Daily Nebraskan

Forum answers questions

Panelists favor restructuring education

By Matt Herek
Staff Reporter

Members of a study committee that recommended restructuring higher education in Nebraska agreed Wednesday that the powers of coordination and governance do not have to be held by the same board.

State Sens. Jerome Warner of Waverly and Ron Withem of Papillion and Harold Enarson, a senior consultant in the firm that recommended the changes, spoke as panelists at a forum Wednesday morning that discussed LR239CA and LB1141.

About 100 people attended the forum at the Cornhusker Hotel to ask the panelists questions about the legislation.

If the legislation passes, each state

college and NU campus will be run by a seven-member board of trustees. A Board of Regents for Nebraska Higher Education would oversee the boards of trustees.

According to the legislation, the trustees would be responsible for management, carrying out the board of regents' policies and hiring a president and other personnel.

The new board of regents would make policy, be responsible for decision-making and planning and would hire a chancellor.

Enarson said a lay board of trustees governing a single campus would have more "intimate knowledge" of the issues confronting a single institution than a board that governs several.

A lay board of trustees should be able to address all of the issues if it spends one or two days a month in meeting and the same amount of time preparing and researching, he said.

Under the current system, the NU

Board of Regents usually meets once a month and decides policies for the three NU campuses.

"We desperately need lay persons who are thinking about education," he said.

Withem agreed with Enarson, saying that Nebraska does not have a good method of dealing with the total spectrum of higher education.

The new legislation has attempted to deal with the issues at hand, he said.

The only negative testimony he heard on the legislation were worst-case scenarios, but they still will be considered, Withem said.

This legislation is not meant to increase the Legislature's power, Warner said.

"The suggestion that there is a change in power is simply not true," he said.

The Education Committee will advance the proposals to the floor of the Legislature, Withem said.

Parker: Society at crossroads, prejudice reduction necessary

By Jennifer O'Cluka
Staff Reporter

In his keynote address Wednesday night, Dr. William C. Parker began by saying that he wouldn't be giving a speech, but instead would be teaching "prejudice reduction."

Parker, vice chancellor for minority affairs at the University of Kentucky at Lexington, told the crowd gathered in the Nebraska Union that he strongly believes people can learn to deal with their prejudices.

Society has reached a "crossroads" between learning to get along with people who are different from ourselves or sinking into total chaos, he said.

"When I teach, that means you have to learn," he said.

Parker said he wanted audience members to share their ideas, because that is the best way to teach others how they can be more sensitive to those who are different from themselves.

Prejudice reduction, Parker said, involves learning to perceive a person's uniqueness as positive, doing something in higher education to deal with bigotry and easing the hurt and rejection of those discriminated against.

Parker said no audience members were racist or sexist, and they attended the "workshop" to become even more sensitive to others.

Parker said he assumes that everyone, no matter what race, ethnic group or sex, has been discriminated against.

"My guess is that you didn't feel very good about it, did you?" Parker said.

He pointed out that failure to act when people feel discriminated against or when they witness discrimination is considered acceptance of discrimination.

Bigotry causes deep scars, he said. People lose their self-esteem, and become depressed, but "guilt is the glue that holds bigotry

See PARKER on 3

UNL colleges take steps to prepare for surge in retirement age faculty

By Carri Koetter
Staff Reporter

Even though University of Nebraska officials say 25 percent of faculty members will reach retirement age by the year 2000, deans of the most affected colleges at UNL say there is little cause for concern.

By the end of the decade, 25.6 percent of the faculty members at the three campuses will be 65 or older, according to Randy Haack, NU assistant vice president and director of budget and analysis.

The colleges most affected, Haack said, will be the UNL College of Journalism with 50 percent of the faculty expected to retire by the year 2000; the UNL College of Engineering with 35.1 percent expected to retire; and the UNL College of Architecture with an expected 31.8 percent.

Haack said the individual colleges are taking steps to prepare for the surge in retirement age faculty. A tenure buyout program, initiated in 1988, has lured 88 faculty members into early retirement, bringing younger professors in.

The tenure buyout program would benefit

the university, Haack said, by stretching out the period of time in which faculty members would have to be replaced.

W. Cecil Steward, dean of the College of Architecture, said the early retirement option will help eliminate some of the expected turnover at the college by the end of the decade. Three full-time faculty members are involved in the tenure buyout program, he said.

The College of Engineering and Technology will try to compensate for an expected 35.1 percent retirement factor by increasing recruiting efforts, according to Dean Stanley Liberty.

But Liberty said he is not particularly alarmed about the retirement situation.

"We have been aggressively recruiting many good, young, prospective faculty members," Liberty said, "and so far with great success."

College of Journalism Dean Neale Cople said he is not concerned about the expected 50 percent of professors who will be 65 in the year 2000. That percentage, he said, only takes into account assistant professorships and above and does not include faculty members who are hired at the college as professional lecturers.

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