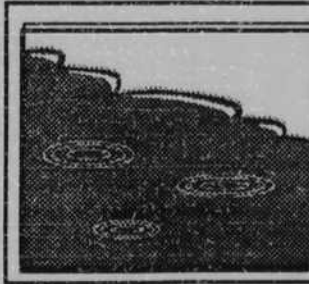


# Daily Nebraskan

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## TODAY'S WEATHER

An 80 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms today with the low in the mid-50s. Tonight, a 70 percent chance of rain with the low in the mid-40s. Windy and cool Friday with the low in the 50s and a 30 percent chance of rain.

## Senators revive bill to kill death penalty

By Tabitha Hiner  
Senior Reporter

After state senators voted to extract from the Judiciary Committee a bill to abolish the death penalty, the sponsor said he thought LB327 had a strong chance of making it through the Legislature.

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers said he thought many of the senators voting 25-20 to debate LB327 will support it on the floor. The bill has 24 co-sponsors.



LB327 would eliminate the death penalty in Nebraska and replace it with life imprisonment without the chance of parole.

Chambers opened discussion on the bill by saying the death penalty has too many inconsistencies.

Even after the Nebraska Supreme Court sentences someone to death, judges will hesitate to condemn another person who commits a similar act, Chambers said.

Sen. Jerome Warner agreed. "There is nothing in the death penalty that is sure, swift or certain that is consistently applied," the Waverly senator said.

Chambers also called the death penalty inefficient and expensive because appeals keep criminals on death row for years.

Lincoln Sen. LaVon Crosby and Omaha Sen. John Lindsay linked the bill to abortion legislation. Both senators supported LB425, a bill requiring parental notification before minors obtain abortions.

"For me it's a life issue," Crosby said. "... I simply cannot vote for anything that is going to take someone's life."

Chambers said such support showed consistency.

If senators consider the fetus to be a person, he said, their unwillingness to kill that life transfers to opposition of the death penalty. Chambers has long opposed anti-abortion legislation.

Omaha Sen. Carol McBride Pirsch, Coleridge Sen. Elroy Hefner and Omaha Sen. Jerry Chizek were the vocal opponents of Chambers' bill.

Pirsch said she resented the correlation senators made of a "cold-blooded murderer with the human life of a newborn baby."

Because murder is irreversible and the most violent crime, Hefner said, the only equivalent penalty the state has is death.

"I feel that in order for a punishment to be effective, it must fit the crime," Hefner said. "Anything less than the death penalty for ... cold-blooded murder is not fit for the crime."

Eliminating the death penalty would be an "insult to the grief of the family of the victim," he said.

Chizek, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said the bill should remain in the committee because it received a 4-4 vote. Five committee members must support a bill for it to advance out of committee.

"I just think that if we continue to pull bills from committee, then we're setting a precedent," he said.

Sen. Dennis Baack of Kimball said he supported the motion for the same reason.

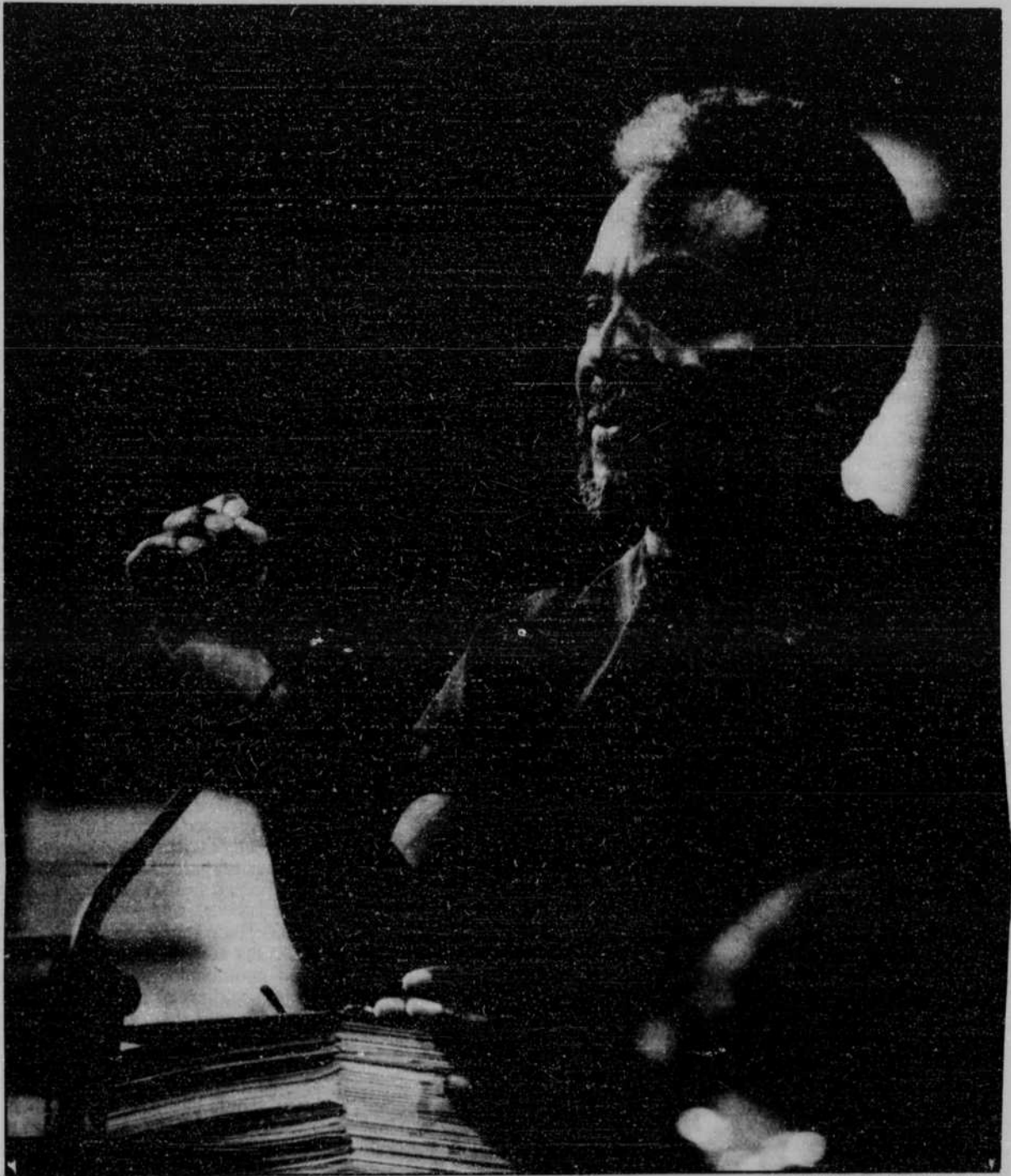
Baack said the bill should not "be held hostage in a committee with eight members."

Ewing Sen. M.L. "Cap" Dierks said he supports the motion because 23 people executed in the United States had later been proved innocent.

Dierks also cited statistics that showed murder rates in states with the death penalty are higher than in those without the death penalty. He said 4.9 murders per 100,000 people occur in states without a death penalty while 7.4 murders occur in states with the penalty.

Lincoln Sen. DiAnna Schimek gave statistics from a 1987 Bureau of Social Research survey that indicate that "when confronted with a full range of alternatives, only 21 percent prefer the death penalty over all range of alternatives."

Other senators said that although they think their constituents favor the death penalty, their consciences won't allow them to vote for it.



Joe Heinzle/Daily Nebraskan

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers opens discussion Wednesday on LB327, a bill that would abolish Nebraska's death penalty.

## THURSDAY



Diversions explores the fine arts world inhabited by UNL students. **Page 5.**

Educators at a Chicano forum call for changes in the educational system. **Page 3.**

A NCAA gymnastic championship shot for the Huskers depends on a Friday night win. **Page 13.**

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## Charges pending

### Queer Nation Nebraska member to file for alleged assault

By Tabitha Hiner  
Senior Reporter

A Queer Nation Nebraska member is pressing charges against a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student for allegedly pulling, kicking and spitting at him at last week's kiss-in rally opposing ROTC discrimination against homosexuals.

Scott Shanks, a senior in the Teachers College, said he decided to press charges the day after videotaping the alleged attack by Shawn Swanson, a general studies freshman.

"I'm going to pursue every channel to see that the message is sent that you don't attack people," Shanks said. "You can disagree with them — that's fine."

The Lancaster County Attorney Office is in charge of the legal prosecution, while the UNL Student Affairs Office is investigating what Shanks called a "gross violation of conduct." His personal attorney is helping him sue for physical damages, Shanks said.

Shanks was videotaping the kiss-in rally outside the Military and Naval Science Building April 10 when Swanson approached him.

Swanson then kicked, spit at and pulled Shanks until he fell, Shanks said.

Physical damages include a broken eyepiece on his video camera and a scratched eyeglass lens where the video camera hit it, Shanks said.

He said he also suffered injuries to his shoulder and neck from the fall.

Shanks will meet with the county attorney Friday to discuss what legal charges the office will file, he said.

Swanson could not be reached for comment.

## Relations position filled temporarily — again

By Pat Dinslage  
Senior Editor

UNL will have a director of university relations when the current interim director retires on May 1, but once again only on a temporary basis, officials said Wednesday.

Michael Mulnix, current director of public relations, has been named to take charge of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln university relations office, said Herb Howe, associate to

the UNL chancellor.

Mulnix will replace the current interim director, Neale Copple. The former journalism college dean has held the position since August 1990, when Tom Krepel left. Copple had planned to retire on March 1, but delayed leaving until May 1.

Howe said the search for a permanent university relations director has been put on hold until a new UNL chancellor is named.

"(Interim Chancellor Jack) Goebel decided that since it is so late in

the year to hold off because the new chancellor may want to structure the position differently," Howe said.

For example, the new chancellor may want to combine Howe's position and the university relations position, Howe said, or may want to put the public relations and government relations functions together.

"The new chancellor may have his or her own ideas how these responsibilities go together," he said, "and Jack thought it best to leave that person the freedom to structure it as he or

she wants."

Howe said it is unlikely that a permanent university relations director will be appointed before fall.

He said Mulnix was selected for the interim because he has experience in government relations work. Mulnix worked in government relations at the University of Alaska at Juneau.

Mulnix said he handled legislative relations for four to five years in Alaska and sees similarities between the media

relations and government relations responsibilities.

"The questions that legislators have are the same ones the media have," he said.

Mulnix said he does not know whether he will fill the position on a permanent basis.

"They asked to me help fill in," he said. "Whether or not that is permanent depends on who the chancellor is. But I enjoy working with the Legislature."