

# Bill would keep college students from missing class for jury duty

By ERIN SCHULTE  
Senior Reporter

Matt Dane didn't want to give up his chair in a classroom for one in a jury box.

So when the UNL sophomore was called up for duty in his home county of York, more than an hour away, he politely declined, saying he was a full-time student. The judge said OK.

But over the next two months, Dane was called for jury duty seven times, and the judge demanded more evidence of his dedication to classes every time. At first, he had to provide a copy of his class schedule and registration.

Then the courts asked him to come for jury selection (requiring him to skip a day of school) to plead his case for exemption.

Later, the jury draft escalated to requiring letters from professors saying Dane couldn't miss class.

His parents became concerned.

"If he would get selected, how long would it go on?" his mother, Joyce Dane, said. "We even asked if they could take one of our names instead."

Eventually, Matt Dane said, his time in the jury selection pool ran out, and so did his troubles.

"Either that, or they ran out of cases," he said, laughing.

But his parents, who live in Henderson, decided to take action anyway and went to their state senator, Elaine Stuhr of Bradshaw.

The result is LB73, a bill that would exempt full-time college students from jury duty.

"It's a hardship," Stuhr said. "Students from my district live far from college, and there's the cost of attending college to consider, too."

The bill would simply put off jury duty for students until they finished their classes, Stuhr said.

"I'm sure students would be glad to do it when they're not at the university," she said.

Stuhr said passing the bill might be easier if students would come to committee hearings and testify about their troubles getting out of jury duty.

Dane's father said he planned to testify before the committee.

## Legislature

**"If he would get selected, how long would it go on? We even asked if they could take one of our names instead."**

JOYCE DANE  
bill advocate

"If students want to testify, they should give my office a call," Stuhr said.

If the bill is passed, Matt Dane said he had a definite lack of celebration plans.

"I guess I just won't have jury duty."

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