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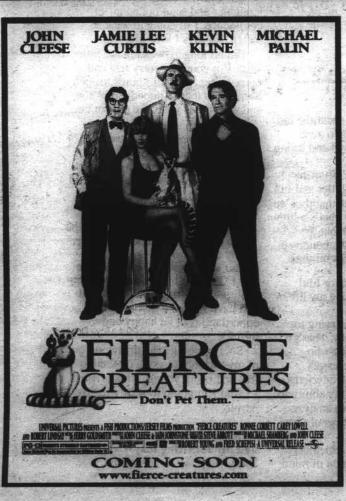
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Bills contend for acceptance

MARRIAGE from page 1

discriminatory.

"It is not about denying civil rights or equal protection under the law to an immutable or inherent characteristic or an accident of birth," Jensen said. "It is not about discrimination on the basis of gender.

"And it is certainly not about hatred, animosity, prejudice or intoler-

The bill, he said, simply defends traditional marriage

"It is about whether society will give recognition and approval to a morally controversial choice by joining it to the time-honored institution of marriage," he said.

Sacred institution

Both gay-rights groups and Christian groups are bracing for a standoff.

Doug Patton, executive director of the Nebraska Christian Coalition, said the coalition planned to testify against Chambers' bill and in support of Jensen's bill.

"Sen. Jensen is a real friend of the family on legislation that he's proposed," Patton said. "We're very appreciative of his efforts."

Last year, Patton said, the Christian Coalition testified against a similar bill also drafted by Chambers.

Gay and lesbian couples have no reason to try to obtain legal marriages,

"The legal protections are already there," Patton said. "They are able to very extensively in testifying and lob-have their partner in a will, give them bying, maybe even protests," Kimberly

We certainly don't need to redefine marriage to accommodate homosexual couples."

> Doug Patton executive director of the Nebraska Christian Coalition

the power of attorney, that sort of thing.

"We certainly don't need to redefine marriage to accommodate homosexual couples.'

Failing to keep marriage a heterosexual institution could even lead to a societal downfall, said Guyla Mills, executive director of the Nebraska Family Council.

"There's absolutely no historical recedent for homosexual marriage," Mills said. "Every culture that has ever embraced homosexuality as a lifestyle or any kind of sexual immorality has

our culture would not pay a tremendous price at this juncture in history as

Post no bills

Lincoln groups like Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), also vowed to voice their opinions on both bills, said Barbara Kimberly, PFLAG chairwoman.

"Our organization will be involved

said. "We'll just work on both of them, because Ernie will keep bringing it

back again and again." Some members of PFLAG are going to even more extreme measures to encourage political action among members of the gay community.

Janyss Ballard, a member of PFLAG, said she and the woman she considers her wife are starting a new organization called Lincoln Pride Network that would encourage communication between gays, lesbians and their organizations.

"We'll be becoming more politi-"We would be naive to think that cally active," Ballard said. "We will be there.

> Ballard said she didn't think the group would focus more on one bill than the other. Bill or no bill, gays and lesbians are still having wedding ceremonies, even if there's no official marriage license.

> "By making it illegal, they're not stopping us," Ballard said. "What they are doing is preventing our children from having insurance — those are the kind of things they prevent."

UNL senior feels confident about beauty pageant

PAGEANT from page 1

beauty pageants didn't begin until she was 17 years old. On a dare from her Butte High School friends, she entered the Miss Nebraska Teen competition and finished as first runner-up.

"I came away with an incredible support system and a forum to tell my story," she said.

Weir said her life hadn't always been so glamorous.

She spent her childhood traveling between foster homes, she said, after her mother abandoned her and two older brothers when Weir was only 18

It wasn't until last semester, at age 21, Weir made Miss USA her goal.

Now she considers herself a child advocate, she said. She has used her position as Miss Nebraska to visit one has to." schools and talk to children about making positive decisions, she said.

Weir hopes to continue her motivational speaking as Miss USA, she said. It's an incredible opportunity because she can represent the country and work on a national scale, Weir said.

Weir left for Shreveport on Tuesday to spend two weeks rehearsing the pageant's production numbers, attending parties with Louisiana dignitaries and interviewing with celebrity judges.

Weir isn't worried about all of the classwork she's missing, though.

"I don't expect to come back," she said. "I think I'm going to win. Some-

She said she wasn't even nervous about the competition, which, according to Trump Pageants, L.P., producers of the competition, has an expected audience of 600 million people around the world. The pageant will air on CBS from 9 to 11 p.m. on Feb. 5.

"I'm ready to go," she said. "If I had to leave right now, I'd go and represent myself to my maximum poten-

It's time. The tapes are getting old.

An incident involving frozen lizface burning Monday.

S. 29th St. at 1:26 p.m. Monday where noon demanding the entire payment. Raymond Tripp III, 29, said he had

demanding payment for 25 lizards he which he had frozen in his freezer. bought in Florida.

After showing the lizards to the showing the lizards the showing the lizards the showing the lizards the showing the lizards the showing the s

Florida in September where he got 25 lizards with an agreement that he would sell them in Lincoln and pay his credi-

Since September, 19 of 25 lizards ards from Florida left a Lincoln man's have died. Tripp said he had returned some of the money, but two men Lincoln police were called to 200 showed up at his door Monday after-

Tripp reported being threatened by He said two men arrived at his door show them the 19 dead lizards —

After showing the lizards to the Lincoln Police Sgt. Ann Heermann men, one man reached in his jacket, Tripp's face, causing burns.

