

Sen. Bruning says state should learn by example

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it because here I can have an impact." Bruning, a 1990 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a 1993 graduate of the NU College of Law said government should regulate its spending by tightening its belt as much as he has.

On a shelf in his office, he displays a model of the green Ford Explorer he sold to cut his expenses. He and Deonne Bruning, an attorney in the communications department of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, now commute to Lincoln daily in a 1991 Mercury Sable with 80,000 miles on it.

But Deonne Bruning shares her husband's excitement about his new position.

"I was really excited because I knew Jon could contribute," she said. "It's a change already, and it's going to be a bigger change when we have a baby this summer."

"But both things are wonderful and we wouldn't want to give them up."

Jon Bruning was introduced to financial challenges early in his campaign for the Legislature. Because he was challenging a popular incumbent, Mike Avery, special interest groups

were reluctant to invest in his candidacy.

Bruning instead built his campaign from the ground up, campaigning from door to door every night from February to November. Although the campaign was hotly contested, Bruning ended up pulling away to win 57 percent of the vote.

Since his swearing-in on Jan. 7, Bruning has sought to define himself as a strong representative of his district in Sarpy County. But he hasn't avoided some ribbing about his youthfulness.

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers dubbed Bruning "Senator Goober" in a poem. On the first day of the session, 28th District Sen. Chris Beutler noted that he and outgoing 10th District Sen. Carol Pirsch had each begun their legislative careers in 1978, when Bruning was "a precocious third-grader."

As a freshman senator, Bruning said he wants to learn about the everyday business of the Capitol and speak only when prepared. But when the debate demands his input, he said he is not afraid to speak out.

"I want to be thought of as a thoughtful, bright, hardworking young senator," he said.

Six newest senators ready to make strong impressions

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Jon Bruning

Sen. Jon Bruning of Omaha's 3rd District entered the legislative session as the youngest senator, at age 27. An attorney and University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumnus, he thought state property taxes were too high and wanted to help search for ways to control spending.



Bruning

Bruning said property tax issues were especially important in his district in Sarpy County, which includes large rural areas. As Omaha expands and the district becomes more urban, crime will become a concern, he said.

Bruning said he would try to make up for his lack of experience by researching the issues and bringing enthusiasm to his job.

"It's the biggest responsibility I've ever had, and I take it very seriously," he said. "Every day, the things that happen on the floor affect the lives of all Nebraskans."

Gene Tyson

Sen. Gene Tyson of Norfolk decided to run for the Legislature after becoming dissatisfied with his 19th District predecessor, C. Klein.



Tyson

A retired Nucor Steel businessman, Tyson said his conservative principles more nearly represented his constituents' views.

"I think every-

body ought to participate in government," he said. "I was retired and had the time and inclination to serve in the Legislature."

In addition to the property tax and educational funding expected to dominate this year's session, Tyson said he expected important water issues to come to the Legislature's attention.

Donald Pederson

Sen. Donald Pederson, a North Platte attorney, was appointed to the 42nd District seat in September following David Bernard-Stevens' resignation.



Pederson

"I thought there was something I could do to contribute to the state, and it was an opportunity to utilize what I've learned in the practice of law," he said.

Pederson has assumed his position as a member of the appropriations committee, which he said would deal extensively with funding for public education and tax base issues.

"There's a tremendous amount of work involved," he said. "But I am extraordinarily impressed with the quality of legislators in this state. They're very helpful and supportive, and very conscientious."

Shelley Kiel

Sen. Shelley Kiel of Omaha's 9th District ran for the Legislature because of a desire to have an impact on several issues including domestic violence, small business incentives and technology.

She said the incidence of domestic

violence in Omaha was higher than the national average and was of special concern to her district in central Omaha.

A member of the appropriations committee, Kiel also said the state should search for ways to reward small business owners for their contributions to the economy. As she and her husband are co-founders of Flat World, a multimedia technology company, she also has an interest in technological issues.



Kiel

"There is very high energy here," she said. "The senators and staff are very diligent. I have yet to see factions or coalitions, and it's a very good indication that the Legislature works in a nonpartisan nature."

Deb Suttle

Sen. Deb Suttle of the 9th District in Omaha was appointed by Gov. Ben Nelson to replace Carol Pirsch, who resigned to serve as a member of the Douglas County Board of Commissioners.



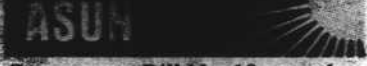
Suttle

Previously a volunteer lobbyist, Suttle said she didn't always agree with Pirsch's positions and ran against her in 1994.

Suttle plans to sponsor a bill providing court-appointed special advocates for troubled youths in an effort to prevent crime.

ASUN votes to support proposed jury duty bill

BY KASEY KERBER
Staff Reporter



ASUN passed a government bill Wednesday supporting LB73, a state bill that would exclude college students from jury duty.

The bill was debated before being voted on by members of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

ASUN President Eric Marintzer said jury duty often interferes with academic curriculum.

"I think the state has a fundamental duty to the education of its students," he said. "This bill addresses that."

Malcolm Kass, Government Liaison Committee chairman, said the last GLC meeting ended with a 20-10 vote in favor of LB73.

But the ASUN vote had only one member voting in opposition, and

Government Bill No. 10 passed.

Another bill discussed by ASUN was Government Bill No. 11. The bill voiced support for a sole beverage alliance on campus, dependent on certain conditions being met by the distributor.

The bill stipulated that funds from an alliance with a specific beverage company must benefit all students in several ways. Some of these conditions included using funds for the enhancement of existing technology and the honors program.

"In passing this bill, I don't support the provider, but the concept of contributing back to students," Marintzer said.

After a 20-minute discussion, ASUN voted to table the bill until next meeting.

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