

Bill would end popular election for two positions

By **BRIAN CARLSON**
Staff Reporter

Legislature

A legislative proposal to change the selection process for two state executive branch positions was held in committee last week.

LR11CA, sponsored by Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly, would end the election by popular vote of the treasurer and the auditor of public ac-

counts. The positions would be filled by appointment made by the governor and subject to legislative approval.

Warner said the bill was developed by the Constitutional Review Commission, which was created to search for ways to improve the state constitution. "One of the goals of the commission was to strengthen the office of

governor, and this bill is designed to do that," Warner said.

The Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony Wednesday but delayed taking action on the bill until further arguments were heard.

Robert Sittig, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln political science professor, testified in support of the proposal.

He said an increasing number of

candidates and referendums on election ballots had swamped voters and caused frustration for those not fully informed on smaller issues.

Bill proponents also questioned the need for the popular election of officials to posts involving generally non-partisan duties such as record-keeping.

But State Treasurer Dave Heineman said citizens were sufficiently well informed about his duties

and deserved the right to fill the post by their vote.

Heineman also said his backing by the people of Nebraska had made him a better advocate for the state's interests. He said the fact that he represented citizens, rather than the state government, enabled him to more effectively monitor the state's investments to make sure it received all its guaranteed interest payments.

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