

Bills offer help for landlords

By BRIAN CARLSON
Staff Reporter

Landlords could charge tenants twice as much for security deposits if a bill heard on Thursday passes in the Legislature.

The Legislature's Judiciary Committee heard testimony on LB504, sponsored by Sen. Jim Jensen of Omaha.

LB504 would increase the maximum security deposit landlords could charge tenants from one month's rent to two months' rent. It would also allow uncontested eviction proceedings to begin five to seven days after a summons is issued.

The larger security deposit could be used by landlords to cover property damages caused by tenants, which several proponents said was a growing problem.

But Malcolm Kass, representing the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, said larger security deposits could place off-campus college students in a pinch.

He said the bill's provisions would cause "a particular strain to students." Wavering time schedules, academics and the lack of a full-time job would

inhibit their ability to fight an eviction notice in the shorter period of time, he said.

"It would definitely hamper that student's ability to concentrate on academics," he said.

But the bill was supported with extensive proponent testimony.

Frank Kucirek, president of Omaha's Property Owners Association, said the bill would boost the economy by allowing landlords to put their property back on the market sooner following an eviction.

He said if tenants have to move out soon after their eviction notice it would minimize the property damage they could do out of frustration in that time.

Kucirek said most actions for possession are not contested by the tenants, and the proposal would speed up the process.

Other bill proponents said the state risked creating a further shortage of rental availability if landlords weren't granted further options for ensuring the profitability of their rentals.

In a joint hearing, the Judiciary Committee considered LB533 and LB779, similar bills sponsored by Speaker Ron Withem of Papillion and Don Wesely of Lincoln, respectively. The two bills would allow land-

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lords to more quickly terminate rental agreements for dangerous tenants or those who committed felonies or other infractions.

Withem's LB533 would allow landlords to seek law enforcement help to immediately terminate a rental agreement following a "material and irreparable" breach.

Under Wesely's LB779, landlords would be able to terminate a rental agreement after three days' notice if a tenant created a "serious and clear danger" to another tenant.

Nadja Wright of Lincoln testified in support of the proposed legislation. A resident of a local apartment complex, Wright said she had received repeated harassment and death threats from a fellow female resident.

She said the complex's management had ordered the woman to quit threatening her, but held no real power to correct the situation.

"I live in a state of fear," she said. "I do not like having to come home to a place where I pay rent and have to fear for my life."

The Judiciary Committee heard no opposition testimony on the proposals.

Blood drive draws big turnout

By DAVID WELCH
Staff Reporter

More than 600 students found their way to the Centennial Ballroom Wednesday and Thursday to lend a helping arm.

The Red Cross Blood Drive drew about 500 pints of usable blood in return for satisfaction for some of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who participated.

Micheal Ziska, a sophomore accounting major, said he donated because he wanted to help.

"I was glad I had an opportunity to help others who are in need of blood," Ziska said.

Senior biology major Jeana Schmid, member of the Campus Red Cross and co-chairwoman for the blood drive, called the drive a success.

"The blood drive's motto, 'Saving the World One Drop at a Time,' helped generate our motivation, and I am

pleased with the success of this year's donor turnout," Schmid said.

After students donated, they were offered snacks from Subway, Burger King and Papa John's Pizza, which donated food for the blood drive.

About 120 volunteer nurses, health aides and students also helped with the drive, Schmid said.

Students who want to donate blood before next year's drive can set up an appointment with the local Red Cross or Lincoln's Community Blood Bank.

Competing ASUN candidates attend government convention

By KASEY KERBER
Staff Reporter

Curt Ruwe, presidential candidate for the ADVANCE party, and Mark Meyer, first vice presidential candidate for the KEG party, never expected to be spending four days together.

But when Ruwe and Meyer were offered the opportunity to brush elbows with student government leaders at the Council of Student Government Associations convention, they put their election differences aside and traveled to Texas A&M University in College Station.

"It was a unique experience having to room with (Ruwe), considering our competing positions," Meyer said. "Yet we got along fine."

While at the CSGA convention, Ruwe and Meyer learned ways to improve student government.

They attended workshops, listened to speakers, participated in round table discussions and spoke with student government representatives from coast to coast.

Ruwe said the council gave him a chance to learn things that could be used in the current ASUN. He said some of the best ideas centered on enhancing ASUN's Freshman Action Com-

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mittee.

In Texas A&M's fish aids and fish camps programs, the university boasts a 91-percent retention rate for freshmen, Ruwe said.

Meyer said this program also had an impact on him.

"It's an impressive accomplishment for A&M," Meyer said. "I think such a program here could be very beneficial."

Meyer also said he learned about how to make student government financially stronger and use technology for easy and effective communication.

Both Ruwe and Meyer agreed that ASUN should continue to send election candidates to the CSGA.

"I'd send more than two candidates for this," Ruwe said, adding that the University of Nebraska at Omaha sent four representatives.

Both candidates also agreed the council offered a good chance to see what worked for some governments and what might work for ASUN.

"You got to see how certain programs could be successful," Meyer said, "and it made you consider your own."

KEG gets wired with web page

From Staff Reports

The KEG party is online.

For the first time in ASUN history, a student government election party has its own web page.

The page at <<http://www.unl.edu/KEG>> features a list of KEG candidates, a copy of the party's platform, voting information and locations, and information on KEG's "Write-In" campaign. It also allows web viewers to send mail to the KEG party.

KEG presidential candidate Scott Brauer

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said getting the web page was far from easy.

"It took us three days," Brauer said. "There was a lot of bureaucratic process involved."

But after lining up an adviser, authorization and finally the page itself, Brauer said it was worth it.

"Technology is becoming more and more of a part of this university," Brauer said. "We wanted to recognize that."

Brauer said he hoped the page would soon include photos of KEG candidates and updated information on next week's debates.

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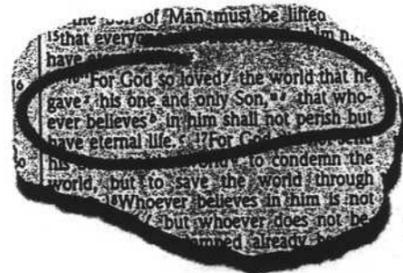
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