

Senators cooperate on proposals

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stripped of last year's amendments. Matzke and Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha worked together to rewrite LB422's language. They persuaded the Legislature to return the bill from final reading to select file in order to strip the amendments calling for the mental retardation exemption. Chambers, who opposes the death penalty, said he disagreed with the cop-killer bill but worked with Matzke in order to facilitate passage of the new bill prohibiting execution of the mentally retarded. Chambers said he would always be able to resume his crusade to

end the death penalty in Nebraska. Allowing Matzke's bill to proceed toward its expected passage was an acceptable sacrifice to protect the mentally retarded from execution, he said. But Chambers still took a jab at Matzke's bill. "The bill is now, if I may say so, a 'pure' killing bill," he said. Matzke, after thanking Chambers for his cooperation, said he nevertheless thought Chambers should "wear the hat of a law professor instead of a legislator." The bill adding an aggravating circumstance for killers of police officers was designed to fill a loophole in state law. The

Nebraska Supreme Court has ruled the aggravating circumstance can be invoked only if the killing of a police officer takes place while the suspect is in custody. Aggravating circumstances are weighed against mitigating circumstances in capital sentencing. The new aggravating circumstance could tip the scales in favor of execution and thus make it easier for cop killers to be executed. Sen. Dave Maurstad of Beatrice commended the often-criticized Chambers for his cooperation with Matzke. "It's important that this act of statesmanship should not go unrecognized."

UNL students learning from Capitol experiences

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and junior broadcasting and advertising major, said her work schedule is flexible enough for school. "The senators know school is a first priority," Eagle said. Plus, working in the Capitol can be a stepping stone on the path to a government career, she said. Franzen agreed and said she hopes working in the Capitol will lead her to Washington, D.C., after graduation. She said making connections and getting hands-on experience

were perks of her job. "I've learned more working here than I've actually ever learned in school," Franzen said. "This is a great place to start." On Tuesday, the coffee machines will quit dripping, the copiers will quit humming, and the pages will give up their seats at the front of the Legislature. And in the end, pages say, the long hours were worth it. "I've learned a lot about the (legislative) process," Junck said.

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