

Stenberg faces campaign allegations

By JOSH FUNK
Senior staff writer

The Nebraska Democratic Party filed a complaint Wednesday alleging that Attorney General Don Stenberg violated campaign contribution laws during his 1995 U.S. Senate campaign.

The Federal Election Commission complaint centers on one Blair-based campground company, Thousand Adventures, and the contributions of its employees, owner and the owner's family, including a \$1,000 contribution made by a 12-year-old boy.

"I just question whether a 12-year-old boy has a real interest in the U.S. Senate," Nebraska Democratic Party Chairwoman Anne Boyle said.

Stenberg was not in his office Wednesday afternoon, and could not be reached for comment.

Federal election regulations limit contributions to a maximum of \$1,000 from each person during an election.

To circumvent this regulation illegally, contributors sometimes give money to other people, which then is contributed to the campaign.

That is what Democrats allege happened in Stenberg's campaign.

The owner of Thousand Adventures, David Vopnford, six of his family members and three employees contributed a total of \$9,400 to Stenberg's Senate campaign.

Critics question the timing of the Democrats' complaint with the election one month away.

Stenberg faces Democrat Pat Knapp in the November election for attorney general.

But Boyle, who became party chairwoman in July, said she first learned of the contributions in a September Omaha World-Herald story about Thousand Adventures.

In that story, Stenberg was quoted saying he did not know all his contributors.

But Boyle argued that with eight \$1,000 contributors from the company, it was likely Stenberg did know them.

Thousand Adventures' history of consumer fraud charges fuel the allegations of improper contributions.

Lawsuits have been filed by 21 states against Thousand Adventures, and the company filed for bankruptcy earlier this year.

But Nebraska never filed suit against the

company despite 33 consumer complaints.

Instead, Stenberg chose to pursue mediation with the company and did collect \$73,000 for the state.

Boyle said it was "bothersome that 21 states did (file suit) and we didn't."

The Federal Election Commission will take several months to review the complaint before taking any action.

The complaint could potentially be used by Knapp in her campaign against Stenberg.

But Boyle maintained that this was not a campaign issue.

"We filed the complaint just to clear the air," Boyle said.

Knapp was out of her office Wednesday afternoon, and could not be reached for comment on the complaint.

Republican Party Chairman Chuck Sigerson responded to the complaint with a letter to Boyle urging Democrats to focus their campaigns on issues, not negative attacks on opponents.

The Republicans did not address the complaint directly in the letter. Instead they focused on "staying on the high road" in campaigns.

413 supporters out-donating its opponents

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about the amendment.

Wolf said every donation was important — not only for the monetary contribution but also for the show of support of the amendment.

The year-to-date cost of the group's campaign has totaled more than \$2.6 million.

Three opposition groups, which were created after the signatures were gathered in a drive for the proposed amendment, have spent a combined total of more than \$459,000 since the beginning of the election year. Two main groups are opposing the tax lid proposal: Nebraskans for the Good Life, and Heartland Agriculture and Business Against the Lid.

Though both groups serve different constituents and are run separately, a third group — Agriculture, Mainstreet and Education Against 413 — serves as an umbrella group to orchestrate the efforts of the other two.

Nebraska State Education Association Executive Director Jim Griess, whose group was a large contributor to Nebraskans for the Good Life, said the money is funneled into the other groups to pay for radio and television advertising.

Those efforts aim to inform voters about the potential damage to the state the lid could cause if approved in November.

But, he said, facing a group with a budget nearing \$3 million has been a challenge.

"We're going to continue to work at the grass roots level ... to make sure folks get registered and turn out to vote," Griess said.

Nebraskans for the Good Life reported having \$124,000 in cash on hand at the end of September, which will be used to augment advertising as the election draws near.

Both leaders said their focus is to educate voters about the effects of the amendment.

"Nebraskans are smart," Wolf said. "They're going to make decisions based on the merits of information provided."

Symposium to examine public perception of politics

By BRIAN CARLSON
Staff writer

When it comes to the political process, are people mad as hell and not going to take it any more?

That is the question to be explored during the 1998 Hendricks Symposium on Oct. 9 and 10, sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln political science department.

The symposium will include six panels discussing the public's disenchantment with the political process in the United States.

Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, an associate professor of political science, said public disaffection with the political system, which has waxed and waned throughout history, can have a negative influence on public policy-making.

"I think the public's attitude toward government has potentially long-lasting ramifications," she said. "If people are disaffected with the political system, they may pursue short-term solutions that don't make long-term sense."

Although the symposium may be particularly timely in the midst of the turmoil surrounding the Clinton presidency, the weekend's events will focus on the history and root causes of public discontent.

The symposium's keynote address, to be delivered by New York University psychology professor Tom Tyler, is titled "The Psychology of Public Dissatisfaction with Government." His speech is scheduled for Friday at 7:30 p.m. in the University Club, 13th and P streets.

On both Friday and Saturday, three panel discussions will be held in the Nebraska Union to discuss aspects of public political discontent, including public dissatisfaction over time, the psychology of discontent, the structural causes of disaffection, levels of frustration

aimed at particular governmental branches and issues and the consequences of dissatisfaction.

Panel discussions are scheduled for 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 3:15 to 5:15 p.m. Friday.

From 3:15 to 4:45 p.m. on Saturday, Theiss-Morse will moderate a concluding discussion among five other speakers. Theiss-Morse and John Hibbing, a UNL political science professor, will conduct the 1998 Hendricks Symposium.

Theiss-Morse said President Clinton's difficulties and the public's reaction to the events in Washington, D.C., will receive some attention. In addition to Clinton's behavior, the actions of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr and the Congress have had a negative influence on the political system and its public image, she said.

"What's happened with the Clinton fiasco is really damaging to the political system."

Professor works to attract more women to math

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ing her undergraduate degree from Cambridge's all-female Girton college, Wiegand's grandmother, Grace Chisholm Young, left her home for Germany. Her goal was to obtain a doctoral degree in mathematics, and she left her home country because England did not allow women to earn advanced degrees.

After studying in Germany, thanks to an experimental program that allowed women to work toward their doctoral degrees, Wiegand's grandmother received hers.

That was after she was forced to walk to her last examination after the carriage driver who was supposed to pick her up passed by because she was a woman.

The carriage driver just assumed that only a man would be in pursuit of a doctoral degree. When he didn't see a man sitting on the curb, he passed her,

Wiegand said in a book she helped write about couples in science. Her grandparents' story made up one chapter of the book.

After her grandmother walked to her examination and arrived five minutes late, she passed the exam successfully.

Though Wiegand's pursuit of a doctoral degree was a little less historic than her grandmother's, she still uses her grandmother's experiences to motivate her for her job as president of AWM.

Many of the problems she addresses during her nationwide speeches come from attitudes and misconceptions that still linger despite the progress women have made since her grandmother's feat. These problems cause fewer women to become mathematicians or make them less vocal about being one, she said.

"When AWM started, people realized that women were invisible at math meetings," Wiegand said.

"The goal of the organization was to

increase these numbers and encourage women to study mathematics," she said.

Wiegand had no problem following in the footsteps of her grandmother. She took many college math courses in high school and graduated in three years from Bryn Mawr College, a women's school in a Pennsylvania town of the same name.

She went on to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After being in classes with only women during her undergraduate years, she found a different world from the close, supportive classes at her all-female alma mater.

"When I went to the University of Wisconsin, I felt it wasn't as likely that you'd get support from a coed place," she said.

Wiegand said she found mostly an encouraging environment during her graduate career.

But when seeking a university job after graduation, Wiegand got a taste of

what the conditions for women were really like in mathematics in the 1970s.

"Can't your husband support you?" was the University of Wisconsin-Madison math department's response when Wiegand asked for a teaching position.

Despite some inequalities that still exist, Wiegand said, colleges have made strides in encouraging women to study math. In order to stay functional, Wiegand said, more math departments have realized that women are a necessary component for success.

But, despite the fact that the percentage of women earning doctorates in mathematics is at a record high, attitudes and barriers still need to be overcome to create an environment welcoming to women, she said.

These are the problems that she addresses when she speaks at colleges and universities across the nation.

One of those problems is the attitude among high school girls that taking an

interest in math isn't cool, Wiegand said.

After talking with girls at a high school math camp that takes place every summer at UNL, she found that most attendees enjoyed the camp experience, yet felt they couldn't tell their friends they attended because they would be seen as different.

Though there seems to be an equal number of jobs for men and women mathematicians with doctorates, Wiegand said, women don't get promoted as often as men do.

For these reasons, Wiegand continues to spread the AWM message in speeches nationwide.

Jean Taylor, a math professor at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., and AWM president-elect, said Wiegand's dedication to speaking to audiences across the nation is one of the qualities that has made her tenure as president different from others.

Though many AWM presidents have focused on one part of the nation, such as the East Coast, Wiegand has made a strong attempt to spread her message everywhere.

"I think that's one of the most striking things about her," Taylor said.

"Just putting a human face on a woman in mathematics is important," she said.

Wiegand doesn't leave her dedication to encouraging women in mathematics behind when she enters the classroom.

Serpil Saydam, a UNL doctoral student in mathematics from Turkey, said Wiegand has helped her overcome the challenges that she has encountered.

She also has promoted the AWM agenda on a smaller level with her graduate students, Saydam said. Her visibility in promoting women in mathematics has been a benefit to the department, she said.

"She is a leader," Saydam said. "When I came here the first time, she was the person I felt would be my role model."

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