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Participants debate privatization

SECURITY from page 1

cent supported it. Nebraska participants generally opposed privatization plans. However, participants were more supportive of supplemental accounts — privately invested funds that would be added to Social Security — than of other privatization plans.

Asked if they would support investment of trust fund assets in the markets, 51 percent were somewhat opposed or strongly opposed, while 37 percent expressed some support or strong support for the idea.

Karen Feekan, a junior political science major at Doane College, said she distrusted the idea of the government investing Social Security funds in the markets because investment decisions could become politicized and could grant the federal government too much influence on the economy.

Nebraska participants opposed establishing individual accounts to replace Social Security by 57 percent to 37 percent.

But on the idea of establishing individual supplemental accounts in addition to Social Security, 42 percent supported it, while 41 percent said they were opposed, with 17 percent undecided.

In a statement broadcast to the entire teleconference, Chris Earl-Bleich of Lincoln spoke for those who oppose privatization because it would leave Social Security recipients' financial security to the whims of the market.

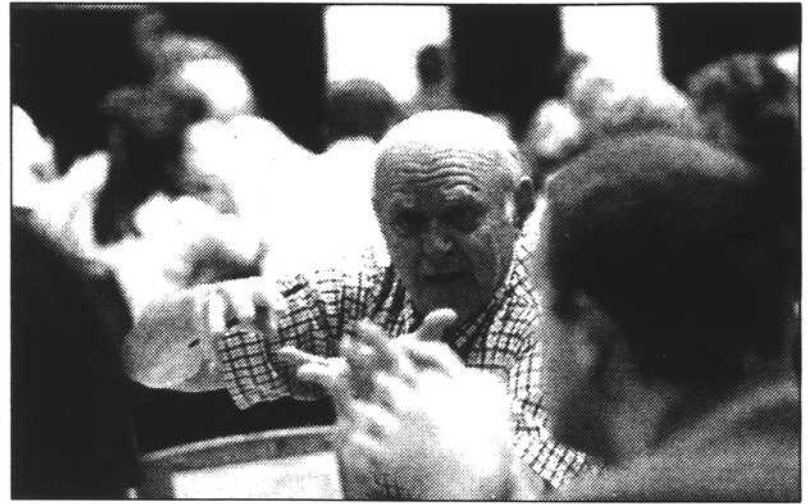
"It does put at risk the safety net for our elderly and disabled," she said.

"Back in 1935, the private sector did not protect the elderly and disabled; that's why we have Social Security."

But Bob Fitzsimmons, a certified financial planner from Lincoln, said he favored some sort of privatization plan to take advantage of stock market returns that are historically higher than the returns on U.S. Treasury securities, which is how Social Security dollars are now invested.

"But I think the recent market volatility and correction has scared people," he said.

All five conferences showed sup-



REUBEN WORSTER, of Lincoln, shares his views on Social Security during a nationwide teleconference Saturday sponsored by Americans Discuss Social Security. Lincoln was one of five cities that participated in discussions. About 39 percent of the 110 participants were between the ages of 18 and 39.

DAWN DIETRICH/DN

port for lifting or eliminating the \$68,400 cap on taxable income.

According to information provided by Americans Discuss Social Security, eliminating the income cap while allowing benefits to be paid on the additional earnings could solve 68 percent of Social Security's long-term financing shortfall.

"We've seen today that 68 percent of the problem can be solved by eliminating that cap, and that's what we need to do," said Mark Intermill, who works for the Division of Aging Service in Lincoln.

The five-state poll showed that 81 percent supported separating Social Security Trust funds from other government spending.

Nebraskans also opposed increasing the eligibility age for full benefits, with 57 percent opposed and 32 percent in favor.

Opponents of higher retirement ages, such as Jim Willis of Lincoln, noted that physical labor can take a toll on workers and make it difficult for them to continue working into their late 60s.

But Lorraine Giles of Omaha disagreed, saying today's workers enjoy better health and longer life spans.

"It's perfectly reasonable to expect my children to work longer,"

she said. "Our productive years can go well beyond the 60s, well beyond 65."

Forum organizers said about 110 people participated in Lincoln. Males accounted for 52 percent, females for 48 percent.

While Nebraska is a predominantly Republican state, the political affiliations of the group were reversed. Fifty-four percent of participants were Democrats, and 26 percent were Republicans.

With 39 percent of participants age 18 to 34, the Nebraska group had the largest group of young participants.

In other poll results:
■ Reduce benefits across the board: 73 percent opposed, 10 percent supported.

■ Increase the payroll tax rate: 63 percent opposed, 27 percent supported.

■ Raise the amount of earnings subject to payroll taxes: 79 percent supported, 15 percent opposed.

■ Reduce benefits for high-income beneficiaries: 57 percent supported, 38 percent opposed.

■ Require all new state and local government workers to be covered by Social Security: 78 percent supported, 11 percent opposed.

You're invited...
to **NU's Health & Safety Fair!**
Tuesday, October 13th
City Union Greenspace
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Wednesday, October 14th
East Union
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
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Law & Order

Boy's death leads to arrest

Lincoln Police officers made two arrests this weekend in connection with the death of a 22-month-old toddler.

Police arrested the child's mother and her boyfriend early Sunday morning in the wake of the boy's death Saturday, Assistant Police Chief John Becker said.

Paramedics and police were called to the couple's home on the 300 block of Northwest 16th Street on a medical emergency early Saturday morning.

The toddler was taken to BryanLGH Medical Center West where he was pronounced dead shortly after arrival.

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said in a statement Sunday that preliminary autopsy results showed the boy had suffered a "severe blunt-force trauma to the head."

Both the mother, 24, and her boyfriend, 28, were arrested Sunday on charges of criminal homicide and child abuse.

The courts are closed today for Columbus Day, so the couple likely will be charged Tuesday.

Police seek teen-ager

Police are still looking for the Lincoln High student who assaulted two others with a handgun Oct. 5.

Arrest warrants were issued Thursday for Adren Jackson on charges of first-degree assault and two counts each of terroristic threats and the use of a weapon to commit a felony following the lunch-hour fight, Lincoln Police Sgt. Ann Heermann said.

The fight started when one student accused Jackson of stealing a T-shirt from him.

Jackson responded by pulling the gun and firing several shots at the accusing student and his friend, missing them both. Jackson then attacked them with the butt of the gun, fracturing one student's skull and cutting the other's head.

Compiled by senior staff writer Josh Funk

Festival encourages diversity

HERITAGE from page 1

"We are celebrating ourselves," Gajardo said to the crowd. "It is our day."

The theme for this year's festival was "Passport to Latin America." Gajardo wanted this theme to entice people to come to the festival to learn about the diversity of Hispanic communities and become more open to other cultures.

"Prejudice is based on ignorance, not on knowledge," Gajardo said. "We need to know each other."

Kay Sweeney, running the booth entitled "Mission: Guatemala," said she wants to help people become better educated about Third World countries.

"The more that people know about other people's roots, the less likely they are to look down on others," Sweeney said.

Coleen Seng, Lincoln City Council member, said she has been coming to this festival for several years.

"Attendance here today is better than any other," she said.

Tammy Arnold, a Lincoln resident, said she came to the festival to have fun and learn more about the Hispanic culture.

"The dancing and food is very good," Arnold said. "It's good for kids to come to get them exposed to the culture."

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Monday
• Native American Singers/ Plaza, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
• Howard T. Rainer, program administrator for the Native American Education Outreach Programs at Brigham Young University/ Coliseum, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday
• Karaoke/ Coliseum, 6:30 p.m.

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