

— LEGISLATURE —

Execution method change considered

By Jill Zeman
Staff writer

Legislators are considering whether or not execution in Nebraska should be modified to be more humane.

LB52, which proposes changing the legal form of execution from electrocution to lethal injection, was introduced by Sen. Kermit Brashear of Omaha on Jan. 7, 1999.

Gov. Mike Johanns recently announced his support of the bill, which has sparked controversy throughout Nebraska, in his State of the State address.

Sen. Pam Redfield of Omaha co-signed the bill.

When the bill was introduced, it was not a step toward abolishing execution but toward decreasing suffering, Redfield said.

"The death penalty should not be about making the prisoner die as painfully as possible," she said.

Redfield said she thought lethal injection was a far better approach than electrocution for the people who carry out the execution as well as for the prisoners.

Members of the medical profession have declared their opposition to lethal injection.

The Nebraska Nurse's Association and the American Nurse's Association have both taken a stand against lethal injection, said Carol McShane, a registered nurse and member of the Nebraska Nurse's Association.

Both associations have declared that if nurses were to participate in lethal injections, it would be against their ethical code, McShane said.

She said lethal injection is just as inhumane as electrocution because it can be a long, painful process for death row inmates.

It can be very difficult to get a prisoner's I.V. started because many inmates have used drugs that affect their veins, she said.

The needle could come out of the inmate's vein, making the death a prolonged process, McShane said.

"(Lethal injection) is torture for someone," she said.

If the bill becomes law, any death row inmate convicted before its passage would be able to choose death by electrocution or lethal injection.

"It's very inhumane to ask someone to make a conscious choice on how they will die," McShane said.

McShane said the most humane form of execution is the guillotine, but it is no longer used because it can be gruesome to watch.

"Lethal injection is only more humane for the viewers," she said.

Marc Patry, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln graduate student in law and psychology, said he didn't want to take a stance on the death penalty issue.

"I think the electric chair is more harsh than necessary; some may view it as cruel and unusual punishment," Patry said.

He said the possible change to lethal injection would not be a step toward abolishing the death penalty.

"Fundamental opponents to the death penalty may agree it's more humane. However, they realize a person is still being killed," he said.

The bill has been placed in the General File and will go to the floor for the senators to debate, which is unscheduled.

New system suggested

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us how we're serving our students," Wickersham said.

South Dakota uses a student information system similar but not identical to the one proposed by Wickersham, said Lesta Turchen, senior administrator for the South Dakota Board of Regents.

South Dakota's system differs because it offers information for only public universities, Turchen said. It includes information such as student placement test scores, grades and transcripts.

The South Dakota regents are in the process of converting the system so students can access their account via the Internet, she said.

Turchen said there were few problems with the system.

Osborne considers running for Senate

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"Winning national championships doesn't automatically make you an effective legislator," Smith said.

If Osborne enters the campaign, it would attract a lot of attention and give opponents a scare, Smith said.

Smith said Osborne's greatest political asset is his name.

"In the state of Nebraska, Tom Osborne is a sterling name," he said.

Osborne said voters are familiar with him and his issues, which could help in the election, if he runs.

UNL junior accounting and economics major and College Republicans Chairman Jason Wiggins said he thought Osborne would be an excellent candidate for public office.

"I think he embodies a lot of ideals that Nebraskans can identify with," Wiggins said. "He has a high moral character, and that's what's most important in a candidate."


Wiggins also acknowledged the strength Osborne would have in campaigning.

"He has a celebrity status in this state," Wiggins said.

Osborne was skeptical about the voters' behavior.

"I've been through a lot with the people of Nebraska," he said. "But who knows what they think about when they're in the voting booth?"

In other campaign news, Sen. Bob Kerrey is expected to make an announcement today if he will run for Senate.




Career Services Snapshot

...see what's developing next week in Career Services

Over 130 national companies will interview at UNL this spring for post graduation jobs, internships and co-ops. Students who are registered* with Career Services can participate in the interviews.

Allstate	MCI Worldcom
Cargill	Mutual of Omaha
Fisher Controls	Pella
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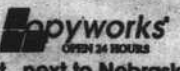
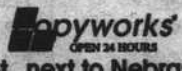
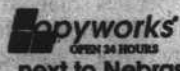
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