

LEGISLATURE

Felony murder bill voted down

By Michelle Starr
Staff writer

A bill proposed to rewrite Nebraska law to provide a lesser maximum sentence for felony murder was voted down Monday.

The Legislature failed to advance LB509, originally proposed last year by Sen. Ernie Chambers and Sen. Kermit Brashear, both of Omaha.

"It's over," Brashear said. The bill would have allowed a lesser sentence of life in jail without the possibility of parole for a felony murder charge.

Felony murder is classified as killing someone during the event of another felony, such as first-degree sexual assault, robbery, arson, kidnapping, burglary or hijacking.

Nebraska law does not require prosecutors to prove intent to kill, and felony murder is punishable by death.

"We failed to increase the scope of the law and improve the criminal code," Brashear said.

An amendment proposed by Brashear this year added three crimes to the list of felony murder offenses: first-degree false imprisonment, sexual assault on a child and child abuse. It would have also made the possibility of parole unavailable for felony murder.

"I would have supported the bill with the amendment, but not without it," Sen. Dwite Pedersen, of Elkhorn, said.

A charge of felony murder is unlike first-degree murder because once a person is charged with felony murder, jurors can only choose to convict or acquit. In first-degree murder charges, jurors are allowed the option to convict on a lesser charge.

The amendment would not have applied to people already convicted of felony murder.

Brashear said no plans for a future bill dealing with felony murder have been made.

Johanns pushes bills that focus on youth

By Veronica Daehn
Staff writer

Gov. Mike Johanns urged the Education Committee on Tuesday to advance two bills that would support Nebraska's youth.

LB1160 would provide money for state mentoring programs, and LB1162 would render grants for a statewide school-to-career program.

Johanns said both bills would give students a reason to stay in school and embark on a lifetime of learning.

"In order to educate, we need to ensure school experiences are relevant and rewarding," Johanns said.

That's why giving money to mentoring programs and school-to-career programs is so important, he said.

If it passes, LB1160 would make available \$500,000 from the state's general fund to support mentoring programs.

In order to receive money, though, the program applying for the grant would have to match the amount provided by the state.

Johanns said this would push partnerships between local organizations and state government.

"We know mentoring works," he said. "This money could be the catalyst to encourage local participation."

Local investors would also need to match the state's contribution in LB1162.

Johanns said \$1 million would be available in state general funds to support school-to-career programs.

School-to-career programs allow high school students to go into the workplace during a portion of the school day to gain experience.

Sen. Mark Quandahl of Omaha said he introduced the bill because federal funding for school-to-career programs ends this year.

"Over 10,000 businesses and 800 schools participate in Nebraska (in school-to-career programs) now," Quandahl said. "This bill would ensure the continued growth of those programs."

LB1162 would help the state, as well as the students, Quandahl said.

"We need to ensure that students have some capacity to understand the requirements of certain careers," he said. "This adds an integral first step to the state's workplace shortage."

"In order to educate, we need to ensure school experiences are relevant and rewarding."

Gov. Mike Johanns

Both bills would place grants under the control of the Department of Economic Development instead of the Department of Education.

Several senators said this was a bad idea.

"If this program is just to deal with kids, I have trouble putting it into the Department of Economic Development," said Sen. Bob Wickersham of Harrison. "Do they know anything about kids? That is quite troubling, actually."

Sen. Jon Bruning of Omaha introduced the bill and said the main issue is not which department gets control of the money.

"The Department of Economic Development already knows how to administer grants," Bruning said. "The big issue is how do we get money to help kids?"

The governor agreed. Johanns said both bills would have a positive impact on Nebraska's economic future, as well as on its youth.

Former University of Nebraska Football Coach Tom Osborne said his mentoring program, TeamMates, has 1,400 mentor match-ups across Nebraska.

He said he would like to see that increase to 5,000 within the next three years.

The program costs about \$500 a year per student, Osborne said, totaling around \$20,000.

So far, all money is private. "Does government belong in this?" Osborne said. "I don't know. That's your decision. But we will continue to work whether we have government funding or not."

Both bills were held in committee Tuesday and will be discussed within the next two weeks.

Study focuses on teen smoking

By John Hejkal
Staff writer

Groups of high-school students getting their nicotine fixes after the bell rings for the day may become a less common sight if Kristine McVea has anything to do with it.

McVea, an assistant professor of family medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, is conducting a study designed to understand why high-school students have such a hard time quitting smoking.

Grants were received from the American Cancer Society, the state of Nebraska and the Nebraska chapter of the American Lung Association for McVea's study. The American Cancer Society provided the largest amount of money, giving \$135,000.

"Teen smoking is a huge issue in our nation right now," she said, pointing out that about one-fourth of high-school students smoke on a regular basis.

She said about 75 percent of high-school smokers have tried to quit, but their success rate is lower than that of adults.

The first year of the three-year study involves interviewing teen smokers to find out why they want to quit and how they go about trying. That informa-

tion will be used to figure out how organizations can support those students, McVea said.

In the second and third years of the study, McVea will be trying out forms of intervention to help teens kick the habit.

Rob McEntarffer, a psychology and philosophy teacher at Lincoln Southeast High School, is a co-researcher with McVea and John Creswell, an educational psychology professor at UNL.

There are a lot of programs to prevent teen smoking, McEntarffer said, but few help students change their behaviors.

Finding out what it is like for a teenager to quit smoking is important, he said, because teen smoking rates have stayed about the same over the years.

"Whatever we're doing now isn't working that well," McEntarffer said.

The researchers are surveying high school students from Lincoln Southeast, Lincoln East and Lincoln High, McEntarffer said.

A portion of the smokers will be interviewed every two weeks for three months. The others will be interviewed once per month for a year.

A pilot program has already begun to help teens quit smoking, McVea said.

The researchers are working to train teens in giving smoking cessation advice, she said.

"One of the things that makes it hard for teens to stop smoking is that they're offered cigarettes from their friends," she said.

McVea said she hopes getting peers involved will help teens overcome problems they encounter as they try to quit.

"We noticed teens don't have the skills to provide effective smoking cessation messages, so we thought, 'Why don't we train them?'" she said.

The research that McVea has done so far has yielded information about the psychological state of teen smokers.

"A lot of the students that we're talking to who are smokers are really stressed out," she said.

She said many students may be struggling with depression or attention deficit disorder, and they self-medicate with cigarettes.

She said helping students learn other ways to cope, like relaxation techniques, may be instrumental in helping them quit smoking.

"I think it's kind of sad that these kids want to do something for themselves, but no one's really helping them," she said.

BUY RECYCLED.

AND SAVE:

When you buy products made from recycled materials, recycling keeps working. To find out more, call 1-800-CALL-EDF.

Ad Council

EDF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

Professional HAIRCUTS \$7.50

Call Leanne at 464-7358

Hairport Salon

4711 Huntington

shampoo: \$3 extra

exp. Jan.30

DINE FOR \$2.99

All You Care To Eat

Original Sauce Spaghetti, Plus a Trip To Our Garden Fresh Salad Bar & Two Slices Garlic Cheese Bread

Offer good for Lunch or Dinner. Mon., Tues. & Wed. only. Must present coupon when ordering. Not valid with any other coupon.

Expires 2/9/00

228 N 12th Lincoln

Navix® is now ALLTEL Internet Service.

(Now you won't have to share your e-mail.)

New name — same service. Plus a whole lot more. Now, with ALLTEL Internet, you'll receive up to 5 personal mailboxes with your account so everyone can have their own e-mail address. And, ALLTEL Internet gives you up to 5MB of FREE personal web space. So you can create your own web page.

Get 5 FREE Hours

And if you're a UNL student, faculty or staff member, we'll give you 5 free hours of Internet access every month

when you sign up for one of these plans:

Low Usage Plan: Get 15 hours of online time for just \$6.50 a month.

Medium Usage Plan: Get 60 hours of online time for just \$10.00 a month.

High Usage Plan: Get 250 hours of online time for just \$19.50 a month.

Additional minutes for each plan are just \$.02 and activation is free.

472-5151

472-3434

Info@alltel.net
www.alltel.com
www.alltel.net

ALLTEL The power to simplify

* 60-day subscription required. Netscape™ Communicator software available in Windows and Macintosh versions.

STOP by STUDENT INVOLVEMENT University of Nebraska

200 Nebraska Union
300 East Union

you will find:

- Student Organization Listings
- Leadership Programs
- Campus Calendar of Events
- Cultural Diversity Programs
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Involvement Opportunities
- Current Publications
- Helpful Handouts
 - ASAP
 - Essential Experiences
 - Involvement Guide

got involved?

www.unl.edu/sinvolve