

LEGISLATURE

Bill would relieve property taxes

By Gwen Tietgen

Staff writer

Providing Nebraska's property owners with more tax relief is the intent of a bill discussed during Thursday's Appropriations Committee hearing.

LB1214 was introduced by Speaker Doug Kristensen of Minden at the request of Gov. Mike Johanns.

The bill would transfer \$30 million from the Cash Reserve Fund to the Relief to Property Taxpayers Cash Fund.

The money would then be used for increased aid to community colleges during the 2000-01 fiscal year.

Currently, community colleges are funded by property taxes from their respective communities.

Gerry Olitmueller, director of public research, said: "This bill is a good way to provide relief for citizens concerned about the level of property taxes in Nebraska."

"It reduces (legislators') needs to levy property taxes on property owners."

In fiscal year 2001, the bill will give another \$30 million in relief.

This relief is in addition to the \$35 mil-

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Gerry Olitmueller

director of public research

lion worth of tax relief given during this fiscal year.

If the bill passes, \$65 million in property tax relief would be in place for the 2001 fiscal year.

There are six different community college areas in Nebraska and 13 campuses.

With the additional aid provided by the bill, each community college area would receive between 2.15 and 2.33 cents per \$100 of property value.

"This is a result of Gov. Johanns wanting to provide property tax relief," Olitmueller said.

"The governor has chosen to use this money for property tax relief instead of using it to create bigger government."

Senators discuss pair of animal health bills

■ One of the bills would license animal technicians.

By Veronica Daehn

Staff writer

Senators voiced concern over cats, dogs and livestock Thursday in the Health and Human Services Committee Hearing.

No action was taken on two bills that would change the definition of veterinarian and the way a vet practices.

Sen. Merton Dierks of Ewing said LB963 would allow animal technicians to work under the supervision of any licensed veterinarian.

The bill would also license animal technicians. Under the current system, animal technicians are only certified, not licensed.

Columbus veterinarian Jim

Kramer said certifications are not transferable to other practitioners or other states. If animal technicians were licensed, they could change employers or move to other states much more easily.

"This bill would protect the animal-owning public," Kramer said.

The bill would also change the name of animal technicians to veterinary technicians.

Veterinary technicians would work with a licensed veterinarian in one of three supervised settings.

Depending on the level of skill, the vet tech would be under immediate supervision, direct supervision or indirect supervision.

The levels of supervision would be determined by the Department of Health and Human Services, Dierks said.

This bill would ensure continued quality care for pets and food production animals, said Dierks,

a practicing veterinarian.

Sen. Carol Hudkins of Malcolm introduced LB1023.

Hudkins said this bill would amend the current state law to allow foreign-trained veterinarians to practice in Nebraska.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, Nebraska is the only state without a procedure for licensing foreign veterinarians.

"We need to update our laws," Hudkins said. "British vet schools are the best in the world. There's no question about the (quality of the) training there."

Nebraska law currently requires veterinarians seeking employment to provide proof of graduation from an accredited vet school.

If LB1023 passes, prospective vets would need to get approval from the American Veterinary Medical Association Education Committee for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.

ASUN

President will present fetal tissue bill Wednesday

By Sara Salkeld

Staff writer

ASUN President Andy Schuerman will be presenting a bill Wednesday to encourage a committee to lobby against the Legislature's fetal tissue bill.

The bill introduced to the Legislature on Jan. 20 by John Hilgert would essentially ban fetal tissue research being done at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Schuerman's bill would require the Government Liaison Committee to lobby against banning fetal tissue research.

The research being performed on fetal tissue is for neuro-destructive disorders such as Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. The fetal tissue is donated by Dr. LeRoy Carhart.

Schuerman said the majority of the ASUN senators he spoke with were in favor of his bill.

"They are able to agree that it is not linked with abortions and see the value of the research," Schuerman said. "They don't agree with abortion or think that abortion is right, but since no money is changing hands, they are okay with the research."

"I don't think the student funds and resources ... should be involved."

Trisha Meuret

ASUN second vice president

Schuerman also said if this type of research goes elsewhere, it could be commercialized.

"The fetal tissue could be sold to research institutions," Schuerman said. "It won't happen here. Nebraska is a state where we are comfortable with our morals and ethics."

Trisha Meuret, second vice president, said it would be hard to lobby against the bill when senate members don't know other students' opinions.

"I don't think the student funds and resources that ASUN uses should be involved in something where all of the students don't feel the same," Meuret said.

Mourners honor former Sen. Curtis

MINDEN (AP) — About 100 mourners made their way over icy roads and streets Thursday to the funeral of former U.S. Sen. Carl Curtis.

Curtis, whose 40 years in Congress is the longest of any Nebraskan, died Monday at age 94 after a long illness.

Curtis retired after 24 years the U.S. Senate in 1979. He served 16 years in the House.

Curtis was known by many for his unwavering support of President Nixon, even in the final days of

Watergate.

He also was known as an ardent conservative who never feared to buck the trend as he voted against numerous social programs that now are part of the American fabric, including Medicaid, Medicare and food stamps.

Curtis said federal dollars created dependency.

His funeral was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Among honorary pallbearers was former President Ford, though Ford did not make it to the service.

Program brings different cultures together

By Katie Muetting

Staff writer

With about 94.5 percent of UNL students from the United States, the majority finds it difficult to experience different cultures.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students from the United States desiring to befriend someone from another country should consider the English Conversation Program, said Piotr Juskiewicz, a graduate assistant at International Affairs.

Participants are paired with a foreign student who wants to better experience American culture.

"The purpose of the program is for the foreign students to have some American friends," Juskiewicz said.

Many foreign students who come to Nebraska know the language but are unfamiliar with the culture, Juskiewicz said.

Students who participate in the program meet for at least one hour a week, Juskiewicz said.

"What they do during this hour is totally up to them," he said.

A list of possible conversation topics is provided by the program.

"We met three times a week and ate

lunch," said Sarah Kelling, a junior international business major.

Kelling is participating in the program for the fourth time.

"I have an interest in learning about other cultures," she said.

Kelling had two conversation partners during the fall semester. Kelling's conversation partners also shared their cultures with her. She was invited to their house every Friday night for Chinese food.

Kelling described the experience as a give and take of both cultures.

Students interested in the program should fill out a two-minute application at International Affairs by Tuesday.

International Affairs will match each American student with a foreign student, taking into consideration their interests, majors, country and gender preferences.

Students will meet their conversation partners at a matching event on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Nebraska Union.

"We are really, desperately needing 30 Americans ... otherwise we have all these foreign students not matched with anyone," Juskiewicz said. "We never want to see that."

The program gives American students a chance to learn first hand about different

between correctional institutions.

In Oregon in 1972, Dunster was imprisoned for raping and killing an Oregon woman.

He was transferred to Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge six years later; he killed an inmate there and gave prosecutors evidence of killing another.

He arrived at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in 1993.

Dunster is now the tenth man on the state's death row.

Nebraska law states that a death sentence goes for an automatic appeal before the State Supreme Court.

Though Dunster said he wanted to die, it won't be without the appeal.

Merritt granted Dunster the right to represent himself on Sept. 7, 1999.

Dunster made the request, saying he would be able to communicate more freely to Merritt in order to speed up the trial.

Merritt assigned Public Defender Robert Hays to stand by if Dunster had any questions for legal action.

"We are really, desperately needing 30 Americans ... otherwise we have all these foreign students not matched with anyone."

Piotr Juskiewicz

International Affairs graduate assistant cultures without ever having to leave Lincoln, Juskiewicz said.

Kelling encouraged students to participate in the program.

"You can see other countries' perspectives on the U.S.," Kelling said.

She also said her participation in the program made her a more accepting individual.

"Once you know where other people are coming from, you can understand them more."

Clarifications

NU on Wheels, a safe-ride home program, will not be an ASUN program until fall of 2000. The program is currently run by Project CARE and the University Health Center.

The Committee for Fees Allocation had not voted on ASUN's budget request as of Tuesday.