

— LEGISLATURE —

Bill examines school violence

■ **Senator hopes bill sparks needed debate about important topic.**

By **Veronica Daehn**

Staff writer

Sen. David Landis of Lincoln said he didn't know if his bill LB1272 had all the answers.

He didn't even know if he agreed with all the minor details the legislation offered.

But Landis said the bill does accomplish one important thing.

The bill that would establish the Student Discipline Act opens the lines of communication on a pertinent topic.

"My personal goal is to start a dialogue as to what to do about the (school violence) phenomenon," Landis said. "This is meant to be an approach with some ideas."

Landis' bill could help ease violence in schools by keeping troublemakers out of the classroom longer, or at least until the teacher and school principal discussed what should happen.

The bill was heard in the Education Committee Monday, but no action was taken.

Duane Obermier, president of the Nebraska State Education Association, said this bill would preserve the rights of the non-disruptive students.

"This is a step," Obermier said. "The removal of the disruptive student from class would be temporary, but the

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David Landis
state senator from Lincoln

student would not return until the teacher and principal had spoken. I welcome this requirement."

Obermier said the bill had the support of Lincoln Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools and the Nebraska Association of School Boards.

The bill would also allow schools to discipline for certain offenses made off school grounds and to require school-approved behavioral counseling to some students who violate the Student Discipline Act.

The bill would also give teacher's access to student disciplinary files.

Some senators voiced concern over certain aspects of the bill.

Committee Chairwoman Sen. Ardyce Bohlke of Hastings said she was unsure the school should have to require or even approve a counseling program for a student.

Sen. Ron Raikes of Lincoln agreed.

"This is tough," Raikes said. "On one hand, you've got a student's individual rights and due process, and on the other you've got education."

Sen. Kermit Brashear of Omaha said he wasn't sure the bill would change how a disruptive student

behaves in a classroom setting.

"We keep passing more laws," Brashear said. "I'm just not sure we're making the world better by doing it."

But Obermier insisted the bill was necessary.

The dialogue between the teacher and principal is essential, he said.

Before becoming president of NSEA, Obermier taught high school in Grand Island.

The teacher-principal cooperation was in place there, he said, and there weren't any problems.

"We need to have that teamwork," Obermier said. "There's not perfection on either side, but this (would be) the state saying, 'you must do this.'"

Landis said the state has been caught up in student individual rights for too long, and his bill should help the classroom as a whole.

But he's still not sure the bill solves everything.

"What I'm sure of is I got a hold of a real problem," Landis said.

"I'd like help. I'd like new ideas and dialogue on this issue. The solutions are tough, and I don't have all the answers."

Reception to aid students

■ **Tonight's program will prepare students to mingle with employers.**

By **Derek Lippincott**

Staff writer

When attending a recruiting reception, the last thing potential job searchers want to do is sit in the corner with a plate of hors d'oeuvres.

Tonight from 5:30 to 7 at the Culture Center, the first networking workshop, "Making the Most of a Recruiter Reception," will help students acquire skills needed when meeting with recruiters at recruiting receptions.

Recruiters from different businesses will be attending the workshop to give students a lifelike recruiting reception situation.

Some of the businesses are Con Agra, Nebraska Department of Corrections, the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City-Omaha Branch and the BryanLGH Medical Center.

"Students will have the opportunity to actually mingle with the recruiters," said Souk Vannavong, academic counselor of Student Opportunities and Services.

"The workshop will help students learn how to start a conversation with a total stranger and give them a chance to practice those skills at the workshop," Vannavong said.

Jake Kirkland, assistant director of Career Services, said the workshop will prepare students for the Students of Color Recruiter Reception on Feb. 9.

It will help them learn how to approach and network with recruiters, meet with recruiters and learn the art of mixing and mingling with strangers.

"That is what networking is all about," Kirkland said. "It's a lot of hobnob. It's one thing to tell students how to network. It's another thing to let them go through it all and experience it for themselves."

The workshop is sponsored by Career Services, Students of Color Career Advisory Committee, Student Opportunities and Services and Voices of the People.

Illinois governor suspends executions

■ **More death sentences have been overturned in the state than carried out since 1977.**

CHICAGO (AP) — Gov. George Ryan announced a moratorium on executions Monday, saying he wants to know why more Illinois death sentences have been overturned than carried out.

"There is no margin for error when it comes to putting a person to death," Ryan said at a news conference in which he called for a special panel to study the state's capital punishment system. "Until I can be sure that everyone sentenced to death in Illinois is truly guilty ... no one will meet that fate."

Ryan said the panel will study Illinois' entire capital punishment system and focus on why the cases of 13 death row inmates were overturned.

The governor reiterated that he

"Until I can be sure that everyone sentenced to death in Illinois is truly guilty ... no one will meet that fate."

George Ryan
governor of Illinois

still believes in the death penalty but said a moratorium was needed until questions about the system are answered. He did not set any deadlines for the investigation.

Nebraska is the only one of 38 states with the death penalty that considered a similar step, but a moratorium passed by the Legislature last year was vetoed by the governor.

The Illinois House last year approved a resolution calling for a moratorium, but it had no force of law and never made it to the Senate.

Death penalty opponents praised the governor's decision.

"No one else in a prominent political position has stepped forward and called for a moratorium and a com-

prehensive review," said Bill Ryan, chairman of the Death Penalty Moratorium Project.

Since Illinois' death penalty was reinstated in 1977, 13 death row inmates have been cleared — one more than the number of inmates the state has executed.

In one high-profile case, Anthony Porter spent 15 years on death row before a college journalism class proved his innocence. Porter was released from prison last year.

Within the past month, Cook County prosecutors dropped charges against a former Chicago police officer who was convicted and sentenced to die based on the word of a jail-house informant.

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