

# Rustad's Senate bid official

By Jill Zeman  
Staff writer

Another candidate officially joined the heated race for the U.S. Senate seat currently occupied by Sen. Bob Kerrey.

Elliott Rustad, a Republican from Lincoln, officially announced his candidacy for the Senate on Wednesday in the Capitol.

Rustad said he decided last fall to enter the race because he realized the people of Nebraska felt strongly about issues he had knowledge of.

"The issues chose me rather than

me choosing the issues," he said.

Rustad, a physician, said health care is his primary concern. Other issues important to him are agriculture, veterans' affairs, taxation and retirement security.

Rustad said he thought he could apply his experience as a doctor to the Senate.

"As a physician, I am involved in diagnosing a condition, prescribing medication and curing the problem," he said.

Rustad said he wants to make health care more accessible.

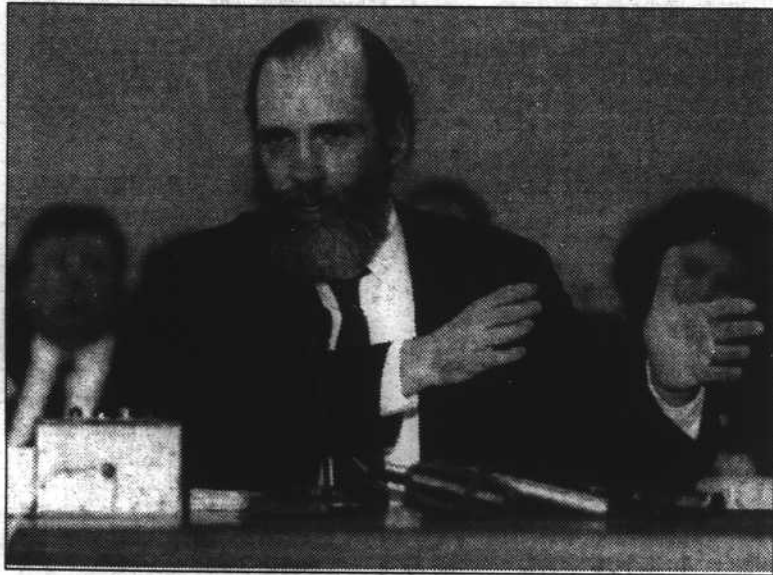
Rustad also acknowledged that his background is different from other

candidates, including former Gov. Ben Nelson, Attorney General Don Stenberg and Secretary of State Scott Moore.

"Everyone else has a strong political background," Rustad said. "In contrast, coming from the private sector, I have a strong background in the issues at hand."

Rustad said it didn't matter to him who his opponents were because he was intent on solving problems facing Nebraskans, in the face of any and all opposition.

"I think the people in general agree we need new blood (representing them in government)," he said.



DR. KEITH CRUTCHER, from the University of Cincinnati, speaks Wednesday to the Judiciary Committee of the state Legislature about a bill that would ban the use of aborted fetal tissue in research.

Josh Wolfe/DN

## Fetal tissue research debated in committee

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Center was using aborted fetal tissue in research for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

Schmit-Albin and her organization, which consists of 65,000 households across Nebraska, gathered 9,000 petition signatures against UNMC's research.

Dr. Keith Crutcher, professor of neurosurgery at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, said the research can be conducted without the use of aborted fetal tissue.

"It seems like an appealing situation," he said. "People look at all the tissue and think that since it'll just be thrown away, they could put it to a good use, which is a false hope."

Research using aborted fetal tissue has been abolished since 1974 in Ohio, and research done at UCMC has not suffered, he said.

Crutcher said the research could use cells obtained from other sources, such as miscarriages or stillbirths.

UNMC doesn't use cells from

miscarriages because the cells need to be viable, and many women do not know when the actual miscarriage occurs, said Dr. Sam Cohen, chairman and professor of microbiology and pathology at UNMC.

Cohen also said the bill potentially could stop promising research conducted at UNMC.

"We've been looking for alternatives for a long time, but the controversy has accelerated our efforts," Cohen said.

University of Nebraska Regent Drew Miller of Papillion said the research in no way encourages or legitimizes abortion.

"If an elective abortion is an evil act, then destroying the tissue is a second evil act," he said.

Miller said the research has the potential to save lives of those affected by Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease.

Miller told Hilgert: "I want you to tell the people in your district that have Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease that we should incinerate tissue that could possibly save their lives."

## Legislature Notebook

### Bill would change state statutes for minors seeking abortions

The Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee heard testimony Wednesday on a bill that would change parts of Nebraska's statutes related to abortion.

LB1291, introduced by Mark Quandahl of Omaha on Jan. 18, would formally state that Nebraska prefers child birth over abortion.

In addition, the bill would require that guardians of abortion patients attend abortions and provide photo identification proving their identity.

If the guardians could not attend the procedure, the guardians would have to send a notarized letter to the physician, which would express their knowledge of the procedure.

Nancy Wolf, who testified against the bill, said she the notary requirement violated women's privacy.

Julie Schmit-Albin, director of Nebraska Right to Life, said the notary requirement is necessary.

"There is a Web site that allows children to forge their parents' signatures on consent documents," Schmit-Albin said.

No action was taken on the bill.

### Chambers testifies on annual capital punishment bill

The Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee heard testimony Wednesday on a bill that would abolish capital punishment in Nebraska.

LB1118, introduced on Jan. 10 by Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, would change the maximum sentence for first-degree murder from electrocution to life without parole.

"I do not believe that the state should take the life of any person," said Chambers, who annually introduces bills to abolish the death penalty.

Sean Lewis, a UNL graduate student, also testified in favor of the bill and was concerned about the execution of innocent people.

"We have to decide what loss of human life is acceptable," Lewis said.

No action was taken on the bill.

Compiled by staff writer George Green

## Bill would fund newspaper program

Newsline for the Blind may become financed with state and federal money.

By Gwen Tietgen

Staff writer

If you take reading the newspaper for granted, try reading it with your eyes closed.

LB1366 would make this possible for the visually impaired through Newsline for the Blind, a digital voice newspaper delivery system.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Chris Beutler of Lincoln, was discussed Wednesday in the Health and Human Services Committee and later advanced out of committee to general file.

The bill would provide state and federal funding for Newsline, replacing current funding by grants, Beutler said.

Amy Rut, who is visually impaired and the outreach coordinator for Newsline for the Blind, said she has spent a lot of time working on grant proposals and that this funding would help.

Rut dialed up Newsline and gave committee members a dose of what the voice newspaper system is like.

The system, which uses prerecorded voices, provides the visually impaired with three national newspapers - USA Today, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune - and the Omaha-World Herald.

The bill aims to add at least one more local newspaper to the list.

Newsline was first available in June 1999 and has been available statewide since November 1999.

Barbara Walker is visually impaired and supported the bill as a representative for the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska.

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- ◆ Meet program representatives on campus
- ◆ Postsession slide presentation on Semester in Nepal at 2:30 p.m., Pewter Room

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