

Regent challenges campaign-spending rules

■ Candidate Randy Ferlic claims giving his incumbent opponent public funds to match his spending gives her an unfair advantage.

BY VERONICA DAEHN

A candidate in the NU Board of Regents' race is challenging the state's voluntary campaign-spending limits.

Randy Ferlic, candidate for the 8th District regent spot, has filed a lawsuit

Election 2000

in district court.

The suit says an act that sets voluntary spending limits for each statewide office violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The Campaign Finance Limitation Act says the voluntary spending limit for a regent candidate is \$25,000 for the general election.

If candidates refuse to abide by the

voluntary spending limits, they're required to file affidavits by Sept. 8 stating how much more they expect to spend.

Ferlic filed that form and estimated he would spend \$50,000.

Now, according to the suit, he wants to spend more money on his campaign to compete with the name recognition of incumbent Rosemary Skrupa.

Under the act, public funds will make up the difference between Ferlic's and Skrupa's spending, said Frank Daley, executive director of the Nebraska Accountability and

Disclosure Commission.

In an election, if one candidate agrees to abide by the spending limit established by the Campaign Finance Act, and the other one doesn't, the candidate who agrees to abide gets the difference made up in public dollars.

Ferlic's suit claims giving Skrupa public money to use just because he is spending more money than the spending limit is a disadvantage to him and inconsistent with the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

The 14th Amendment says a state may not disadvantage some of its citi-

zens while giving others an advantage.

It's the job of the disclosure commission to enforce the rules of the campaign finance act, Daley said.

Ferlic had requested a restraining order on the commission. That was denied by a judge in Lancaster County District Court.

Daley said it was still a pending lawsuit, but that the commission would continue to enforce the Campaign Finance Limitation Act.

Ferlic could not be reached Tuesday, and his attorney, Kurth Brashear, said he would not comment on the case.

County passes Cheetahs case to state for liquor-license hearing

BY JOSH FUNK

The Lancaster County Commission again deferred judgment to the state Tuesday on nudity violations at Cheetahs strip bar.

Despite clear evidence of infractions against a 20-year-old county resolution barring nudity from liquor-serving establishments, the commission sent the case on to the state liquor com-

mission and requested that it hold a formal hearing.

The topless dancing at Cheetahs is what commissioners object to, but the liquor license for the 640 W. Prospector Court business is owned by Coaches Sports Bar and Grill, which occupies the rest of the building.

Coaches' owner, DLH Inc., has challenged the validity of the resolution in Lancaster County District Court.

"Police reports indicate that ... but-tocks are exposed. There is a liquor license, and they are serving alcohol," said Deputy County Attorney Dave Johnson, who urged the commission to revoke Coaches' liquor license.

Earlier this year, DLH leased part of the building to Cheetahs strip club, which opened July 28.

Omaha attorney K.C. Engdahl, who represents DLH, did not contest the

sheriff's reports of violations on Sept. 1, 2 and 6 before the commission Tuesday.

"As I stated, the facts are not in dispute; the legality of the revocation is," Engdahl said.

In the lawsuit, Engdahl argues, among other things, that the 1980 commission that drafted the resolution did not have the authority to do so.

Commissioner Linda Steinman's motion to forward the case on to the

liquor commission passed 5-0.

The county commission decided to do the same thing with evidence of earlier violations at an Aug. 24 hearing.

Nebraska Liquor Control Commissioner Frosty Chapman said the referred evidence would be evaluated by the attorney general's office as part of the normal routine. Then, if there is enough evidence to press the charge, a hearing will be held.

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