

Legislature faces daunting tasks

ISSUES from page 1

Time also promises to be a thorn in the senators' sides when they create a budget for the state.

Final revenue projections will not be available until the end of February or the beginning of April, which puts an additional squeeze on senators who will be bogged down in redistricting woes, Wehrbein said.

A final budget is supposed to hit the floor for debate on April 20th, he said.

Budget forecasts paint a dreary picture that shows the state being several hundred million dollars in the red, Bruning said.

Fueling this budget shortfall, he said, are proposals for increased teacher pay and a request from the University of Nebraska for

\$50 million more than it received last year.

To pay for these increases and to shore up the budget, Bruning said, the Legislature will consider several different measures including expanding the sales tax to cover services and possibly relaxing property tax levies.

But, he said, most senators are leery about adjusting property taxes so the revenue will most likely come from elsewhere or other government programs will have to be trimmed.

Beyond the massive redistricting and budget issues, Wehrbein said the Legislature will also face controversial topics when it debates lowering the blood alcohol content at which drivers are considered legally drunk from .1 to .08.

The federal government has mandated

that states drop their BAC levels if they want to receive federal money for road maintenance, he said.

Wehrbein said the BAC controversy has created intense debate in the past.

Wickersham said he anticipates conflicts over the controversial research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center using tissues from aborted fetuses.

Last year, he said, several senators voiced intense opposition to the research and promised more conflict this year.

None of the senators interviewed by the Daily Nebraskan were willing to speculate on how these issues would be resolved.

But Bruning said he did know one thing for certain:

"There will be many spirited debates."

Passing a bill isn't as easy as it seems

BILLS from page 1

it's heard and voted on by the committee.

Committees vote to either pass the bill to General File, kill it or take no action on it.

General File is the first time the bill, with amendments, hits the floor for debate by the entire Legislature.

In General File - the most crucial step for a bill - legislators can decide whether to pass the bill to Select File, amend it or indefinitely postpone, or kill, the bill.

If the bill passes General File status, it is sent to Enrollment and Review to be checked for technical errors.

In Select File, the bill is debated by the entire Legislature once again and is either passed, amended or killed. If it passes, it moves to a Final Reading.

In a Final Reading, the bill is read aloud by the Clerk of the Legislature where it cannot be debated.

The governor then has five days to approve the bill, veto it, line-item veto a particular portion of the bill or do nothing with it.

If a bill is vetoed by the governor, senators can override the veto with the support of 30 senators.

A bill generally becomes Nebraska law three months after the Legislature adjourns unless it has been granted emergency status.

There's not enough time for every bill to be heard on the floor. Because of this, senators are given one bill they can designate to receive "priority" status within the first 45 days. Priority bills are the first ones heard on the floor.

But not all the legislators' time is spent debating bills.

During an odd-numbered year or during every biennial session, the Legislature gets new senators, prepares the state's budget, assigns new committee chairmen, and elects a

new Speaker of the Legislature.

But for now, the events of the next few days are what's on senators' minds.

Legislators will debate the rules for the legislative session, hear Gov. Mike Johanns' State of the State Address and continue gaining support for their respective bills within the week.

New senators take over committee seats

SENATORS from page 1

sary experience to navigate through the difficult budget process.

But she said new senators with different perspectives also can improve the Legislature's budget and bills.

"New eyes on the issues are good, too," Brown said.

Freshman dominance also spilled into the process of electing committee chairmen.

In three of the four competitive races for committee chairmen positions, a veteran senator lost to a less-experienced member.

Senators are elected to committee chairmen positions by a vote of the entire 49-member Legislature.

The influential Education Committee, which played host to this year's most intense chairmanship battle, fell into the hands of the least-experienced senator.

Sen. Ron Raikes of Lincoln, elected to the Legislature in 1997, beat out Sens. Elaine Stuhr of Bradshaw and Nancy Thompson of Papillion who both had more experience under their belts.

Raikes said the competition for the position was intense and that all the candidates had solid campaigns.

Raikes cited his interest and experience in school finance

issues, which will be important in this session with teacher pay at the forefront of legislative issues, as a factor that may have tipped the hat his way.

With such a divisive issue on the table, Raikes said, his fellow senators also might have elected him because of his moderate stance on the issue.

The chairman of the Education Committee, he said, will be in charge of reconciling the conservative and liberal positions.

"A moderate can get a feel for both sides," he said.

As the dust of the committee battles settled, members of the Legislature embarked on the task of introducing this session's bills.

Several key bills have emerged since senators began introducing legislation on Thursday:

■ Sen. Chris Beutler of Lincoln introduced a bill to reconcile opposing sides in the debate concerning research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center using tissue from aborted fetuses.

LB304 would prohibit groups from selling and transferring fetal tissue. The bill also mandates that the Medical Center stop using aborted fetal tissue as soon as alternative sources have been located. In addition, the bill provides for a

system to monitor the use of the tissue.

■ Sen. Pam Redfield of Omaha plans to tackle unwanted e-mails that clog Internet accounts.

Her bill, LB26, would let Internet users sue for damages when unsolicited e-mails or e-mail viruses damage their accounts.

"We want to stop unsolicited e-mails from jamming boxes full," she said.

Redfield said when these emails shut down systems because of too much volume, they hurt users financially and hinder law enforcement officials who need to use the various email systems.

■ Nebraska's method of execution will be changed from electrocution to lethal injection if Sen. Jon Bruning of Sarpy County gets his bill passed.

Many courts seemed poised to rule that death by electrocution is a cruel and unusual punishment, he said. By passing LB62 now, Bruning said, the Legislature will avoid future work.

Bruning said he supports the death penalty but believes that electrocution might be unnecessarily painful.

"There is no need for extra suffering," he said.

■ Several bills addressing teacher pay were announced

during the last week.

The Education Committee introduced a bill that meets all of the recommendations of a Teacher Pay Task Force established by the Legislature last year.

LB305's most far-reaching suggestion is to provide teachers with salary stipends ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Raikes, chairman of the Education Committee, said the committee's bill will be one of many dealing with the issue.

■ Late night beer drinkers will rejoice if a bill from Sen. John Hilgert of Omaha passes.

LB231 proposes to allow bars to keep their doors open until 1:30 a.m. instead of 1 a.m.

■ Cell phone users might have to ditch their telephones when driving if a bill introduced by Sen. David Landis of Lincoln is passed.

LB42 would mandate that anyone who was using a cell phone when involved in a car accident would be automatically held partially responsible for the collision.

But, Landis said, courts would examine each situation individually so people involved in accidents that had nothing to do with cell phones would not be forced to hold the guilty card.

"We're looking for a reasonable way to address this issue," he said.



NO APPOINTMENTS NEEDED
17th & N St. 476-9466
OIL CHANGE SERVICE

Now Only \$20.99*
Reg. \$26.99
SAVE \$6.00 with UNL ID & coupon

Best Service in Just 10 Minutes

Includes:

- Oil, oil filter, up to 5 qts oil
- Lubrication of zerk fittings
- Check & fill automatic transmission, power steering, washer fluid.
- Check & fill tire pressure
- Check antifreeze, air filter wiper blades
- Vacuum interior
- Wash windows

Open: Mon-Fri 8 to 6 Sat 8-4



*Environmental Disposal Fee Included
Coupon expires May 31, 2001



www.nebraskabookstore.com

Sprint Express Phone Cards at only 4 cents per minute! Buy on-line or in the store.

GIVE US A CLICK!
A WHOLE LOT NEW IS GOING ON.

Now, 500,000 book titles you can order on-line!

CROSS THE STREET! HOW MUCH CAN YOU SAVE?:

TITLE:	UNION PRICE:	NEBRASKA BOOKSTORE PRICE:	SAVINGS:
Statistics for Business Anderson ECON 215	\$71.25 used	\$51.25 used (50 copies)	\$20
Business communications Bovee CURR 120	\$63.40 used	\$48.40 used (90 copies)	\$15
Invitation to psychology Wade PSYC 181	\$46.90 used	\$36.90 used (65 copies)	\$10
College Algebra Sullivan MATH 101	\$63.00 used	\$51.00 used (80 copies)	\$12
Communication Seiler COMM 109	\$38.05 used	\$28.05 used (100 copies)	\$10
Macro Economics McConnell ECON 211	\$51.40 used	\$36.40 used (100 copies)	\$15
Devel. Across the Lifespan Feldman FACS 160	\$60 used	\$50.00 used (65 copies)	\$10
Basic Practice of Statistics Moore STAT 180	\$65.45 used w/study guide	\$55.45 used (95 copies)	\$10
Biology Cambell BIOS 101	\$66.25 used	\$59.95 used (120 copies)	\$6
Communicating at work Adler COMM 311	\$39.55 used	\$30.55 used (110 copies)	\$9
Understanding Amer. Govt. Welch POL 100	\$45.40 used	\$37.40 used (55 copies)	\$8
Brief Calculus Benice MATH 104	\$64.70 used	\$54.70 used (80 copies)	\$8

Prices as of 1/02/01

TOTAL SAVINGS!

YOU JUST SAVED:

\$143!

WHAT DO 25% OF UNL STUDENTS HAVE THAT YOU DON'T?

ANSWER: A N.B.S. CHARGE ACCOUNT! SEE STORE FOR DETAILS.

SAVE 25% ON YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE OF SCHOOL AND ART SUPPLIES!

January 8 through the 14th only!

13TH AND Q
ONLY ONE BLOCK SOUTH
OF LOVE LIBRARY.



Special Hours:
Jan 8-11: 8 - 8 p.m.
Jan 12: 8-6
Saturdays 9-6
Sundays 12-5

*Quantities of each title are limited to stock on hand.